



NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 2 – DISABLED PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS

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 31 August 2022, the Inquiry opened Module 2 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 23 September 2022.
2. The Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2 provides that this module will examine the decision-making by the UK Government during the 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 23 September 2022 the Inquiry received an application from the Disabled People's Representative Organisations ('DPOs') for Core Participant status in Module 2.
4. I made a provisional decision not to designate the following Disabled People's Representative Organisations; Disability Positive, Inclusion London, Disability Peterborough, WinVisible, Bristol Reclaiming Independent Living, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, Disabled People Against Cuts, The Alliance for Inclusive Education, Changing Perspectives, Disability Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Wiltshire Centre for Inclusive Living, West England Centre for Inclusive Living, Living Options Devon and Wheels for Wellbeing (The Applicants) as a Core Participant in Module 2, thereby declining the Applicants application ("the Provisional Decision"), on 13 October 2022. The Applicants were provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 12pm on 20 October 2022.

5. The Applicants 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 set out in Rule 5(2) in relation to the issues set out in the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2.
8. I have taken into account all of the information which the Applicant has relied upon. The fact that I have not, in making this determination, referred to every matter which is set out in the application does not mean that I have not considered it. The summary below is intended to capture what appear to be the most important points made in support of the application.

Summary of Application

9. The Applicants describe themselves collectively as Disabled People's Representative Organisations, being organisations run by and for disabled people, representing approximately 250,000 individuals. The term 'disabled people' is used in the applications to refer to people facing societal barriers due to their impairments or conditions (regardless of their age) which includes physical impairments, mental health conditions, hearing impairments, deaf people with BSL as their first language, visual impairments, learning difficulties and neurodiverse people. Some of the Applicants also explain how they supported bereaved families of disabled people who died during the pandemic. An appendix to the submissions helpfully sets out the background and remit of the Applicants.

10. The applications are made on the basis that the Applicants have played a direct and significant role in relation to the matters which will be investigated in Module 2 and that they have a significant interest in the matters which will be investigated in Module 2. The applications also made detailed submissions based on the Inquiry having certain obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, including the duty effectively to investigate issues of discrimination and inequality insofar as they relate to loss of life and significant harm amounting to inhuman and degrading treatment during the pandemic under Articles 2, 3 and 14 of the ECHR, and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Decision for the Applicant

11. I have considered with great care everything that is said in The Applicants application. Having done so, in my discretion, I consider that the Applicants do not meet the criteria set out in Rule 5 for designation as a Core Participant in Module 2 and, therefore, I have decided not to designate the Applicants as a Core Participant in Module 2.

12. For a number of reasons, I consider that Disability Rights UK, Disability Action Northern Ireland, Inclusion Scotland and Disability Wales jointly are well placed to assist the Inquiry as to whether the interests of the disabled and those with pre-existing health inequalities were considered as part of the process of core political and administrative decision-making in response to Covid-19 without considering in detail any individual cases. I consider that they will be able to assist me on this issue.

Set against this, I do not consider that the remaining 14 Disabled People's Representative Organisations are sufficiently representative to meet those aims bearing in mind the aforementioned considerations.

13. Furthermore, I do not consider, in any event, having regard in particular to the need to manage the Inquiry effectively and efficiently, that the remaining 14 Disabled People's Representative Organisations (the Applicants) interest in decision making by the UK Government is sufficiently significant as to grant it Core Participant status in this Module. I am determined to run the Inquiry as thoroughly and as efficiently as possible, bearing in mind the Inquiry's wide-ranging terms of reference and the need for the Inquiry process to be rigorous and fair. Given the vast numbers of people who were involved with, or adversely affected by, the Covid-19 pandemic, very many people in this country could potentially have an interest in it and not everyone can be granted Core Participant status for the purposes of the Inquiry hearings.
14. 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 may wish to consider applying for Core Participant status in relation to future modules which are of relevance to them.
15. It is also not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. The Applicants 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.
16. For all of those reasons, having considered all of the information provided by the Applicants, in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2, I consider that the Applicants did not play a direct and significant role in relation to the matters sought to be investigated in Module 2, nor do the Applicants have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 2 relates. I have therefore decided that the Applicants should not be designated as a Core Participant in Module 2 and I confirm that this is my final decision.

17. I will keep the scope of Module 2 under review. My decision not to designate the Applicants as Core Participants in Module 2 does not preclude it from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. The Applicants may wish to consider applying for Core Participant status in relation to future modules likely to deal more directly with the matters which have been referred to in the application. I will consider any future applications the Applicants 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

26 October 2022