

Witness Name:

Dr Julia Pearce

Dated: 3 October 2022

Ref: M2/SAGE/01/JP

COVID-19 INQUIRY – MODULE 2

Questionnaire Response – Dr Julia Pearce

1: Overview of qualifications, career history, professional expertise and major publications:

- 1.1. I am a *Reader in Social Psychology and Security Studies* in the Department of War Studies (DWS) at King's College London (KCL). I am also the Faculty of Social Science and Public Policy (SSPP) Associate Dean for Impact & Innovation and Director of Students and Culture in DWS.
- 1.2. My research uses social psychological theories of health behaviour to examine the impact of risk and crisis communication on risk perception and behaviours, with a focus on extreme events such as terrorism and pandemics. I am specifically interested in understanding the likely reactions, needs and appropriate communication strategies for groups who may be particularly vulnerable during an emergency. The greater part of my research assesses psychological and behavioural responses to low-likelihood, high impact, extreme events such as chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) terrorism and marauding terrorist firearms attacks. This research has (i) challenged assumptions about public panic by providing evidence to suggest that under-response can be as problematic as over-response during a crisis, and (ii) demonstrated the importance of communicating with members of the public before, during and after extreme events.
- 1.3. I was awarded an MSc with distinction in Social Psychology from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) on 1 November 2005 and a PhD in Psychology from London Metropolitan University on 28th October 2010

in recognition of a programme of work entitled *Asylum Seekers in the UK: A Social Psychological Understanding of a Moral Panic*.

Employment History

- 1.4. The following table outlines my post-doctoral employment history:

Table 1 – Employment History

2009 – 2014	Post-doctoral Research Associate at KCL
2014 – 2018	Research Fellow at KCL
2018 – 2021	Lecturer in Social Psychology and Security Studies at KCL
2021 - 2022	Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology and Security Studies at KCL
2022 - Present	Reader in Social Psychology and Security Studies at KCL

- 1.5. During my time at KCL I have contributed to nine multi-institution projects, including leading the communication measures work package on the 3-year EU FP7 Security funded *PRIME* project on the prevention, interdiction and mitigation of lone actor terrorism.
- 1.6. I have recently completed an 18-month project examining the impact of public health communications on the experiences and beliefs about Covid-19 vaccinations of minority ethnic groups in the UK as Principal Investigator. This project (a collaboration between KCL, Birmingham City University and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)) was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of UK Research and Innovation's rapid response to Covid-19. I am also conducting research examining how risk perceptions and behavioural responses to health threats vary amongst different population groups under the auspices of the [*NIHR Health Protection Research Unit \(HPRU\) in Emergency Preparedness and Response*](#).
- 1.7. I am a Chartered Psychologist and an Honorary Public Health Academic Consultant at UKHSA. I hold a number of advisory board positions, including the Deputy Chair of the Cabinet Office National Risk Assessment Behavioural Science Expert Group.

Publications

1.8. I have published 15 peer-reviewed journal articles and 4 peer-reviewed book chapters.

1.9. My publications that demonstrate relevant expertise include:

- (1) Kamal, A, Hodson, A & Pearce, J 2021, 'A Rapid Systematic Review of Factors Influencing COVID-19 Vaccination Uptake in Minority Ethnic Groups in the UK', *Vaccines*, vol. 9, no. 10, 1121.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines9101121>
- (2) Lindekilde, L, Pearce, J, Parker, D & Rogers, B 2021, "“Run, Hide, Tell” or “Run, Hide, Fight”? The Impact of Diverse Public Guidance about Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks on Behavioral Intentions during a Scenario-based Experiment in the United Kingdom and Denmark', *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, vol. 60, 102278.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2021.102278>
- (3) Pearce, JM, Parker, DJ, Lindekilde, L, Bouhana, N & Rogers, MB 2020, 'Encouraging public reporting of suspicious behaviour on rail networks', *POLICING AND SOCIETY*, vol. 30, no. 7, pp. 835-853.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2019.1607340>
- (4) Pearce, JM, Lindekilde, L, Parker, D & Rogers, MB 2019, 'Communicating with the public about marauding terrorist firearms attacks: Results from a survey experiment on factors influencing intention to "Run, Hide, Tell" in the United Kingdom and Denmark', *Risk Analysis*, vol. 39, no. 8, pp. 1675-1694.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/risa.13301>
- (5) Bell, AJC, Rogers, MB & Pearce, JM 2018, 'The Insider Threat: Behavioral indicators and factors influencing likelihood of intervention', *International Journal of Critical Infrastructure Protection*, vol. 24, pp. 166-176. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcip.2018.12.001>
- (6) Heard, CL, Pearce, JM & Rogers, MB 2018, 'Mapping the public first-aid training landscape: uptake, knowledge, confidence and willingness to deliver first aid in disasters/emergencies— a scoping review', *Disasters*.
- (7) Parker, D, Pearce, JM, Lindekilde, L & Rogers, MB 2018, 'Press coverage of lone-actor terrorism in the UK and Denmark: shaping the

reactions of the public, affected communities and copycat attackers', *Critical Studies on Terrorism*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2018.1494792>

