



solicitors Mailbox &lt;solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk&gt;

## Re: Covid-19 Public Inquiry - Letter requesting information - Dr Sam Clifford

1 message

**Samuel Clifford** <Sam.Clifford@Irrelevant &  
To: solicitors Mailbox <solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk>

27 September 2022 at 10:30

Good morning,

Please find my response to the questionnaire below. I have also attached a list of submissions made to SPI-M-O where I'm named as an author.

1. I hold a PhD (conferred 2013) and Bachelor of Science (Honours, 2A, conferred 2009) in Mathematics from the Queensland University of Technology, Australia. My undergraduate and Honours studies included mathematical modelling of infectious diseases, fluid dynamics, Bayesian statistics, and computational mathematics. My PhD and early postdoctoral work was on spatio-temporal modelling of air pollution and its health impacts. Later postdoctoral work was on environmental conservation and intra-host modelling of dengue. I consider my expertise to be mathematical and statistical modelling of environmental and public health problems.

In 2018 I moved to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to take up a postdoctoral fellowship where I worked on pre-vaccination screening for dengue, spatio-temporal modelling of carriage of *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, assisting the WHO with data preparation for the North Kivu Ebola outbreak, and, later, the LSHTM response to COVID-19. I have also collaborated with colleagues in my role as a statistical modeller to assist with work on attitudes towards Ebola vaccination and maternal colonisation of Group B *Streptococcus*. In 2021 I was promoted to Assistant Professor at LSHTM.

My teaching has focussed on project-based learning for developing statistical skills in first year BSc students at QUT and in MSc Health Data Science students at LSHTM.

My major publications have been on traveller screening during the COVID pandemic, systematic reviews of sources of indoor air pollution, children's exposure to air pollution (and its health impact), and spatio-temporal modelling of outdoor air pollution. A full list of publications is available on [Google Scholar](#).

2. My involvement has only been through SPI-M, which I first joined on 2020-08-19. I was kept informed of the goings on of SPI-M, though rarely attended meetings, until its suspension in March 2022.
3. I attended SPI-M meetings on 2020-08-19, 2020-08-26. I was initially asked by John Edmunds to present work on travel screening that I had done with Billy Quilty and others at LSHTM (Quarantine and testing strategies in contact tracing for SARS-CoV-2, submitted to the SPI-M Secretariat 2020-08-14), which I believe was forwarded by the SPI-M Secretariat to a SAGE subgroup on 2020-08-24. I discussed the other papers presented at this time, including one on attendance at sporting events. I contributed to written comments on a piece of modelling conducted by DfT (request for comment on 2021-12-03, sent 2021-12-10). Work I had authored on quarantine and testing had been sent to the SPI-M Secretariat by Billy Quilty on 2020-11-03 (Repeated mass testing with rapid antigen tests can effectively reduce SARS-CoV-2 transmission in defined populations), 2021-11-06 (Quarantine and testing strategies to reduce transmission risk from imported SARS-CoV-2 infections: a global modelling study, published soon after as a [preprint](#) also [here](#)). The SPI-M Secretariat forwarded this work on to SAGE. I am listed as an author of work

considered by SAGE, namely [on estimating cases from recent deaths](#). I contacted the SPI-M Secretariat on 2021-07-28 regarding some work I was doing with colleagues on household transmission (that I had spoken to Graeme Medley about) but this work did not make it to SPI-M. Through the CMMID COVID-19 Working Group (formerly nCoV-2019 working group) I am listed as a group author on a number of other documents published by the group, or submitted to SPI-M/SAGE, though may not have contributed directly to all of them.

4. In addition to the work mentioned above, I contributed to a handful of written reports that summarised the modelling that I was doing on traveller screening, and evaluating the use of PCR and LFT testing as a way of reducing the quarantine/isolation time of either travellers or contacts of known cases.

- a. <https://cmmid.github.io/topics/covid19/quar-test-importation-risk.html>
- b. [https://cmmid.github.io/topics/covid19/lft\\_confirm\\_testing\\_schools.html](https://cmmid.github.io/topics/covid19/lft_confirm_testing_schools.html)
- c. <https://cmmid.github.io/topics/covid19/pcr-entry-screening.html>

5. I have never given evidence at an inquiry, written an article, or given an interview about my involvement in SPI-M, the work of SAGE or its constituent committees. . To my knowledge the only other publications I have made specifically about the UK government's response have been Twitter posts discussing transport policy responses to the pandemic, e.g. the bailout of TfL, the rollout of LTNs, and other active travel and public transport schemes.

6. Overall I'm satisfied with the work of SAGE and SPI-M, though I would have liked to see more coordination between SPI-M and SPI-B, as adherence to lockdown measures was one of the modelling considerations that was most difficult to quantify and incorporate into our models. The mood within the LSHTM team was certainly one of altruism and wanting to do the right thing to help protect the lives of people within the UK as well as provide scientific guidance through both traditional and new channels (advising government, academic publication, social media); contributing to SPI-M and SAGE was viewed in a very positive light as an important way to contribute to public health.

Regarding support, there are multiple levels between the Minister and the individual researchers (through SAGE, SPI-M, PIs, institutions, funding agencies, grant managers etc.) and a lot of work was done by junior researchers without formal mechanisms in place to ensure that their time spent on COVID work was properly funded. Luckily a number of us had supportive line managers and understanding funding bodies, but it's unsustainable in the long term to assume that there will always be research assistants, PhD students and postdocs to pick up commissioned work without their funding (and, for those of us who do not have ILR or citizenship, visas) being extended.

7. As I mentioned above, there needs to be better processes around compensation of researchers for their time spent on commissioned work.

8. I have been the recipient of an email from LSHTM and the SPI-M Secretariat about the existence of the inquiry and what support can and cannot be provided. CMMID has a workplace Slack with a channel dedicated to discussing the existence of the inquiry and avenues for support.

Thanks,

Sam

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**From:** NR [redacted]@covid19.public-inquiry.uk <victoria.o'brien@covid19.public-inquiry.uk> on behalf of solicitors Mailbox <solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk>  
**Sent:** Friday, 2 September 2022 3:55 PM  
**To:** Samuel Clifford <Sam.Clifford@irrelevant.co.uk>  
**Cc:** solicitors Mailbox <solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk>  
**Subject:** Covid-19 Public Inquiry - Letter requesting information - Dr Sam Clifford

\*\*\* This message originated outside LSHTM \*\*\*

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Dear Dr Clifford

Please find

**attached**

a letter sent on behalf of Lady Hallett, Chair to the Covid-19 Public Inquiry. The letter provides details on how to reply and should you have any questions about the contents of the letter please do not hesitate to reply to this email and one of the team will be in touch with you.

Kind regards

The Solicitors Team



[solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk)



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