

Jonathan Bartley calls for investigation into potential breach of special advisers' code of conduct by Dominic Cummings



26 May 2020

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has called for an investigation into whether Dominic Cummings broke the special advisers' code of conduct by editing a blog post which he claimed predicted the risk of coronavirus.

In the press conference held yesterday in the Downing Street garden, Cummings claimed he had written about "the possible threat of coronaviruses" last year.

It has since emerged that a post on the aide's personal blog from March 2019 appears to have been edited on April 14 this year to include a reference to coronavirus. This was the day he returned to work after self-isolating in Durham. [1]

Bartley has now written to the Head of the Civil Service and Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill [2] to ask whether this action would be in breach of the special advisers' code of conduct which states "Special advisers must not take public part in political controversy, through any form of statement whether in speeches or letters to the press, or in books, social media, articles or leaflets." [3]

He has also asked for an explanation about who authorised the press conference, which itself also appears to be a breach of the code.

Bartley said:

"If Mr Cummings has gone back to edit blog posts while he was a special advisor to the Government, to make it appear he was predicting a coronavirus pandemic last year then that clearly needs investigating.

"This took place while he was taking part in meetings at the highest level to determine the Government policy on Coronavirus and it would appear to be a clear breach of the special advisers' code of conduct.

"The fact Mr Cummings was given the platform of the Downing Street garden to hold a press conference to try to explain his journey to Durham also raises serious questions over why this was permitted and whether any taxpayers' money was used.

"There must be clear boundaries to defend the independence of the civil service. It would be wholly inappropriate if any civil servant supported Mr

Cummings yesterday.

“There must be an explanation about why the press conference was permitted, who was involved, what resources were used as well as an investigation into whether Mr Cummings himself broke the civil service code.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://twitter.com/faisalislam/status/1265034438645293056>

2

A copy of the letter can be viewed [here](#)

3

Special advisers code of conduct is available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-advisers-code-of-conduct>

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