



Government
Office for Science

Sir Patrick Vallance FRS FMedSci FRCP
UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser & Head of the
Government Science and Engineering Profession

Email gcsa@go-science.gov.uk
Twitter [@uksciencechief](https://twitter.com/uksciencechief)

10 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0NN

Phone +44 (0) 20 7215 1995
Web gov.uk/go-science

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Chair
Science and Technology Select Committee (Commons)

BY EMAIL ONLY

04 April 2020

Dear Greg,

Composition of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and subgroups informing the Government response to COVID-19

I would like to thank you and the committee for inviting me to give evidence. In answer to your follow up requests please see the information below.

SAGE's response to COVID-19 is structured so that advice is fed in through the following expert groups:

- Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M) (40-45 Participants)
- Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behavioural Science (SPI-B) (18 participants)
- New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) (16 Participants)
- Covid-19 Clinical Information Network (CO-CIN) (5 Participants)

In addition, ad-hoc subject specific groups have been and will be stood up as needed. SAGE has additional participants from a variety of backgrounds. SAGE and the expert groups have considered papers from many sources including the Covid-19 Genomic UK Consortium, Imperial College London, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Manchester Epidemic Group and many academic, clinical and other groups.

Members of SAGE and the expert groups come from over 20 different institutions and have the following areas of expertise: molecular evolution, epidemiology, clinical science and practice, modelling emerging infectious diseases, behavioural science, statistics, virology and microbiology. Other SAGE participants include the Chief Medical Officer, Public Health England, Medical Director for NHS England, the Office for National Statistics, the NHS, the Food Standards Agency, Health and Safety Executive, and Chief Scientific Advisers of government departments relevant to specific meetings or their own scientific expertise.

The decision to not disclose SAGE membership for the time being is based upon advice from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure and is in line with the standard procedure for COBR meetings, to which SAGE gives advice. This contributes towards safeguarding individual members

personal security and protects them from lobbying and other forms of unwanted influence which may hinder their ability to give impartial advice. Of course, we do not stop individuals from revealing that they have attended SAGE.

The frequency and timing of SAGE meetings is driven by current events and recently SAGE has been meeting twice a week. From 1 January to 31 March 2020 SAGE meetings were held on:

- January: 28
- February: 3, 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27
- March: 3, 5, 10, 13, 16, 18, 23, 26, 29, 31

In addition, a precautionary SAGE meeting was held on 22 January 2020 to discuss scientific questions that were raised by COVID-19.

The Government Office for Science is working to regularly publish evidence documents and studies on gov.uk which have formed the basis of SAGE's discussions and advice. Some documents have already been published: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response>. SAGE has also asked all the independent modelling groups that provide modelling information to make their code public. SAGE will commit to informing the Committee in advance when new evidence is due to be published. Once SAGE stops convening on this emergency the minutes of relevant SAGE meetings, supporting documents and the names of participants (with their permission) will be published.

Yours sincerely,



Patrick Vallance