



FREEPOST

UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry

Private & Confidential

Professor Allyson Pollock

By email only: allyson.pollock@ncl.ac.uk

16 September

Dear Professor Pollock,

Module 2 of the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry

Request for Evidence under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006

Reference for Request - M2/ISAGE/02/PAP

I am writing on behalf of Baroness Heather Hallett, the Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry (“the Inquiry”), in my capacity as the Module Lead Solicitor for Module 2.

The Inquiry was established on 28 June 2022 to examine the UK’s response to, and the impact of, the Covid-19 pandemic, and to learn lessons for the future.

Module 2 will examine and make recommendations on the UK’s core political and administrative decision-making in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic between early January 2020 and February 2022, when the remaining Covid restrictions were lifted. It will pay particular scrutiny to the decisions taken by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, as advised by the Civil Service, senior political, scientific and medical advisers, and relevant Cabinet sub-committees, between early January and late March 2020, when the first national lockdown was imposed.

The Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2 can be found [here](#).

This letter is a request for assistance pursuant to Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006. That means any document or information that you provide in response will be used as part of the Inquiry’s work and, if relevant, disclosed to those who are formally involved in the Inquiry, known as Core Participants.

This is a preliminary request, the purpose of which is to assist us in the early stages of our work. For that reason, I am not asking you to provide a witness statement at this stage but rather to answer the queries in the attached questionnaire, as far as you are able. At this stage, you do not need to provide detailed answers to each question. A summary of your views to answer each question, as far as you are able, will be sufficient.

It may be helpful if I provide some context to this letter. Even at the outset of our investigation, it is clear that the work of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its subcommittees is likely to be a key issue for consideration.

The Inquiry has therefore contacted all of those who were independent participants of SAGE and/or its subcommittees between January 2020 and February 2022. Some of those individuals were also members of Independent SAGE. The Inquiry is now in the process of contacting the remaining individuals who were members of Independent SAGE or the Independent SAGE Behavioural Advisory Group during the relevant time period, asking them to respond to the attached questionnaire.

The responses will be considered and I may write to you again with a more detailed request for the provision of documents that you hold and/or for you to provide a formal witness statement.

Next Steps

Any correspondence relating to this request should refer to the Reference Number in the heading to this letter. Once your response to the questionnaire is prepared, please return it to me so that the Inquiry can consider whether there are any additional issues or points of clarification that it would like you to address. Please prepare your response to the questionnaire on the basis that it can be disclosed to those involved in the Inquiry's module 2 investigation, known as Core Participants.

If there are particular matters that you consider are sensitive you should identify those to me. The Inquiry will publish a Redaction Protocol in due course which will be available on the Inquiry's website. If there are matters in your response that you would request are not disclosed to other parties then these should be highlighted and an explanation provided for each request. Where appropriate, the Inquiry will apply redactions before disclosing your response or part thereof to Core Participants.

The Chair wishes to conduct the Inquiry as quickly and efficiently as possible and welcomes the assistance of all individuals and organisations with her task. Therefore, please would you provide me with your response to the questionnaire **by 10am on 10 October 2022**. If you have any questions concerning the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Tim Suter

Module Lead Solicitor

solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk

Questionnaire

UK COVID-19 Inquiry: Module 2 - Rule 9 Request to Professor Allyson Pollock - Reference: M2/ISAGE/02/PAP

Please provide the following information:

1. A brief overview of your qualifications, career history, professional expertise and major publications.
2. An outline of when you participated in Independent SAGE, the role that you performed and any matters that you advised on.
3. A summary of any reports and/or articles you have written, interviews and/or evidence you have given regarding the work of SAGE and/or its subcommittees and/or the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please include links to those documents where possible.
4. Your views as to whether the work of SAGE and/or its subcommittees in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic (or the UK's response more generally) succeeded in its aims. We have previously invited independent members of SAGE and its subcommittees to address this issue by reference to the matters set out below. You may find them of assistance, although we recognise that some are likely to be beyond your knowledge. Please address this issue as you see fit.
 - a. The composition of the groups and/or their diversity of expertise;
 - b. The way in which the groups were commissioned to work on the relevant issues;
 - c. The resources and support that were available;
 - d. The advice given and/or recommendations that were made;
 - e. The extent to which the groups worked effectively together;
 - f. The extent to which applicable structures and policies were utilised and/or complied with and their effectiveness.
5. Your views as to any lessons that can be learned from the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular relating to the work of SAGE and/or its subcommittees. Please describe any changes that have already been made, and set out any recommendations for further changes that you think the Inquiry should consider making.
6. A brief description of documentation relating to these matters that you hold (including soft copy material held electronically). Please retain all such material. I am not asking for you to provide us with this material at this stage, but I may request that you do so in due course.