



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 1 - BLUE LIGHT SERVICES**

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 13 September 2022 the Inquiry received an application, out of time, from Blue Light Services for Core Participant status in Module 1. This notice sets out my decision on Blue Light Services' application.

Application

4. 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.*

5. 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 1.

Summary of Application

6. The application states that Blue Light Services is a private ambulance service company with over 10 years of experience in the ambulance industry. The application explains that their work includes building emergency and non-emergency vehicles for the healthcare industry and that they provide services to the NHS, private companies and prison services. According to the application, there are only a very small amount of companies that provide this service and Blue Light Services were the only one of these companies that continued to operate nationwide throughout the national lockdown. The application goes on to explain in detail the involvement of Blue Light Services in making adaptations to large numbers of ambulance vehicles in order to reduce the risk and spread of infectious disease, on the instructions of the NHS, as well as raising issues concerning industry capacity to make these adaptations and the impact of this work on their staff.



7. The application is made on the basis that Blue Light Services played a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1 relates, due to the organisation playing a vital role in the preparedness to the pandemic response and their engagement with the authorities at central government level. Specifically, they contend that they are an example of an organisation that proactively fulfilled a role that ought to have been undertaken by the authorities as part of their contingency planning and resilience. For the same reasons, the application also says that Blue Light Services has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 1 relates.

Decision for the Applicant

8. As I have already noted above, the deadline for making applications for Core Participant status in Module 1 was 16 August. This application was therefore made 28 days after the deadline expired. Other than an unparticularised reference to this applicant having “*emerged*”, no explanation has been given as to why this application was made out of time and I can see no good reason for such a significant delay. I would therefore decline Blue Light Services’ application on that basis.
9. In any event, on the basis of the information contained in the application I consider that Blue Light Services did not play a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which Module 1 relates, nor does it have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 1 relates. Therefore, regardless as to the lateness of the application, I do not consider that the application meets the criteria set out in Rule 5 for designation as a Core Participant in Module 1 and I would decline to designate it as a Core Participant in Module 1. Whilst Blue Light Services state that it had a role in assisting the NHS’s response to the pandemic by making adaptations to ambulance vehicles, the focus of Module 1 is the resilience and emergency preparedness of the UK in advance of the coronavirus pandemic.



10. In my Opening Statement I noted that I will publish more information about the issues intended to be covered by later modules in the coming months. Blue Light Services may wish to consider applying for Core Participant status in relation to future modules likely to deal more directly with the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and healthcare systems.

11. It is also not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. Blue Light Services 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.

12. I will keep the scope of Module 1 under review. My decision not to designate Blue Light Services as a Core Participant in Module 1 does not preclude them from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. I will consider any future applications that Blue Light Services 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
28 September 2022