



**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 Disabled People's Organisations 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 a joint application by Disability Rights UK and Disability Action NI on the basis of Rules 5(2)(a) and (b).
8. The Applicant states that it has played a direct and significant role in the matters to which Module 9 relates as they 'engaged with thousands of Disabled people, unpaid carers and voluntary organisations throughout the pandemic' and advocated on their behalf for increased financial support. The application states that Disability Action NI conducted surveys and gathered evidence in relation to Disabled people and were involved in the administration and distribution of the National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal, which provided funding to organisations across the UK.

9. The application also explains that both Applicants have a significant interest in the Inquiry's investigation in Module 9. The Applicant states that disabled people make up almost a quarter of the UK population and they were disproportionately impacted by economic decisions taken during the pandemic. They raise questions about decision making structures and diversity of consultation; whether the Disabled were considered in economic support design and delivery; and inequality across the four nations as a result of the variation in the support offered. The application also states that the Applicants can assist the Inquiry by facilitating effective participation in the Inquiry on behalf of its members and investigate many aspects of the Provisional Outline of Scope and in particular “what consideration, if any, was given to the equality of impact of the economic support delivered as between particular groups including those who were at greater risk or otherwise vulnerable.”

### **Decision for the Applicant**

10. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. Having done so, I have decided, in my discretion, to designate Disabled People's Organisations as a Core Participant in Module 9.
11. With regard to the provisions of Rule 5(2), I am satisfied that the Disability Rights UK and Disability Action NI jointly have a significant interest in the matters under investigation. Module 9 will consider the broad range of interventions taken by UK Government and Devolved Administrations including support for the vulnerable. As a coalition between two leading disability charities in the UK the Applicants can assist the Inquiry in assessing how economic support was in fact delivered during the pandemic from the perspectives of a very broad range of disabled people. I, therefore, consider that the Applicants are well placed to assist the Inquiry to achieve its aims in Module 9, having regard to the need to manage the Inquiry effectively and efficiently.

### **Legal Representation**

12. 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.*

13. I am satisfied that the Disabled People's Organisations has appointed Shamik Dutta of Bhatt Murphy as its qualified lawyer in relation to this module. I therefore designate Shamik Dutta as their recognised legal representative in accordance with Rule 6(1).

14. 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**