



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION  
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION  
MODULE 3 - COVID AID**

**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 2 December 2022 the Inquiry received an application from Covid Aid ("the Applicant") for Core Participant status in Module 3.
4. I made a provisional decision dated 11 January 2023 not to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 3, thereby declining the application ("the Provisional Decision"). The Applicant was provided with an opportunity to renew the application for Core Participant status in Module 3 in writing by 4pm on 18 January 2023.
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 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 application states that the Applicant launched in 2021 and is the UK's leading Covid-19 charity, having supported and provided a voice to more than 225,000 people across the country affected by long Covid, grief and bereavement, pandemic-related trauma and other life-changing issues. The application describes how the Applicant has designed its "Support Community" as a fully inclusive space to service the needs of all who have suffered, with a focus on those affected by long Covid and those who have lost a loved one to Covid-19. The Support Community is described as having more than 1,200 members. The application explains how the Applicant provides dedicated one-to-one listening support, professional counselling, self-management courses, expert Q&As, tailored peer groups, resources packs, advice and information articles, among other services.

9. The application is made on the basis that members of the Applicant, and those whom the Applicant has supported and represents, have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the Inquiry relates. The Applicant contends that "as the only charity representing every person who has experienced life-changing issues as a result of Covid-19" it represents a diverse group of people including those affected by long Covid, bereavement, trauma, and who work in a variety of professions including the healthcare sector. The Applicant states it would be able to play a positive and collaborative role in ensuring the Inquiry can reach successful outcomes which will be of importance to those whom the Applicant supports. It is also stated that the Applicant has a diverse membership and audience across the four nations, including a substantial majority who have experienced long Covid and/or severe symptoms related to Covid-19 which have required repeated and continued reliance on the healthcare systems across the four nations of the UK.

### **Decision for the Applicant**

10. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. While I recognise the important work the Applicant is said to have done during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the expertise which the organisation can offer, I decline to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 3, for the reasons set out below.
11. 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.
12. The application is put on the basis that the Applicant has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 3 relates (Rule 5(2)(b)).

13. I accept that the Applicant has a significant interest in an important aspect of the Module and thus meets the test in Rule 5(2)(b). Specifically, I accept in this context that there are particular matters in relation to which it may be able to assist the Module. These include (i) the impact of the pandemic on healthcare workers, (ii) providing a perspective from the bereaved and (iii) providing a perspective from those with long Covid. However, while I am bound to consider the factors in Rule 5(2), it is also open to me to take into account other relevant matters. I am not obliged to designate any particular person or organisation as a Core Participant.
14. 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 the UK could potentially have an interest in the Inquiry. Not everyone can be granted Core Participant status for the purposes of the Inquiry.
15. I have granted Core Participant status to a number of organisations able to assist with the impact of the pandemic on healthcare workers, as well as groups supporting the bereaved. I have also granted Core Participant status in Module 3 to a group application from Long Covid Kids, Long Covid Physio, Long Covid SOS and Long Covid Support. I consider that the matters raised in the application are sufficiently addressed through the designation of the aforementioned groups as Core Participants.
16. I wish to extend my deep sympathy to all those represented by the Applicant regarding the deaths of their family members and loved ones, as well as to those who have suffered, and continue to suffer, from adverse health, illness, disability and other matters as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. I repeat my ongoing commitment, as set out in the Terms of Reference and again, 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 including those with pre-existing health conditions and wider inequalities.
17. It is not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. It is likely that the Inquiry will in due course seek

information from a range of individuals, organisations and bodies who may have information relevant to the issues raised in the Modules and, where appropriate, make requests for witness statements and documents. The Inquiry will hear 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. The Applicant may wish to contribute to the work of the Inquiry through this process. 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 to be used as evidence during the Inquiry's Module hearings.

18. For all of those reasons, having considered all of the information provided by the Applicant in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 3, I have decided that the Applicant should not be designated as a Core Participant in Module 3 and I confirm that this is my final decision.
  
19. I will keep the scope of Module 3 under review. My decision not to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 3 does not preclude it from making any further applications in respect of any later Modules. I will consider any future applications the Applicant 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**

**13 February 2023**