



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION  
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION  
MODULE 9 - ECONOMIC RESPONSE  
CLINICALLY VULNERABLE FAMILIES (CVF)**

**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. 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.
3. On 5 August 2024, the Inquiry received an application from Clinically Vulnerable Families (CVF) (“the Applicant”) for Core Participant status in Module 9. This Notice sets out my determination of the application.
4. I made a provisional decision not to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 9 on 13 September 2024 (the “Provisional Decision”). The Applicant was provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 20 September 2024 at 4pm.

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 9.

## **Summary of Application**

8. 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.
9. The Applicant, Clinically Vulnerable Families, was founded in August 2020 and currently represents those who are clinically vulnerable, clinically extremely

vulnerable, the severely immunosuppressed and their households across the four nations of the UK. The Applicant states that its approximate combined membership and social media following of the group is approximately 55,653.

10. The application states that the Applicant has a "strong significant interest" in relation to all aspects of the scope of Module 9 and therefore I understand the application to be put on the basis of Rule 5(2)(b). In connection with the matters to be examined in Module 9, the Applicant notes its concerns as to what it says was the lack of financial support provided to those who were shielding or otherwise clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable. It states that individuals within these groups had to return to work when certain financial support schemes ceased, or alternatively lost their jobs. The application states that CVF is unique and separate to other groups.
11. The Applicant states that it is able to assist the Inquiry with examples of the lived experience of their members and, in particular, the experience of how economic support measures impacted vulnerable populations during the pandemic. The application identifies how it can provide such experience in relation to each paragraph of the Provisional Outline of Scope in Module 9, and how this can assist the Inquiry in its investigation and in making appropriate recommendations.

### **Decision for the Applicant**

12. I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. Having done so, I have decided, in my discretion, not to designate Clinically Vulnerable Families (CVF) as a Core Participant in Module 9. I wish to extend my sympathy to those who have suffered, and continue to suffer, from adverse health, illness and disability as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
13. Whilst I appreciate that the Applicant brings a representative voice from the clinically vulnerable and their households, the focus of Module 9 is economic support across a broad range of interventions in response to the pandemic including support for businesses, relevant public services, grants, loans schemes, the voluntary and community sector as well as support for the vulnerable, benefits and sick pay. On page 8 of the application in sub-paragraph (d) is a list of the 'key issues' for the group which form part of its advocacy and campaigning programme. None of those include

economic issues specifically. Therefore I do not consider that the Applicant's interest in the matters to be examined in Module 9 is sufficiently significant as to grant it Core Participant status in this module.

14. Even if this were not the case, and having regard in particular to the need to manage the Inquiry efficiently and effectively, in my discretion I provisionally decline to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 9. While I am bound to consider the factors set out in Rule 5(2), it is also open to me to take into account other relevant factors. I am not obliged to designate any particular person or organisation as a Core Participant. 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 in, or adversely affected by, the Covid-19 pandemic, very many people in this country could potentially have an interest in it and not everyone can be granted Core Participant status for the purpose of the Inquiry hearings. It is not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. The Applicant may have relevant information to give in relation to the matters being examined in the Inquiry and the Inquiry will be contacting a wide range of individuals, organisations and bodies to seek information, to gain their perspectives on the issues raised in the modules and, where appropriate, to ask for witness statements and documents.
15. The Inquiry will also hear and consider carefully the experiences of those who have suffered hardship as a result of the pandemic, through the listening exercise, Every Story Matters. The Applicant, or its members, may wish to contribute to the work of the Inquiry through this process. I made clear in my Opening Statement that this listening exercise is a significant and important task which will lead to summary reports of the impact of the pandemic to be used as evidence during the Inquiry's module hearings.
16. For all of those reasons, having considered all of the information provided by the Applicant, in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 9, I consider that the Applicant should not be designated as a Core Participant in Module 9 and I confirm that this is my final decision.

17. I will keep the scope of Module 9 and the designation of Core Participants under review. My decision not to designate Clinically Vulnerable Families (CVF) as a Core Participant in Module 9 does not preclude Clinically Vulnerable Families (CVF) from making a further application in any later module. I will consider any future applications Clinically Vulnerable Families (CVF) may wish to make on their merits at the time they are made.

**Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett**  
**Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry**  
**30 September 2024**