



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION  
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION  
MODULE 1 - USER VOICE “UV”**

**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 UV (“the Applicant”) for Core Participant status in Module 1.
4. I made a provisional decision not to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 1, thereby declining the application (“the Provisional Decision”), on 7 September 2022. The Applicant was provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 4pm on 16 September 2022.
5. The Applicant 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 is put on the basis that UV is a charity whose focus is on aiding those in the prison and rehabilitation system. The application states that UV would be able to provide the Inquiry with an insight into, amongst other matters: Her Majesty's Prison Service's structures in place as of January 2020 to deal with the pandemic from the perspective of the prisoners and their families; the lack of planning and resources available, within prisons, for the management of prisoners when lockdowns were



announced; the absence of a national plan to coordinate the response to the pandemic; and the impact on prisoners when support services ceased. The application also states that UV would be able to suggest practical planning measures for future pandemics from the perspective of the rehabilitation of prisoners.

### **Decision for the Applicant**

9. I acknowledge the matters which are raised in the application, in particular the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the prior circumstances, which the application describes, on those within the prison and rehabilitation system. I wish to repeat my ongoing commitment, as set out in the Terms of Reference and repeated 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.
  
10. However, having considered with great care everything that is said in the application, I have decided, in my discretion, not to designate UV as a Core Participant in Module 1. Whilst I appreciate the important work UV 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 UV 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.
  
11. 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. UV is encouraged to consider making an application for Core Participant status in a future module more directly concerned with the matters to which the application relates.



12. It is also not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. UV 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.
  
13. 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. UV has the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry, through the listening exercise if it chooses.
  
14. For all of those reasons, having considered all of the information provided by UV, in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1, I consider that UV did not play a direct and significant role in relation to the matters sought to be investigated in Module 1, nor does UV have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 1 relates. I have therefore decided that UV should not be designated as a Core Participant in Module 1 and I confirm that this is my final decision.
  
15. I will keep the scope of Module 1 under review. My decision not to designate UV as a Core Participant in Module 1 does not preclude UV from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. I will consider any future applications UV 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**