



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION  
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION**

**MODULE 1 - NORTHERN IRELAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S ARM'S LENGTH BODIES**

**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 the Northern Ireland Department of Health ("DoH") and its Arm's Length Bodies ("ALBs") ("the Applicant") for Core Participant status in Module 1.
4. I have granted Core Participant status to the DoH in Module 1. However, I made a provisional decision not to designate the ALBs as a Core Participant in Module 1, thereby declining their application ("the Provisional Decision"), on 7 September 2022. The ALBS were provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 4pm on 16 September 2022.
5. The ALBs 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 states that DoH has a statutory responsibility to promote an integrated system of health and social care ("HSC") designed to secure improvement in: the physical and mental health of people in Northern Ireland; the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness; and the social wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland. The DoH holds a key role in the strategic management of emergencies that occur within



Northern Ireland where there is a health or social care aspect to the incident. The DoH is required to lead and coordinate the health response when an emergency has been categorised as serious or catastrophic and requires a cross departmental or cross-governmental response. The sixteen ALBs are the means by which the DoH, in addition to direct departmental action, discharges its duties.

### **Decision for the Applicant**

9. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application on behalf of the ALBs. However, I have decided, in my discretion, not to designate the ALBs as Core Participants in Module 1. The ALBs discharged the duties of the DoH and so may, having regard in particular to the need to manage the Inquiry effectively and efficiently, be represented through the DoH as a Core Participant.
  
10. I will keep the scope of Module 1 under review. My decision not to designate the ALBs as a Core Participant in Module 1 does not preclude them from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. I will consider any future applications the ALBs 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**

**3 October 2022**