# UK's Most Senior Civil Servant Describes Dysfunction in Boris Johnson-Led Government During Covid-19 Response



Simon Case, the UK's most senior civil servant, provided evidence to the Covid-19 inquiry, revealing significant dysfunction within the Boris Johnson-led government during the initial stages of the pandemic. Arriving late to the inquiry due to illness, Case detailed his experiences as head of the Cabinet Office, describing a chaotic environment where good officials suffered under intense pressure.

He characterized Johnson's Downing Street as a "rats’ nest" filled with a "culture of fear" around then-chief aide Dominic Cummings. Case noted that the disorder made crisis management more complicated, referencing messages to Helen MacNamara highlighting the toxic atmosphere and inefficiency. During the inquiry, he admitted his "raw, in-the-moment" complaints, acknowledging their tone but asserting they were not fully representative of the government's operation.

Case discussed Johnson's decision-making style, which he initially misunderstood, noting it often seemed chaotic but was intended to foster debate. He also touched on the widespread use of WhatsApp for discussions, admitting this habit likely breached official guidelines. Case emphasized that the high-stress environment and overlapping responsibilities severely impacted government function, further highlighting the difficulties faced during the pandemic response.