

UK COVID-19 Inquiry: Module 2B - Rule 9 Request to Andrew Jones
Reference: M2B/AJ/01

Response to Questionnaire: Andrew Philip Jones (Public Health Wales)

Please provide the following information:

1. A brief overview of your qualifications, career history, professional expertise and major publications.

Qualifications:

- BSc (Hons) Environmental Health
- Masters in Public Health
- Registration (and revalidation) with UK Public Health Register as a 'generalist specialist'
- Fellow of Faculty of Public Health

Career History

My current role and job title is:

Deputy Director of Health Protection and Screening Services, Public Health Wales January 2020 to May 2022

Between these dates, I held the following posts with Public Health Wales (PHW):

- 1 August 2016 to 30 November 2020 – Deputy Director of Public Health Services/ Director of Integrated Health Protection. NB During this time, PHW implemented an organisational wide Covid-19 response, with revised management and governance arrangements. I was deployed into various roles within this structure including a liaison role with Welsh Government.
- 1 December 2020 – 31 May 2021 – Interim Executive Director of Public Health Services (Interim Strategic Director PHW Covid-19 response) • 1 June 2021 – May 2022 – Deputy Director of Health Protection and Screening Services.

I initially qualified and worked in environmental health. In 2003, I achieved registration with the UK Public Health Register and was employed by the National Public Health Service for Wales as a consultant in public health. I have subsequently held the positions of:

- October 2003 – July 2007: Consultant in Public Health, National Public Health Service for Wales

- July 2007 – March 2010: Regional Director of Public Health/ Director of Health Improvement, National Public Health Service for Wales
- March 2010 – July 2016: Executive Director of Public Health, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

1

Professional Expertise: Consultant in public health with general skills in the domains of health protection; health improvement and health care public health

2. A list of the groups (i.e., TAG and/or any of its subgroups) in which you have been a participant, and the relevant time periods. Please also confirm if you are or have been a participant in SAGE or other relevant groups.

- TAG/TAC: 4 March 2020 – 28 October 2020
- TAG/TAC Education subgroup
- SAGE: Personally received SAGE emails from: SAGE 11 (28 Feb 2020) to SAGE 34 (7 May 2020)

3. An overview of your involvement with those groups between January 2020 and May 2022, including: a. When and how you came to be a participant; b. The number of meetings you attended, and your contributions to those meetings; and c. Your role in providing research, information and advice.

a) When and how you became a participant

- TAG (TAC)

At the end of January 2020, Public Health Wales implemented its organisational response to the emerging threat of Covid- 19. This included implementing an approach using the escalation levels of the organisations Emergency Plan. In this context, I was deployed from my substantive role to support the Executive Director of Public Health Services (Strategic Director Covid-19 response.) I was allocated an initial role of liaising with senior officials in the Health and Social Care division of Welsh Government and other key partner agencies. This included the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Advisor. My role involved attending meetings and communicating information between Public Health Wales Incident Management team and Welsh Government divisions.

In this context, I engaged with the Chief Scientific Officer at Welsh Government during the initial establishment of engagement with SAGE and establishment of the / Technical Advisory Group (TAG) / Technical Advisory Cell (TAC) in Wales. Terms of Reference of TAG/TAC are available from Welsh Government upon request.

My role included identifying colleagues from PHW, who were subject matter experts, to engage with the Chief Scientific Adviser in relation to SAGE and TAC.

My first invitation to a TAC meeting was on Monday 2 March 2020. In the early meetings my role included ensuring that the Public Health Wales IMT was aware of

the main issues being discussed at SAGE and TAC (for example the Reasonable Worst Case Scenario projections) and for supporting PHW Incident Management Team (IMT), subject matter experts and partners to engage and respond.

I was not a named member of TAG/TAC see [Membership: Technical Advisory Cell | GOV.WALES](#)

2

However, in my liaison role, I was in receipt of emails from the Chief Scientific Advisor, and emails/information from Welsh Government TAC secretariat. This included having access to a secure shared folder of information used to support TAC (Objective Connect) which was established on 2 March 2020.

I received emails containing diary invitations, agenda and other information from HSSG.TAC@gov.wales between (4 March 2020 to 14 September 2020). I also received emails direct from a TAC co-ordinator: Name Redacted @wales.gov between (19 March 2020– 28 October 2020).

- TAC Education subgroup

On 15 May 2020, I was approached by the TAC secretariat and asked to approve my name being made public as part of a TAC Education subgroup. I was initially named on this new group to ensure that PHW had a contact point. I advised that I had not yet attended any meetings and there were other conversations taking place with education colleagues. I acknowledged that PHW had membership of the subgroup and I advised TAC secretariat that I would be passing this to a subject matter expert, to ensure a single PHW point of contact. I therefore did not attend any meetings of this subgroup.

