



NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 6
COVID-19 BEREAVED FAMILIES FOR JUSTICE

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 12 December 2023 the Inquiry opened Module 6 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 19 January 2024.
2. On 19 January 2024 the Inquiry received an application from Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice (“CBFFJ”) (“the Applicant”) for Core Participant status in Module 6. This Notice sets out my determination of the application.
3. The Inquiry has published the [Provisional Outline of Scope](#) for Module 6, which states that this module will examine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the publicly and privately funded adult social care sector (the “Care Sector”) 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.

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 6.

Summary of Application

6. The Applicant is described as a campaign group initially comprising family members bereaved by Covid-19 who met through a Facebook page in about April 2020. The group subsequently formalised into a limited company. The Applicant says it has always been and remains UK-wide. The Facebook group is said to have about 6,600 supporters and 4,416 of those are said to have signed-up as members (including 94 from Northern Ireland, 260 from Scotland, and 210 from Wales).
7. The application is put on the basis that the Applicant has a significant interest in important aspects of the matters to which the Inquiry relates generally and in relation to Module 6 in particular. It is submitted that the Applicant has considerable direct, frontline expertise with regards to the Adult Social Care Sector and a clear and compelling interest in all of the issues raised in the Provisional Outline of Scope. The application sets out that many of the Applicant's members have experienced issues relating to the impact of the pandemic in residential and domiciliary care settings, inadvertent infection by family members working in the Care Sector, discrimination,

concerns regarding a lack of regulatory oversight and candour and deaths and bereavement.

Decision for the Applicant

8. I wish to reiterate my deep sympathy to each and every individual who has experienced the tragic loss of a loved one as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic including those the Applicant represents.
9. 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 Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 6.
10. Module 6 will consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the publicly and privately funded adult Care Sector in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It will consider the impact on people's experience of the Care Sector, the structure of same, the key decisions in respect of the Care Sector and the management of the pandemic in adult care and residential homes, including discharge, IPC, testing, availability of PPE, use of DNACPRs and changes to the regulatory regime.
11. The application is put on the basis that the Applicant has played a direct and significant role in the matters to which Module 6 relates (Rule 5(2)(a)) and that the Applicant has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 6 relates (Rule 5(2)(b)).
12. For a number of reasons I consider that the Applicant is well placed to assist the Inquiry to achieve its aims in Module 6 by representing the collective interests of a broad spectrum of those bereaved in England as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. I consider that the Applicant can, amongst other things, aid the Inquiry in understanding the experiences and perspectives of the bereaved when it considers the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Care Sector in the UK and in particular England, without examining in detail individual cases of harm or death.

Legal Representation

13. 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.

14. I am satisfied that the Applicant has appointed Elkan Abrahamson of Broudie Jackson Canter as its qualified lawyer in relation to this Module. I therefore designate Elkan Abrahamson as the Applicant's recognised legal representative in accordance with Rule 6(1).

15. 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

8 February 2024