



NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 7 - NEIL EVANS

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 19 March 2024, the Inquiry opened Module 7 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 26 April 2024.
2. The Inquiry has published the [Provisional Outline of Scope](#) for Module 7, which states that this Module will consider the policies and strategies developed and deployed to support the test, trace and isolate system by the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations. Further modules will be announced and opened in due course, to address other aspects of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.
3. On 24 April 2024 the Inquiry received an application from Neil Evans for Core Participant status in Module 7.
4. I made a provisional decision not to designate Neil Evans as a Core Participant in Module 7, thereby declining the application ("the Provisional Decision"), on 26 May 2024. The Applicant was provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 4pm on 23 May 2024.
5. The Applicant 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 7.

Summary of Application

8. The Applicant Neil Evans identifies as (i) Laboratory Manager for the DHSC Facility in Newport. He indicates that this was 'operated' by Perkin Elmer; and (ii) Deputy Lead Scientist at Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services Lighthouse Laboratory, Bracknell. He confirms that, in both roles, he exercised 'complete oversight' for the testing regime. Thereafter, he makes a number of observations concerning the adequacy or efficacy of the testing regime and/or the kits being used. The Applicant reports that he shared concerns contemporaneously with the Managing Director 'UK and Ireland' and other members of the senior management team. Subsequently, the Applicant was subjected to a redundancy process and his employment brought to an end. He considers himself to have been constrained from raising matters subsequently by

reason of a non-disclosure agreement. The Applicant concludes by expressing the hope that the Inquiry will seek evidence from Perkin Elmer (now said to be trading as Revvity).

Decision for the Applicant

9. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. I consider that Neil Evans does not meet the criteria set out in Rule 5 for designation as a Core Participant in Module 7.
10. Whilst I appreciate the Applicant's role and experience, noting that the Applicant was the Laboratory Manager for the DHSC facility in Newport operated by Perkin Elmer and Deputy Lead Scientist at Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services Lighthouse Laboratory, I do not consider that the Applicant played a direct or significant role in the key decision making of policy and strategy in the test, trace, isolate system (Rule 5(2)(a)). Similarly, while recognising the interest the Applicant has, it is not a significant interest in the matters for investigation in Module 7 (Rule 5(2)(b)).
11. Further, 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 and organisations in this country could potentially have an interest in the Inquiry and not everyone can be granted Core Participant status for the purposes of the Inquiry hearings.
12. The Inquiry will seek information from a range of individuals, organisations and bodies and, where appropriate, request witness statements and documents. I have asked the Module 7 legal team to liaise with the Applicant to make sure the concerns he has raised are reflected in the Inquiry's investigation.
13. I will keep the scope of Module 7 and the designation of Core Participants under review. My decision not to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 7 does not preclude him from making any further applications in respect of any later

modules. I will consider any future applications the Applicant 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

31 May 2024