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## Request reference M2/SAGE/01/GMT

Melendez-Torres, G.J. <G.J.Melendez-**Irrelevant & Sensitive**>  
 To: solicitors Mailbox <solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk>

9 October 2022 at 15:54

Dear Mr Suter

I am writing to provide a response to your request for information. I regret the delay in replying.

1. I attach a brief CV in this regard. My major areas of expertise are clinical and social epidemiology (including medical statistics, but not infectious disease modelling), child and adolescent health (including health in schools), and intimate partner violence. I also have professional experience in residential life in higher education contexts.

2. I was a participant in SPI-B, Children's Task and Finish Group, and the Higher Education/Further Education working group. My participation in SPI-B commenced around April 2020 and continued until its last regular meetings; similarly, I joined the two working groups around the time of their commencement and continued until what I understood to be their last regular, 'plenary' meetings.

3. I came to be a participant in SPI-B via request from the Cabinet Office, on referral from Prof Chris Bonell. My role primarily related to providing input and analysis on social epidemiological aspects of COVID-19 interventions (e.g. health inequalities in test, trace and isolate; targeted lockdowns); on children, schools and health (e.g. early discussions relating to school reopening); and most recently on safe reopening of higher education. I am afraid I do not have a count of all the meetings attended, as they were extensive and diverse particularly in the period from Apr 2020-Oct 2021. However, as I have described, my role was as an attendee.

4. My principal contributions related to the following topics. I regret I do not have links for all of these papers.

- a. Behavioural and health inequalities aspects of test, trace and isolate;
- b. Behavioural and health inequalities aspects of contact tracing more broadly;
- c. School reopening policies;
- d. Health inequalities issues with respect to housing and COVID-19;
- e. Co-production in lockdown contexts;
- f. Transmission in children;
- g. Testing and quarantine policies in higher education contexts.

5. The following papers were published informed, in part, by the work of SPI-B and Children's Task and Finish Group:

- a. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2771181>
- b. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829220308807>
- c. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0163445321006332>
- d. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0241473>
- e. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0141076820956824>

6. It is my view that all groups were highly diverse in perspective, and drew on a range of disciplinary orientations to provide a well-rounded point of view on issues presented. The groups succeeded in their aims, with attendees often working inordinate and unsociable hours to deliver policy advice on rapid timescales. Groups were commissioned to work on relevant issues via a combination of volunteering and direct request, with individual colleagues generally adhering to areas where their specialist input was of relevance. Groups were not 'echo chambers' with a singular perspective, but worked harmoniously, largely due to efficient and effective chairing. Civil service support for the groups was also consistently efficient and effective, supporting rapid turnaround of advice.

7. Despite the considerable personal gusto that individual attendees brought to SPI-B, it was often challenging to undertake this work with little release from daily work duties. While it is acknowledged that SAGE and its concomitant subgroups were not 'designed' to run for the duration that they did, it was challenging to continue the hectic pace for almost a year's time. A related challenge was the sudden 'outing' of the membership of SAGE and its subgroups. For more than a few of us, this brought waves of unpleasant contact from members of the public.

8. Almost all work was undertaken via virtual SharePoint, so the majority of the materials I hold are emails relating to the work of SPI-B.

With best wishes

Prof G.J. Melendez-Torres DPhil MPH RN SFHEA FFPH FAAN  
Professor of Clinical and Social Epidemiology

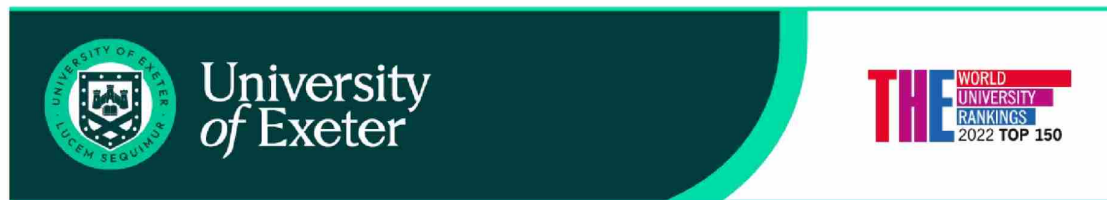
Director, Peninsula Technology Assessment Group

Director, School for Public Health Environments Research at Exeter (NIHR School for Public Health Research)

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

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From: **Name Redacted** <[\[redacted\]@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:[redacted]@covid19.public-inquiry.uk)> <[victoria.o'brien@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:victoria.o'brien@covid19.public-inquiry.uk)> On Behalf Of solicitors Mailbox

Sent: 29 September 2022 09:47

To: Melendez-Torres, G.J. <[G.J.Melendez-Torres@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:G.J.Melendez-Torres@exeter.ac.uk)> Irrelevant & [redacted]

**Cc:** solicitors Mailbox <[solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk)>

**Subject:** Fwd: Covid-19 Public Inquiry - Letter requesting information - Professor G.J. Melendez-Torres

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Dear Professor Melendez-Torres

We refer to our email below, attaching a request for information from Lady Hallett, Chair to the Covid-19 Public Inquiry UK. We are still keen to hear from you in response to our queries. We would be grateful if you could consider our request and provide a response by no later than 13 October 2022. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there are any matters it would be helpful to clarify. Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Kind regards

The Inquiry Team



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

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **solicitors Mailbox** <[solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk)>

Date: Fri, 2 Sept 2022 at 15:35

Subject: Covid-19 Public Inquiry - Letter requesting information - Professor G.J. Melendez-Torres

To: <[G.J.Melendez-Torres@Irrelevant](mailto:G.J.Melendez-Torres@Irrelevant)>

Cc: solicitors Mailbox <[solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:solicitors@covid19.public-inquiry.uk)>

Dear Professor Melendez-Torres

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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