
**IN THE MATTER OF THE UK COVID-19 INQUIRY
MODULE 7: TEST, TRACE AND ISOLATE**

**SUBMISSIONS ON THE PROPOSED TARGET POPULATIONS
FOR TARGETED RESEARCH
ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION**

1. The Department for Education (“DfE”) is grateful for the opportunity to participate in this module as a core participant. It makes these short submissions in response to the invitation in paragraph 43 of Counsel to the Inquiry’s Note for the first Preliminary Hearing in this module (“the Note”) to file written submissions making suggestions in relation to the KLOEs for targeted qualitative research.
2. DfE agrees that the KLOEs identified at paragraph 41 of the Note are appropriate. Its suggestions are limited to the proposed target populations for the targeted research in relation to the KLOEs, which are set out at paragraph 42 of the Note.
3. As set out in its application for core participant status and acknowledged in the Chair’s determination of that application, DfE was closely involved in and had significant input into the formulation of policies and decision making in relation to testing in education and childcare settings and played a key role in the implementation of the education testing programme, which was one of the largest and most significant testing programmes.
4. There were of course a number of particular factors relevant to the education testing programme that were not necessarily of general application in other settings. The purpose of that programme was not only to reduce the spread of Covid-19 within education settings and the wider community, but to help to provide confidence to pupils, parents and the workforce to continue in or return to their settings, and to reduce the number of days missed by pupils and students. There were particular logistical considerations in providing for and mandating testing in the different settings within the programme (childcare, children’s social care, schools, further and higher education).

5. Given those factors, DfE would encourage the Inquiry to consider ensuring that the targeted populations include those who would have been included within the education testing programme, i.e. families with school-aged and younger children, students, and members of the education and care workforce. It submits that conclusions drawn on the issues raised by a number of the KLOEs, for example the impact of not being able to access tests (41.I.C), factors affecting willingness to comply (41.II.A) and whether measures were ineffective or counterproductive (41.II.D), as well as public messaging and enforcement (41.VI.D and E) may differ as between the major testing programmes, and that it is therefore important for the Inquiry to ensure that it has evidence specifically from those included within the education testing programme, which was one of the largest and most significant.

6. The Inquiry is therefore respectfully invited to include “Those attending or working in education and childcare settings including families with school-aged and younger children” within the target populations for the targeted research.

Dated 11 June 2024