



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 1 - NORTHERN IRELAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ITS ARM'S LENGTH
BODIES**

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. On 16 August 2022 the Inquiry received an application from the Northern Ireland Department of Health (“DoH”) and its Arm’s Length Bodies (“ALBs”) for Core Participant status in Module 1. This Notice sets out my determination of the application.
3. The Inquiry has published the [Provisional Outline of Scope](#) for Module 1, which states 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.

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 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:
- a. DoH has a statutory responsibility to promote an integrated system of health and social care ("HSC") designed to secure improvement in: the physical and mental health of people in Northern Ireland; the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness; and the social wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland. The DoH holds a key role in the strategic management of emergencies that occur within Northern Ireland where there is a health or social care aspect to the incident. The DoH is required to lead and coordinate the health response when an emergency has been categorised as serious or catastrophic and requires a cross departmental or cross-governmental response.



- b. The sixteen ALBs are the means by which the DoH, in addition to direct departmental action, discharges its duties.

Decision for DoH

7. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. Having done so, I have decided, in my discretion, to designate the DoH as a Core Participant in Module 1. I consider that the DoH played, or may have played, a direct and significant role in relation to the UK's resilience and preparedness for the Covid-19 pandemic and that it has a significant interest in Module 1 of the Inquiry.

Provisional Decision for the ALBs

8. I have also considered with great care everything that is said in the application on behalf of the ALBs. However, I am minded, in my discretion, not to designate the ALBs as Core Participants in Module 1. The ALBs discharged the duties of the DoH and so may, having regard in particular to the need to manage the Inquiry effectively and efficiently, be represented through the DoH as a Core Participant.
9. It is not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to contribute to the Inquiry. The Applicant Individuals will all have an opportunity to make important contributions to the Inquiry without being designated as Core Participants in Module 1, both through the listening exercise and the Applicant Group if they choose.
10. As I am minded to decline the application, I will offer the ALBs an opportunity to renew the application. If the applicant wishes to renew the application, they must do so in writing to the Solicitor to the Inquiry by **4pm on Tuesday 13 September 2022**. Renewed applications should not repeat information provided in the original application but should provide any additional information that may assist me in considering the renewed application. I intend to determine any applications on paper



without oral submissions, other than in exceptional circumstances. If the application is not renewed, I will confirm this Provisional Decision has become final.

Legal Representation

11. Applications for designation as the Recognised Legal Representative of a Core Participant are governed by Rules 6 and 7 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, which provide:

6.—(1) Where—

- (a) a core participant, other than a core participant referred to in rule 7; or*
- (b) any other person required or permitted to give evidence or produce documents during the course of the inquiry,*
has appointed a qualified lawyer to act on that person's behalf, the chairman must designate that lawyer as that person's recognised legal representative in respect of the inquiry proceedings.

7.—(1) This rule applies where there are two or more core participants, each of whom seeks to be legally represented, and the chairman considers that—

- (a) their interests in the outcome of the inquiry are similar;*
- (b) the facts they are likely to rely on in the course of the inquiry are similar; and*
- (c) it is fair and proper for them to be jointly represented.*

(2) The chairman must direct that those core participants shall be represented by a single recognised legal representative, and the chairman may designate a qualified lawyer for that purpose.

(3) Subject to paragraph (4), any designation must be agreed by the core participants in question.

(4) If no agreement on a designation is forthcoming within a reasonable period, the chairman may designate an appropriate lawyer who, in his opinion, has sufficient knowledge and experience to act in this capacity.

12. I am satisfied that the Northern Ireland Department of Health has appointed Sara Erwin of the Departmental Solicitor's Office as its qualified lawyer in relation to this Module. I therefore designate Sara Erwin as the Northern Ireland Department of Health's recognised legal representative in accordance with Rule 6(1).]



13. Directions will be given in relation to applications for an award under section 40(1)(b) of the Inquiries Act 2005 of expenses to be incurred in respect of legal representation, at the forthcoming preliminary hearing. I will determine any such applications in accordance with the provisions of section 40 of the Inquiries Act 2005, the Inquiry Rules 2006, the [Prime Minister's determination](#) under section 40(4) and the [Inquiry' Costs Protocol](#).

Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett DBE

Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry

7 September 2022