



NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 1 - PRACTITIONERS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Introduction

1. In my [Opening Statement](#) on 21 July 2022, I explained that Modules would be announced and opened in sequence, with those wishing to take a formal role in the Inquiry invited to apply to become Core Participants for each module. On the same day, the Inquiry opened Module 1 and invited anyone who wished to be considered as a Core Participant to that Module to submit an application in writing to the Solicitor to the Inquiry by 16 August 2022.
2. The [Provisional Outline of Scope](#) for Module 1 provides that this module will examine the resilience and preparedness of the United Kingdom for a Coronavirus pandemic. Further modules will be announced and opened in due course, to address other aspects of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.
3. On 14 August 2022 the Inquiry received an application from Practitioners in the Public Interest ("PPI") for Core Participant status in Module 1.
4. I made a provisional decision not to designate PPI as a Core Participant in Module 1, thereby declining PPI's application ("the Provisional Decision"), on 7 September 2022. PPI was provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 4pm on 16 September 2022.
5. On 11 September 2022, PPI submitted a renewed application for Core Participant status in Module 1. This notice sets out my determination of PPI's application for Core Participant status in Module 1.



Application

6. Applications for Core Participant status are considered in accordance with Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, which provides:

5.—(1) The chairman may designate a person as a core participant at any time during the course of the inquiry, provided that person consents to being so designated.

(2) In deciding whether to designate a person as a core participant, the chairman must in particular consider whether—

- (a) the person played, or may have played, a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the inquiry relates;*
- (b) the person has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the inquiry relates; or*
- (c) the person may be subject to explicit or significant criticism during the inquiry proceedings or in the report, or in any interim report.*

(3) A person ceases to be a core participant on—

- (a) the date specified by the chairman in writing; or*
- (b) the end of the inquiry.*

7. In accordance with the approach set out in my Opening Statement and the Inquiry's [Core Participant Protocol](#), I have considered whether the application fulfils the requirements set out in Rule 5(2) in relation to the issues set out in the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1.

Summary of Application

8. PPI's original application explains that PPI is a group of individuals with a range of specialisms, backgrounds and experiences. The application states that they have collaborated in different ways in responding to the pandemic to explore what had worked well, in addition to failures of policy.



9. The original application was made on the basis that PPI had a direct and significant role for a number of reasons, including that the group has a unique collective view of the pandemic through its collective team expertise and knowledge that spans academic health and research, public policy (including at government adviser level), leadership of a local authority responsible for public health (Hammersmith and Fulham), leadership of the country's biggest pensioner's organisation, leadership roles in professional bodies including a Royal College, senior clinical and management responsibilities at NHS trusts providing hospital and community service, clinical expertise in NHS primary care, expertise in child health, child and adolescent mental health and disability and trade union experience. The application states that some of the individuals also organised the 'People's Covid Inquiry', which ran from February to June 2021, and received oral evidence from 44 witnesses and collected a further 14 video testimonies. The application further states that PPI has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the Inquiry relates because they have a common interest in the strength and quality of public service including acute health care, primary care, public health and social care, all of which are essential to the Inquiry.
10. The renewed application is made on behalf of 11 of the 12 original members of PPI (the application is not renewed in respect of Tom Griffiths - film maker). The renewed application reiterates that, by virtue of the members' experience and knowledge, PPI has played a significant role and states that, through their collective understanding, they have an important interest in contributing to Module 1 of the Inquiry. The renewed application expands on individual members' relevant experiences, including that several individuals have been involved in NHS emergency planning and responses, including actual responses to influenza H1N1 2009/10, and that their primary care experience covers both the impact of changes of policy over the years and also direct involvement of influenza planning, outbreaks and Covid.



Decision for the Applicant

11. I have considered with great care everything that is said in PPI's renewed application. I have also reminded myself of what was said in the original application to enable me to assess the application for Core Participant status as a whole.
12. It has been helpful to understand more about how PPI considers itself to meet the criteria for designation as a Core Participant status in Module 1. I appreciate the time and care taken in providing the further detail set out in their renewed application. I acknowledge that PPI wishes to contribute to the Inquiry's understanding of the state of preparedness of public services, including health and social care and that it wishes to bring to bear the collective expertise and insight of the 11 individuals it represents as distinct from individual experiences. Such issues can be considered, as necessary, by the Inquiry's independent legal team who will pursue all reasonable lines of inquiry with the investigatory and analytical rigour that a statutory inquiry of this scale and importance demands.
13. Module 1 is primarily concerned with the core systems and structures within the United Kingdom for preparedness and resilience for an event such as the Covid-19 pandemic, and with high-level pandemic resilience, preparedness and planning. It will examine whether the correct structures, bodies, procedures and policies were in place at UK and at regional and national levels and look at their history, development, co-operation, and performance. In terms of inquiring into pandemic planning, this will include examination of the forecasting processes, the lessons learned from past knowledge of actual events and simulated exercises, the degree of readiness preparation and the general resources that were available. The Module is therefore concerned with how the relevant entities prepared and whether they were ready by way of general response.



14. I will of course keep the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1 under review and, as I explained in my Opening Statement, other aspects of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference will be covered in future modules for which Provisional Outlines of Scope will be prepared and published in due course.
15. I also appreciate what is said about the experience of some members of PPI in contemporaneous evidence gathering with respect to the People's Covid Inquiry. I agree that such experience and insight is valuable but I do not agree that it gives PPI a proper claim to participate as a Core Participant. There are a number of ways in which PPI can, if necessary, participate in Module 1 without being a Core Participant. For example, it is not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. PPI may have relevant and helpful information to give in relation to matters being examined in the Inquiry and the Inquiry will be seeking evidence in due course from a large number of individuals, organisations and bodies.
16. For all of those reasons, having considered all of the information provided by PPI in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1, I consider that PPI did not play a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which Module 1 relates, nor does it have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 1 relates. Accordingly, in my discretion, I decline to designate PPI as a Core Participant in Module 1.
17. My decision not to designate PPI as a Core Participant in Module 1 does not preclude it from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. I will consider any future applications PPI may wish to make on their merits at the time they are made.



Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett DBE

Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry

28 September 2022