

development. Young people and children could be hugely affected. Masks dehumanise people.'

Given that he thought masks dehumanise people, and that the evidence that they help prevent transmission is weak, I wondered how the SPI-B advisors felt about them? I was not surprised that he told me that the group was split. As he said, 'they are not a panacea and the evidence is not clear cut'. But he told me that some of the group like masks because they convey a message of 'solidarity'. In other words, there is a behavioural science 'reason' for wearing masks, to increase a sense of collectivism. This is a feeling favoured by the psychologists that is entirely unrelated to the scientific evidence regarding transmission. Essentially, they want us to feel like we are 'in it together'.

During the course of writing this book I spoke to Morgan a few times. I liked him. He was open, where others were sometimes guarded, and he enjoyed the process of our 'interviews' because they encouraged him to look at different perspectives. When I spoke to him again in early 2021 I got the impression his involvement had been dialled down a little.

The government gave very strong guidance that secondary school pupils should wear masks in classrooms when schools reopened on 8 March 2021. I asked him what was behind this new policy. 'It's gone quiet. We've gone from regular meetings to just being commissioned for different projects,' he said. 'There was no consultation about face masks in schools.' I asked him why. 'I don't know. I have raised the questions a few times with other SPI-B members and with people who also sit on SAGE. We don't know why we weren't consulted.'

It seemed strange that the government had a willing educational psychologist ready and waiting to provide pro bono advice, and not to take advantage. I asked if he thought he wasn't being consulted because he gave the 'wrong sort' of advice. He paused and then offered a diplomatic answer: 'It's becoming more streamlined which is sensible.' Right, but he'd fought hard to prevent masks being used in classrooms before – were they weeding out the wild cards? 'Maybe,' he agreed.

I wondered what he thought of this U-turn on masks in