



NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 9 - ECONOMIC RESPONSE

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 9 July 2024, the Inquiry opened Module 9 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 6 August 2024.
2. On 6 August 2024 the Inquiry received an application from Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) for Core Participant status in Module 9. This Notice sets out my determination of the application.
3. The Inquiry has published the [Provisional Outline of Scope](#) for Module 9, which states that this module will examine how economic support was delivered by the UK Government, the Devolved Administrations and Local Government by examining a broad range of economic interventions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes economic support for business, jobs, the self-employed, vulnerable people and those on benefits. It will also consider additional funding given to relevant public services and the voluntary and community sectors.

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 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 9.

Summary of Application

6. In making this determination, the fact that I have not referred to every matter or detail which is set out in the application does not mean that I have not considered it. The points addressed below are intended to capture what appear to be the most important points made in support of the application.
7. This is an application from Child Poverty Action Group to be granted Core Participant status pursuant to Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules 2006. Although the application does not refer to Rule 5, the application is understood to be on the basis of Rule 5(2)(b) of the Inquiry Rules 2006, namely that it has a significant interest in an aspect of the matters that are the subject of Module 9.
8. The Applicant is a charitable organisation that works on behalf of a quarter of children in the UK growing up in poverty. It submits that it has expert knowledge of the welfare benefits system and that it has an interest in the economic support for vulnerable people. The Applicant provides training, advice and information on the social security

system, which includes publishing a textbook on welfare benefits and tax credits used by the Ministry of Justice. The Applicant collects evidence on the impact of the social security system across the UK. The Applicant coordinates a consortium of more than 40 organisations working on social security issues, provides the secretariat for the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers, hosts a coalition of 100 organisations working to alleviate child poverty, facilitates a youth panel on child poverty and participates on a project relating to low income parents and carers.

9. The Applicant submits that it prepared a weekly, then fortnightly, briefing series on problems faced by families accessing social security during the pandemic, carried out a national survey of families to examine financial impact and sources of support available to low income families, prepared a report with recommendations on further support, published a best-practice guide for local authorities on delivering local welfare assistance, published regularly-updated advice online and worked with a panel of black and ethnic minority parents on low incomes to amplify their voices and develop solutions for issues facing them.
10. The Applicant also submits that it would bring its experience of engaging with various decision-makers in the pandemic, which led to policy changes to support low income households. For instance, the extension of the £20 uplift to Universal Credit for 6 months, the Household Support Fund, taking a cash-first approach to free school meals, the expansion of free school meals to migrant families with no recourse to public funds and policies to support the provision of laptops and other devices.

Decision for the Applicant

11. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. In my discretion, I have decided to designate Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) as a Core Participant in Module 9. Having regard to the provisions of Rule 5(2), I consider that the Applicant has a significant interest in the economic interventions introduced in response to Covid-19 and is best placed to assist the Inquiry with its knowledge of the welfare benefits system and the economic support for vulnerable people.
12. The Applicant is an organisation with significant knowledge of the welfare, benefits and social security system and the effects of the economic interventions introduced

during the pandemic. The Applicant's areas of interest are directly relevant to the issues covered by the Provisional Scope for Module 9. In particular, the Applicant has interest in the effect of economic interventions on those living in poverty, such as changes to benefits or the support for vulnerable people.

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 note that Child Poverty Action Group has not yet engaged legal representation. I am satisfied that the Applicant has not appointed a qualified lawyer in relation to this module. I therefore have not designated a recognised legal representative in accordance with Rule 6(1) for the Applicant at this time. This does not preclude the Applicant from making an application for the designation of a recognised legal representative at a later stage.

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 for 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

13 September 2024