- SAGE

In engaging with the Chief Scientific adviser, I was initially identified as a representative of PHW to be included in the SAGE distribution list for papers. I was not an invited or contributing attendee at SAGE. Once colleagues had been identified, I facilitated the PHW subject matter experts to undertake an observer role at SAGE e.g. attending meetings via telephone as observers.

However, in my role, I received emails from sage@go-science.gov.uk, containing an agenda and papers for meetings. I received these emails from: SAGE 11 (28 February 2020) to SAGE 34 (7 May 2020).

NB On the establishment of TAC on 2 March 2020, SAGE papers were stored on a secure sharepoint site (Objective Connect) [Objective Connect](#), to which all TAC members were given access to view.

I was not an invited attendee for SAGE meetings and with the agreement of the Chief Scientific Adviser, I was removed from the SAGE circulation list for papers on the 10 May 2020.

b) *The number of meetings you attended, and your contributions to those*

meetings:

TAG/TAC

I was not a contributing attendee to TAG/TAC. However, in my liaison role, I attended some TAC meetings in the early stages of the response, as an observer. Dates when I attended and recorded in my personal notes include:

2 March 2020; 23 March 2020, 2 April 2020; 8 April 2020; 10 April 2020; 6 May 2020; 11 May 2020

3

SAGE

I was not an invited or contributing attendee at SAGE.

c. Your role in providing research, information and advice.

TAG/TAC

I was not a contributing attendee on TAG/TAC e.g., as a subject matter expert and did not have a specific role in providing research, information or advice. In my liaison role, on some occasions, I shared information with the TAC co-ordinator and Chief Scientific Adviser to facilitate joint working with PHW.

SAGE

I was not an invited or contributing member of SAGE and had no role in providing research, information or advice.

4. A summary of any documents to which you contributed for the purpose of advising TAG and/or its related subgroups on the Covid-19 pandemic. Please include links to those documents where publicly available.

I was not a contributing attendee of TAG or its related subgroups. In my liaison role, on some occasions, I shared information with the TAC co-ordinator and Chief Scientific Adviser, to facilitate joint working with Public Health Wales.

5. A summary of any articles you have written, interviews and/or evidence you have given regarding the work of the above-mentioned groups and/or the Welsh Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please include links to those documents where publicly available.

TAG/TAC

I have not written any specific articles or given interviews or evidence in relation to the work of TAG/TAC.

SAGE

I have not written any specific articles or given interviews or evidence in relation to the work of SAGE.

6. Your views as to whether the work of the above-mentioned groups in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic (or Wales's response more generally) succeeded in its aims. This may include, but is not limited to, your views on:

a) The composition of the groups and/or their diversity of expertise

Public Health Wales was invited to and provided a number of subject matter experts to support TAG/TAC and its subgroups. The PHW representation of TAG/TAC, covered the relevant areas of Health Protection response, epidemiology and surveillance, microbiology/ virology (including testing and whole genome sequencing), health improvement and behavioural science.

4

b) The way in which the groups were commissioned to work on the relevant issues

From my limited attendance at TAG/TAC and my support of PHW subject matter experts, I observed that commissioning of work of TAG/TAC was effective, noting that turnaround times for submission of information were often short.

c) The resources and support that were available

PHW subject matter experts were adequately supported by the organisation to attend TAG/TAC.

d) The advice given and/or recommendations that were made

As I am not a contributing member of TAG/TAC or SAGE, I do not feel able to answer this question

e) The extent to which the groups worked effectively together

From my limited attendance at TAG/TAC, and my liaison role, I observed that groups appeared to work effectively with each other.

f) The extent to which applicable structures and policies were utilised and/or complied with and their effectiveness.

I am not clear on this question. However, from my limited attendance at TAG/TAC and in my liaison role, I observed that TAG/TAC meetings were structured and subject to processes and procedures for meetings and producing/sharing information.

7. Your views as to any lessons that can be learned from the Welsh Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular relating to the work of the above-mentioned groups. 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.

As I am not a contributing member of TAG/TAC or SAGE, I do not feel able to answer this question.

8. 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.

- *Emails (to/from TAC secretariat, Chief Scientific Adviser Welsh Government and SAGE secretariat)*
- *Links to secure sharepoint sites containing documents and minutes*
- *Personal notebook records*

Dated: 1 March 2023