



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION**  
**CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION**  
**MODULE 3 - FAMILY OF MARK ANTHONY WOOLCOCK**

**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 8 November 2022, the Inquiry opened Module 3 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 5 December 2022
2. The Inquiry has published the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 3, which states that this Module will consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on healthcare systems in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Further Modules will be announced and opened in due course, to address other aspects of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.
3. On 5 December 2022 the Inquiry received an application on behalf of the family of Mark Anthony Woolcock ("the Applicants") for Core Participant status in Module 3.
4. I made a provisional decision dated 6 January 2023 not to designate the family of Mark Anthony Woolcock as a Core Participant in Module 3, thereby declining the Applicants' application ("the Provisional Decision"). The Applicants were provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 4pm on 13 January 2023.
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 3.

### **Summary of Application**

8. The Applicants are the family of Mark Anthony Woolcock, a 59 year old man of Afro-Caribbean descent, who was an ambulance care assistant in Non-Emergency Transport Services and who died on 20 April 2020 from Covid-19. The application states that there is evidence which suggests that Mr Woolcock came into contact with patients either suspected of having or who later tested positive for Covid-19. The application sets out the circumstances in which it is believed Mr Woolcock contracted Covid-19 and the investigations that followed his death including a Health and Safety Executive investigation and an Article 2 European Convention on Human Rights inquest. The Applicants are said to have a significant interest as required by Rule 5(2)(b) in many of the issues that the Inquiry wishes to explore as part of Module 3

including experiences of healthcare, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on healthcare staff and communication with patients and their loved ones.

### **Decision for the Applicant**

9. I wish to extend my deep sympathy to the Applicants regarding the death of Mr Woolcock. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. However, having done so, I have decided to decline to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 3, for the reasons set out below.
10. Module 3 will consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on healthcare systems in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This will include consideration of the healthcare consequences of how the governments and the public responded to the pandemic. It will examine the capacity of healthcare systems to respond to a pandemic and how this evolved during the pandemic. It will consider the primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare sectors and services and people's experience of healthcare during the pandemic, including through illustrative accounts. It will also examine healthcare-related inequalities (such as in relation to death rates, PPE and oximeters), with further detailed consideration in a separate designated Module.
11. The application is put on the basis that the Applicants have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 3 relates (Rule 5(2)(b)).
12. I consider that the Applicants have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 3 relates (Rule 5(2)(b)), as a result of Mr Woolcock's death. The Applicants apply as an individual family. It is not the purpose of the Inquiry, including Module 3, to explore individual deaths. While I am bound to consider the factors set out in Rule 5(2), it is also open to me to take into account other relevant factors. I am not obliged to designate any particular person or organisation as a Core Participant. I recognise the disappointment that my decision will cause.
13. 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 pandemic, very many people in the UK could

potentially have an interest in the Inquiry. I have granted Core Participant status in Module 3 to a number of organised groups representing the interests of large numbers of bereaved family members of people who have died from Covid-19. I consider that the designation of these organised groups sufficiently represents the collective interests of a broad spectrum of those bereaved by Covid-19, having regard in particular to the need to manage the Inquiry effectively and efficiently.

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 Applicants may wish to consider applying for Core Participant status in relation to future Modules which are of relevance to them. I will consider any future applications the family of Mr Woolcock may wish to make on their merits at the time they are made.
15. 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 Applicants will have the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry, through the listening exercise if they choose.
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 3, I have decided that the Applicants should not be designated as a Core Participant in Module 3 and I confirm that this is my final decision.

**Rt Hon Baroness (Heather) Hallett DBE**

**Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry**

**14 February 2023**