- (8) Parker, D, Pearce, JM, Lindekilde, L & Rogers, MB 2017, 'Challenges for effective counterterrorism communication: Practitioner insights and policy implications for preventing radicalisation, disrupting attack planning and mitigating terrorist attacks', *STUDIES IN CONFLICT AND TERRORISM*, vol. 42, pp. 1-28.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1373427>
- (9) Smith, L, D'Antoni, D, Jain, V, Pearce, JM, Weinman, JA & Rubin, GJ 2016, 'A systematic review of factors affecting intended and actual adherence with antiviral medication as treatment or prophylaxis in seasonal and pandemic flu', *Influenza And Other Respiratory Viruses*, vol. 10, no. 6, pp. 462–478. <https://doi.org/10.1111/irv.12406>
- (10) McClelland, E, Amlôt, R, Rogers, MB, Rubin, GJ, Tesh, J & Pearce, JM 2016, 'Psychological and Physical Impacts of Extreme Events on Older Adults: Implications for Communications', *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 127-134.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2016.118>
- (11) Rogers, MB & Pearce, JM 2016, The Psychology of Crisis Communication. in A Schwarz, M Seeger & C Auer (eds), *The Handbook of International Crisis Communications Research*. WILEY-BLACKWELL, pp. 34-44.
<http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd1118516761.html>
- (12) Rubin, GJ, Amlot, R, Page, L, Pearce, J & Wessely, S 2013, 'Assessing Perceptions About Hazardous Substances: The PATHS questionnaire', *Journal of Health Psychology*, vol. 18, no. 8, pp. 1100-1113.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105312459096>
- (13) Rogers, MB & Pearce, JM 2013, Risk communication, risk perception and behaviour as foundations of effective national security practices. in B Akhgar & S Yates (eds), *Strategic Intelligence Management: National Security Imperatives and Information and Communications Technologies*. 1st edn, Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 66-74.

- (14) Pearce, JM, Rubin, GJ, Selke, P, Amlôt, R, Mowbray, F & Rogers, MB 2013, 'Communicating with the Public Following Radiological Terrorism: Results from a Series of Focus Groups and National Surveys in Britain and Germany', *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 110-119. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049023X12001756>
- (15) Rogers, MB & Pearce, JM 2013, Chapter 6 - Risk communication, risk perception and behavior as foundations of effective national security practices. in B Akjgar & S Yates (eds), *Strategic Intelligence Management: National Security Imperatives and Information and Communications Technologies*. Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 66-74.
- (16) Pearce, JM, Rubin, GJ, Amlôt, R, Wessely, S & Rogers, MB 2013, 'Communicating Public Health Advice After a Chemical Spill: Results From National Surveys in the United Kingdom and Poland', *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 65-74. <https://doi.org/10.1001/dmp.2012.56>

2: List of groups I participated in and the relevant time period:

- 2.1. I participated in three SAGE Ethnicity Sub-group meetings, which took place on 21 August 2020, 15 September 2020 and 22 September 2020 and co-authored one report as described at paragraphs 3.3 to 3.9.

3: Overview of involvement in groups between January 2020 and February 2022:

- 3.1. I was first contacted by Dr Carrie Heitmeyer from the Government Office for Science (GO-S) on 13 August 2020 to ask whether I might consider becoming a participant in a new sub-group of SAGE related to BAME groups. The Terms of Reference for the group were attached and I was invited to join the first meeting, which took place on Friday 21st August 2020.
- 3.2. Following the meeting the Ethnicity sub-group secretariat sent an email dated 2 September 2020 to confirm the Chairs' intention to establish a smaller core

group of participants to drive forward the work. The core group met on 1 September 2020 and identified two main actions to produce:

- (1) a report on drivers of relatively high prevalence and incidence of Covid-19, and
- (2) a report on impacts to date of public health communications to BAME groups.

- 3.3. I supported Dr Atiya Kamal, the lead author on the second paper as a contributing author, as this review fell squarely within my area of expertise.
- 3.4. The draft report dated 14 September 2020 was shared by the SAGE secretariat to all Ethnicity sub-group participants for discussion at the next sub-group meeting on 15 September 2020.
- 3.5. The Ethnicity sub-group participants provided feedback on the draft during the meeting and were also asked to provide any additional comments by 16 September 2020 to enable revised drafts to be reviewed over the weekend.
- 3.6. Final drafts of the report were circulated on 21 September 2020 ahead of the last Ethnicity sub-group meeting that I attended on 22 September 2020. The paper was endorsed by the Ethnicity sub-group at this meeting for submission to SAGE. It was also reviewed by SPI-B on 22 September 2020.
- 3.7. Dr Atiya Kamal presented the report to SAGE on 24 September 2020.
- 3.8. The final draft of the report was signed off by Professor Kamlesh Khunti, the Ethnicity sub-group Co-Chair on 30 September 2020 and circulated to key stakeholders across government, including ministerial offices.
- 3.9. I continued to receive meeting notes but did not participate in any further meetings of the Ethnicity sub-group.

