



NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION

**MODULE 1 - ANNE LONGFIELD CBE, USFORTHEM LIMITED, OASIS CHARITABLE TRUST,
DR ROSIE GRAY AND PROFESSOR HANNAH SMITHSON**

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 16 August 2022 the Inquiry received an application from Anne Longfield CBE, UsForThem Limited, Oasis Charitable Trust, Dr Rosie Gray and Professor Hannah Smithson ("the Applicant Group") for Core Participant status in Module 1.
4. I made a provisional decision not to designate the Applicant Group as a Core Participant in Module 1, thereby declining the application ("the Provisional Decision"), on 7 September 2022. The Applicant Group was provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 4pm on 16 September 2022.
5. The Applicant Group did not renew the application by the prescribed deadline. Accordingly, this Notice sets out my final decision on the application.



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 of Rule 5(2) in relation to the issues set out in the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1.

Summary of Application

8. The application says that the Applicant Group has a collective unique and unparalleled breadth of experience in relation to children and young people. It explains that Anne Longfield CBE held the role of Children's Commissioner for England between 2015-2021 and was responsible for promoting the rights, views and interests of



children in matters which affected them during this period. The application sets out her involvement in relation to the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The application explains that Professor Hannah Smithson is an expert in the fields of youth justice, youth gangs and youth engagement and Dr Rosie Gray is a Registered Forensic Psychologist who specialises in child safeguarding. Both Professor Smithson and Dr Gray have conducted research on the impact of Covid-19 in their fields of expertise. The application further sets out how UsForThem is an organisation of parents with interest covering all aspects of the impact of Covid restrictions upon children, whilst the Oasis Charitable Trust provides national and international community development and education services to children and was active during the pandemic in continuing its work to protect the interests and improve the lives of children. The application sets out the activities of each member of the Applicant Group in detail, both generally and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

9. The application is put on the basis that the Applicant Group has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the Outline of Scope for Module 1 relates for the purposes of satisfying Rule 5(2)(b), specifically how the government's pandemic planning and preparedness related to, considered or impacted children and young people. The application sets out in detail those aspects of the government's preparedness and planning in relation to children and young people which are of particular interest to the Applicant Group.

Decision for the Applicant

10. I acknowledge that many children's and young people's lives were seriously impacted as a result of the UK Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. I wish to repeat my ongoing commitment, as set out in the Terms of Reference and in my Opening Statement, that inequalities will be at the forefront of the Inquiry's investigations. This will include a focus on the disparities evident in the impact of the pandemic on different categories of people.



11. However, having considered with great care everything that is said in the application, I have decided, in my discretion, not to designate the Applicant Group as a Core Participant in Module 1. Whilst I appreciate the important work the Applicant Group is said to have done during the pandemic and the expertise the organisation can offer, the focus of Module 1 is on the resilience and preparedness of the UK in advance of the coronavirus pandemic. I do not consider that the Applicant Group played a direct and significant role in matters to which Module 1 relates nor do I consider that they have a significant interest (of the kind required by the Rules) in the matters under investigation in Module 1.
12. In my Opening Statement, I said that I will publish more information about the issues intended to be covered by later modules in the coming months. The Applicant Group is encouraged to consider making an application for Core Participant status in future modules likely to deal more directly with the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, education and children and young persons.
13. It is also not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. The Applicant Group may have relevant information to give in relation to matters being examined in the Inquiry and the Inquiry will be reaching out in due course to a range of individuals, organisations and bodies to seek information, to gain their perspective on the issues raised in the modules and, where appropriate, to ask for witness statements and documents.
14. The Inquiry will also listen to and consider carefully the experiences of bereaved families and others who have suffered hardship or loss as a result of the pandemic, through the listening exercise. I made clear in my Opening Statement that this listening exercise is a significant and important task which will lead to summary reports of the impact of the pandemic on those who come forward to be used as evidence during the Inquiry's module hearings. The Applicant Group has the opportunity to



contribute to the Inquiry, through the listening exercise if it chooses.

15. For all of those reasons, having considered all of the information provided by the Applicant Group, in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1, I consider that the Applicant Group did not play a direct and significant role in relation to the matters sought to be investigated in Module 1, nor does the Applicant Group have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 1 relates. I have therefore decided that the Applicant Group should not be designated as a Core Participant in Module 1 and I confirm that this is my final decision.
16. I will keep the scope of Module 1 under review. My decision not to designate the Applicant Group as a Core Participant in Module 1 does not preclude the Applicant Group from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. I will consider any future applications the Applicant Group 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

29 September 2022