

UK Covid 19 Inquiry

Reference M2/ISAGE/01/DAP

My name is Dr Alison Jane Pittard, OBE. I qualified as MB ChB from Leeds University in 1988 and embarked on a training programme in Anaesthesia. I became a Fellow of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, FRCA, in 1994 and was awarded an MD by the University of Leeds in 1998. In the same year I was appointed to a consultant post in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. In 2000 I became a founding fellow of the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (FFICM). My clinical career has focussed on the delivery of Intensive Care Medicine. At a National level I have been involved in education and training and latterly, as Vice Dean (2016 - 2019) and Dean (2019 - 2022) of the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine, I have taken a strategic role in the development of the specialty in the UK, promoting high quality education, training and assessment, establishing standards for safe patient care and providing career guidance for recruiting and retaining intensive care professionals. As Dean of FICM I worked closely with members of The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, NHS England, the Chief Medical Officer and many others to lead the health service through the pandemic.

I received an invitation from Sir David King, in April 2020, to become a member of Independent SAGE. At that time it was unclear to me what the role of the group would be but, as Intensive Care Medicine was at the forefront of the pandemic, I felt it was important to be involved to ensure we both had a voice and that the public received accurate information. I agreed to become a member as a clinician rather than as Dean of FICM. On 4 May 2020 I participated in a live meeting where aspects of the science behind the UK Covid 19 strategy were discussed. On 12 May a report was published, setting out recommendations for government based on an open and transparent examination of the scientific evidence:
(<https://www.independentsage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/The-Independent-SAGE-Report.pdf>)

My role was to provide a clinical context, where appropriate, to discussions and this publication rather than to advise. I contributed to the section "Effective clinical care for patients and staff" which can be found on pages 23 - 24 of the document. I did not publish any work or give interviews in my role as a member of the committee. Shortly after publication of the report the committee moved its focus onto children and schooling. As this was outside my area of expertise I declined to be involved and left the committee.

In my role as a clinician providing advice to iSAGE I do not feel that I can comment on the work of SAGE in responding to the Covid 19 pandemic or any lessons learned.