



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 3 - COFFEE AFRIK & SAAFI**

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 a joint application on behalf of Coffee Afrik and SAAFI ("the Applicants") for Core Participant status in Module 3.
4. I made a provisional decision dated 13 January 2023 not to designate the Applicants as Core Participants in Module 3, thereby declining the application ("the Provisional Decision"). The Applicants were provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 4pm on 20 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. Coffee Afrik is described as a Somali community-based organisation operating in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham since 2018. SAAFI is described as a community-based organisation in Brent founded and led by British-Somali mothers.
9. The Applicants are said to have provided emotional and mental health support to vulnerable members of their communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. The application states that many members of their communities were key workers working in front line jobs such as carers, bus drivers and cleaners and that some were often “the sole breadwinner for multi-generational homes”. It is said that, as a result, they had disproportionately high death rates. The Applicants give an example of SAAFI having acted as a “safety net” for many of the most vulnerable residents in their

communities. Both Applicants are said to have taken an active role in communicating key healthcare messages to their vulnerable members. They are also said to have taken on the role of explaining the key messages around self-isolation and social distancing, distributed key health messages through leaflets, posters and attendances at local shops, mosques and community centres as well as distributing PPE.

10. The application also identifies numerous issues the Applicants say they can provide evidence on, including communication with patients with Covid-19 and their loved ones about conditions and treatment including DNACPRs, deaths caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and shielding and the impact on the clinically vulnerable.

Decision for the Applicant

11. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the Applicants' application. Having done so, I consider that the Applicants do not meet the criteria set out in Rule 5 for designation as a Core Participant in Module 3 and, therefore, I have decided not to designate the Applicants as a Core Participant in Module 3.
12. 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.
13. While I recognise the important work the Applicants are said to have done during the Covid-19 pandemic and the expertise which the organisations can offer, I do not consider that the Applicants meet the criteria within Rule 5(2)(a) for the purposes of Module 3. The Applicants' work is one step removed from the healthcare system and appears to have been centred around their work in their communities and supporting key workers in general.

14. I also do not consider that the Applicants have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 3 relates for the purposes of Rule 5(2)(b). I recognise that the Applicants have demonstrated an interest in health inequalities, as well as inequality issues generally. However, I do not consider that the issues which are raised within the application are sufficiently connected to the way healthcare systems were organised or functioned during or immediately before the pandemic to meet the criteria in Rule 5(2)(b) for the purposes of Module 3. I wish to reiterate, however, that the points raised are of significant importance to the Inquiry. The Inquiry will address health inequalities in another dedicated module. In the circumstances it will not be practicable to examine these, other than with respect to specific healthcare-related issues, within Module 3. Other public services, including frontline delivery by key workers will also be considered in later modules.
15. Even if this were not the case, in the exercise of my discretion, and having regard in particular to the need to manage the Inquiry efficiently and effectively, I still decline to designate the Applicants as Core Participants in Module 3. 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 hearings. I must therefore assess very carefully whether applicants can assist the Inquiry in the Module to which they have applied.
16. 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 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.
17. The Inquiry will 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. Those individuals whose interests the Applicants' represent have the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry, through the listening exercise if they choose.

18. 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.

19. I will keep the scope of Module 3 under review. My decision not to designate the Applicants as Core Participants in Module 3 does not preclude them from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. 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
14 February 2023