Twitter Thread by Jo Maugham



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The High Court gave us 'permission' to bring some of our judicial review arguments in relation to the Government's odd PPE contracts. We are today asking again for permission to bring the others. You can read our (remarkable) Skeleton and Statement here.

We chose these three contracts (Clandeboye/Ayanda/Pestfix) in June/July when we had much less understanding than we do now about what was going on. Once you appreciate that fact, what we have already uncovered (before disclosure) about those three is all the more remarkable.

Let me just focus on one aspect of those contracts: the quality of the product supplied by those companies (respectively, a confectionery wholesaler, a 'family office', and a pest control specialist).

And, rather than me editorialising, let me quote the words of those companies themselves, or Government, or Government agencies.

This is what Government says about what we bought from Clandeboye (we spent a total of £108m on gowns).

But how can they not be cleared for use as gowns? And yet be "authorised for distribution... as part of the PPE ensemble"? It doesn't sound like what we got was gowns.

This is what the Health and Safety Executive says about the isolation suits supplied by Pestfix (on which we spent £32m).

And this is what Pestfix themselves say: "We do not want it to be made public knowledge that PPE from Pestfix has not passed HSE inspection."

Pestfix's very expensive lawyers send me LOTS of emails threatening me with all sorts of stuff but these emails say what they say and there is no dispute at all that Pestfix supplied a lot of duff facemasks to the private sector which it had to recall.

Government also ordered - according to the NAO - £155m worth of facemasks that did not comply with Government's own specifications. I do not believe that what Ayanda delivered complied with the contractual specification either, but leave that aside.

These are only three contracts, of over 400 awarded, and they are three that were chosen by us (as I say) before we knew that much about the sector and before we knew anything about the quality of the PPE supplied under them.

So what about the other 397+?

It is inconceivable to me that these problems with PPE supplied are not widely replicated in the other contracts Government entered into at (as the NAO found) five times normal prices for five years worth of PPE whilst bypassing all normal governance around proper procurement.