



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 1 - MAGPIE PROJECT**

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 Magpie Project ("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. Magpie Project is a registered charity providing a safe place for mothers and children under 5, suffering in temporary or insecure accommodation. The majority of the mothers which Magpie Project supports have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRTF) and are destitute. They are overwhelmingly from BAME communities.

9. The application is made on the basis that Magpie Project played a direct and



significant role as they supported and represented the interests of families in Newham in temporary or insecure accommodation throughout the pandemic through front-line and advocacy work. Magpie Project also asserts a significant interest in the matters to be considered in Module 1, namely that those living in temporary accommodation experienced some of the worst consequences of Covid-19 as a direct result of their accommodation. Magpie Project wishes to ensure that the perspective of those they represent is addressed by the Inquiry, with the view to improving outcomes in the event of a further pandemic or national emergency.

Decision for the Applicant

10. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. I acknowledge that people living in temporary and insecure accommodation were seriously impacted by the pandemic as a result of their housing arrangements. 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 Magpie Project as a Core Participant in Module 1. Whilst I appreciate the important work Magpie Project 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 Magpie Project 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. Magpie Project is encouraged to consider making an application for Core Participant status in future modules dealing more directly with the impact of Covid-19 on health inequality and housing.

13. It is also not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. Magpie Project 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. Magpie Project 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 Magpie Project, in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1, I consider that Magpie Project did not play a direct and significant role in relation to the matters sought to be investigated in Module 1, nor does Magpie Project have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 1 relates. I have therefore decided that Magpie Project 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 Magpie Project as a Core Participant in Module 1 does not preclude Magpie Project from



making any further applications in respect of any later modules. I will consider any future applications Magpie Project 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