4: Summary of documents to which I contributed for the purposes of advising the Ethnicity sub-group:

- 4.1. As detailed at paragraphs 3.3 to 3.9 I was a contributing author on a report '*Evidence Summary of impacts to date on public health communications to minority ethnic groups and related challenges*', 23 September 2020.

- 4.2. This report presents an evidence summary of the impact of tailored public health communication during pandemics and for infectious disease outbreaks more generally. It was published on the gov.uk website on 23 October 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-summary-of-impacts-to-date-of-public-health-communications-to-minority-ethnic-groups-and-related-challenges-23-september-2020>).

5: Summary of articles, interviews and/or evidence:

- 5.1. I have not written any articles or given any interviews regarding the work of the Ethnicity Sub-group.
- 5.2. However, I have commented more generally on the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in an article published by The Conversation on 15 May 2020 (<https://theconversation.com/feeling-alert-where-the-uk-governments-new-coronavirus-campaign-went-wrong-138572>).
- 5.3. The article considered the impact of the change in messaging from 'Stay home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives' to 'Stay alert, Control the virus, Save lives'. It should be noted that I did not write the headline.
- 5.4. I also commented on the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic as a contributor to the BBC Radio 4 programme, *Led by the Science* (available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000lmg6>) and as a panellist at The Royal Institution event '*How Well Has the Science of the Pandemic Been Presented*' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ypTqy1AIWs>).
- 5.5. In *Led by the Science* I briefly highlighted challenges associated with the idea of being led by 'the' science during a situation of uncertainty when there was no single scientific consensus. I also discussed trust in the government response and the impact of changes in messaging and different regional approaches. As a panellist on '*How Well Has the Science of the Pandemic Been Presented*', I commented on the release of SAGE meeting minutes and supporting documents into the public domain in relation to building trust and providing an important public record of events. I also commented that the extent to which it is readily available and/or intelligible to wider audiences is debatable

and the extent to which advice has been factored into decisions taken by the government has not always been so clear.

6: Views as to whether the work of the Ethnicity sub-group in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic succeeded in its aims.

- 6.1. As I have already highlighted, I provided a focused and limited contribution to the advice that fed into SAGE from the Ethnicity sub-group in my role as co-author on an evidence summary report on the impact of tailoring public health communications for minority ethnic groups.
- 6.2. My experience of working on this report was a positive one. I worked very closely with Dr Atiya Kamal to quickly synthesise the available and emerging evidence base, and input from other colleagues on the Ethnicity sub-group and feedback from SPI-B was extremely helpful to us in finalising the report.
- 6.3. I found the discussions in Ethnicity sub-group meetings to be frank but collegiate and the breadth and depth of knowledge within the group provided incredibly useful challenge.
- 6.4. The SAGE secretariat provided excellent administrative support and the primary challenge we faced related to the need to deliver accurate evidence at pace. It would have been helpful to have received data from government communication teams more quickly, but I appreciate that they were also under tremendous time pressure.
- 6.5. The terms of reference for Ethnicity sub-group were reasonable and expected given the nature of the work being undertaken.
- 6.6. I did not know Dr Atiya Kamal prior to meeting her on the Ethnicity sub-group but having worked together so effectively to deliver the report, I invited her to partner on project that was designed to address some of the evidence gaps we identified (see paragraph 1.6).

7: Lessons that can be learned

- 7.1. Based on my experience of contributing to the SAGE Ethnicity sub-group, I believe that setting up focused groups to input specific subject-matter expertise

into the UK response to COVID-19 was an effective approach that should be replicated for future events.

- 7.2. As described above, academic colleagues worked together very effectively within extremely challenging circumstances and unquestionably there was a collective desire to maximise the effectiveness of the UK's response to the COVID-19 pandemic which allowed participants to shift gears to provide a high-quality response to requested information at extremely short notice. The civil service structures that were put in place to support the group were extremely helpful and I have no concerns about the way that the Ethnicity sub-group was run.
- 7.3. I cannot speak directly to the composition of the sub-group or how decisions were taken regarding who should be invited to participate, but I think it could potentially be helpful for the future to consider mechanisms, such as an open call for contributions to maximise the range of available expertise. That said, I have no concerns regarding the quality or relevance of the expertise that was drawn upon by the sub-group, and I recognise given time constraints the value of identifying and directly approaching experts working within the field given that our research and qualifications are readily accessible in the public domain.

8: Documents that I hold

I hold email correspondence relating to my participation in the Ethnicity sub-group and my notes/drafts for the report I co-authored.