



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 9 - ECONOMIC RESPONSE
DEPARTMENT FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT (DCMS)**

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 1 August 2024, the Inquiry received an application from DCMS (“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

1. 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.*

2. 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

3. 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.
4. The Applicant is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport ('DCMS'). The application is made pursuant to Rule 5(2)(a) of the Inquiry Rules 2006. The Applicant submits that it played a direct and significant role in the matters to which Module 9

relates. The application states that DCMS did not have a role in designing or administering the schemes identified in the Provisional Outline of Scope but that it engaged and worked closely with other government departments in order to support sectors which the DCMS oversees. The application states that the DCMS is the lead department on policy relating to the voluntary and community sector and an example is provided by which the DCMS 'pressed HMT strongly to provide a financial package of support' for those sectors which it says resulted in a £750 million support package. The application sets out a range of schemes which the DCMS established in order to support the cultural, media and sporting sectors, its engagement with groups across a range of areas and how it assessed the impact of restrictions through the Covid-19 Analysis Hub.

Decision for the Applicant

5. 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 the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 9. Whilst I appreciate that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) played a role during the pandemic, the application does not evidence that the Applicant had a role in the design or administration of the interventions covered by the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 9. Rather, its role was one of supporting other departments in such tasks. Accordingly, I do not consider that it played a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to be investigated in Module 9. There are other UK Government Departments, such as HM Treasury, HM Revenue & Customs and the Cabinet Office which will have had a more significant institutional involvement in relation to the matters to which the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 9 relates.

6. 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 is in the process of contacting a 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.

7. 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.

8. I will keep the scope of Module 9 and the designation of Core Participants under review. My decision not to designate the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport as a Core Participant in Module 9 does not preclude it from making a further application in any later module. I will consider any future applications the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 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