

# The Guardian



## Who's who on secret scientific group advising UK government?

**Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) is advising cabinet on coronavirus response**

**Revealed: Cummings on secret scientific advisory group**

**Ian Sample** *Science editor*

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On Friday the Guardian revealed the 23 attendees of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage). They comprise 21 scientists and two Downing Street political advisers.

**Sir Patrick Vallance, chief scientific officer**



Photograph: Hannah McKay/Reuters

The government's chief scientific adviser and former president of research and development at GlaxoSmithKline. In the run-up to the EU referendum, he warned that a vote for Brexit would mean uncertainty for future drug development.

### **Prof Chris Whitty, England's chief medical officer**



Photograph: James Veysey/Rex/Shutterstock

A doctor and epidemiologist with an enormous reputation among colleagues. He has devoted much of his career to malaria research in Africa. Previously chief scientific adviser at the Department for International Development and the Department of Health.

### **Prof Jonathan Van-Tam, deputy chief medical officer**



Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

An expert in influenza and respiratory viruses, Van-Tam is a professor of health protection at the University of Nottingham School of Medicine and sat on the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) during the 2009 swine flu pandemic.

**Prof Stephen Powis, national medical director of NHS England**

Photograph: Niklas Halle'n/AFP via Getty Images

A professor of renal medicine at UCL, he was the leading voice calling for former nurses to return to the NHS to help deal with the the epidemic.

**Prof Sharon Peacock, director of the National Infection Service at Public Health England (PHE)**

Photograph: David Bishop/UCL

The professor of public health and microbiology at the University of Cambridge department of medicine told MPs on the science and technology committee in March that antibody testing kits would be available for mass testing within days, but the tests failed quality checks.

**Maria Zambon, director of Reference Microbiology Services at PHE and head of the UK World Health Organization National Influenza Centre**

Zambon is known as a thorough and extremely competent scientist. She is medically qualified and a specialist on RNA viruses, antivirals and vaccines.

**Meera Chand, consultant microbiologist at PHE**

Chand worked on the UK's response to the Ebola epidemic and has expertise in infectious diseases from influenza and diphtheria to scarlet fever and monkeypox.

**Charlotte Watts, chief scientific advisor to the Department for International Development**

Watts is on secondment from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine where she is professor of social and mathematical epidemiology.

**Prof John Aston, Home Office chief scientific advisor**

A specialist in applied statistics, he joined the government in 2017 after stepping down as a trustee of the Alan Turing Institute.

### **Angela McLean, professor of mathematical biology at Oxford University's Department of Zoology**



Photograph: Pippa Fowles/10 Downing Street/AFP via Getty Images

McLean is the government's deputy chief scientific adviser and chief scientist at the Ministry of Defence. She often speaks at the No 10 press conferences and has said that the number of hospital admissions "is not as bad as it could have been" had lockdown not been put in place.

### **Ian Diamond, head of the Government Statistical Service and chief executive of the UK Statistics Authority**

The nation's statistician, Diamond prompted an investigation over a £282,00 payment when he stepped down as principal at the University of Aberdeen.

### **Graham Medley, professor of infectious disease modelling at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**

Medley was one of the first scientists to elaborate on the herd immunity strategy. He told Newsnight he'd like to "put all the more vulnerable people into the north of Scotland ... everybody else into Kent and have a nice, big epidemic in Kent, so that everyone becomes immune".

### **Neil Ferguson, professor at Imperial College London Faculty of Medicine**



Photograph: MarshaJ

Head of the Imperial College modelling team whose work predicted half a million deaths in Britain and is credited with prompting the government to impose the lockdown.



**Prof John Edmunds, specialist in design of control programmes against infectious diseases at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**

A leader in disease modelling and analysis, Edmunds warned that Italy's lockdown might prove unsustainable and has argued against banning exercise outdoors on the grounds that it has a negligible impact on the spread of the disease but benefits for mental health and wellbeing.

**James Rubin, reader in psychology of emerging health risks, Kings College London**

Rubin has studied how people respond to all manner of perceived health risks, from nuclear meltdowns and the Ebola outbreak to mobile phone signals and novichok nerve agents.

**Brooke Rogers, professor of behavioural science and security at Kings College London and chair of the Cabinet Office National Risk Assessment Behavioural Science Advisory Group**

Rogers specialises in threat and risk communication, and is a strong advocate for basing interventions on evidence.

**Peter Horby, former professor of infectious diseases and global health at University of Oxford and chair of the government's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (Nervtag)**

Horby ran Ebola trials in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and is now heading up the major Recovery trial into drugs for coronavirus.

**Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust**

Photograph: James Drew Turner/The Guardian

One of the few members of Sage who has made their membership public. Farrar is a medical researcher and former head of Oxford's clinical research unit in Ho Chi Minh City. He has warned Britain is on course to be among the worst, if not the worst, hit country in Europe.

**Andrew Rambaut, member of the Institute of Evolutionary Biology at Edinburgh University's School of Biological Sciences**

A leading geneticist who specialises in the evolution of emerging human viruses. His recent work showed that the coronavirus may have spread to humans via pangolins but "clearly" wasn't created in a lab or purposefully manipulated.

**Emma Reed, director of emergency response and health protection at the Department of Health and Social Care**

Reed worked on the government's Ebola response and has coordinated programmes to reduce childhood obesity and diabetes.

### **Dr Edward Mullins, clinical advisor to the chief medical officer**

Mullins is a clinical lecturer at Imperial College and an obstetrics and gynaecology registrar at Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea hospital, London. He has previously worked with Dame Sally Davies, England's former chief medical officer.

### **Dominic Cummings, chief adviser to the prime minister**



Photograph: Mark Thomas/Rex/Shutterstock

Former director of the Vote Leave campaign who famously advertised for “weirdos and misfits with odd skills” to advise government.

### **Ben Warner, Downing Street adviser on data science**



Ben Warner Photograph: N & A Unwin/Spiderwoodimages

The Leave campaign's data specialist joined No 10 after running the private election model that predicted the landslide victory for the Tories.

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