



RULING FOLLOWING THE FIRST MODULE 7 PRELIMINARY HEARING ON 27 JUNE 2024

Background

1. On 27 June 2024 I held the first Preliminary Hearing in Module 7.
2. Prior to the hearing, 7 of the 23 designated Core Participants filed written submissions (one was a joint submission) and during the hearing I heard 7 oral submissions. I am very grateful to all those who addressed me, whether in writing or orally, for the obvious care they took in making their submissions. I direct that the written submissions be published on the Inquiry's website.
3. In this ruling I record my decision on those issues that I consider require determination or clarification.
4. The majority of the evidential areas addressed in submissions are already reflected in the Rule 9 requests the team is issuing under the Inquiry Rules 2006 and in other aspects of the work in which they are engaged, including the instruction of experts. I will continue to consider the helpful submissions on Module 7's Provisional Outline of Scope further with the Inquiry team.

Provisional Scope for Module 7

Module title

5. Module 7 concerns the approach to testing, tracing and isolation adopted during the pandemic and the Provisional Scope for Module 7 refers to “testing, tracing and isolation” (“TTI”).
6. I have considered submissions on the Module title regarding the adoption of alternative or additional language. I have decided to amend the wording in the Scope such that reference will be made in the opening paragraph to: Test and Protect (Scotland); Test and Trace (England); Test, Trace, Protect (Wales) and Test, Trace and Protect (Northern Ireland). Whilst these were referenced in a footnote to the published Provisional Scope, they will now be referenced in the opening paragraph reinforcing that Module 7 is a four nations module.
7. TTI as a single term is adopted as short-hand for each of the testing, tracing and isolation arrangements to be scrutinised. Where it is used in correspondence with Core Participants or in oral submissions, it is intended to acknowledge the different models adopted across all four nations. For the sake of clarity, it does not stand for nor signify “Test & Trace” in England alone.

Date range

8. The dates in the Provisional Scope are also amended such that the Module will now refer to the period 1 January 2020 to 28 June 2022 (the latter date being the date when the Inquiry was first established). The original date range of the scope ended in February 2022. However, the Rule 9 requests include questions up to 28 June 2022. Extending the date range also allows for consideration of rules and

transition plans that were in place up until April 2022. Therefore, for completeness, the dates of the Scope will now correspond to the wider date range of the Inquiry's investigation.

Support

9. Finally, paragraph 4 of the Provisional Scope refers to “*factors influencing compliance*”, which includes “*financial and practical support to those required to isolate*”. I have considered submissions received on the importance of considering the interrelationship between testing and isolation compliance and access to financial support.

10. On 9 July 2024 I published the provisional scope of Module 9. It will examine economic interventions and consider how economic support was in fact delivered by the UK Government, the Devolved Administrations and Local Government. Whilst the scope still remains subject to submissions from Core Participants, the intention is that I investigate in Module 9 support for business, jobs and the self-employed, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. Given Module 9's provisional scope, Module 7's focus will therefore be on what practical and financial support was available in the limited context of how this support impacted on isolation as a result of testing and tracing policies. I can therefore confirm it will investigate, in a focused and proportionate way, the specific financial support put in place as part of the TTI systems adopted, as one of the factors influencing compliance. .

Listening Exercise - Every Story Matters.

11. I received a number of useful written and oral submissions concerning the Key Lines of Enquiry' ('KLOEs') which will guide the Inquiry's work in gathering and

analysing experiences shared with Every Story Matters, in particular through targeted interviews. The Inquiry team and I will continue to consider the submissions I heard very carefully. More information about any changes to the KLOE's in light of these submissions will be provided to Core Participants through the Solicitor to the Inquiry's monthly update note.

The Right Honourable Baroness Hallett
Chair of the Covid-19 UK Inquiry
10 July 2024