



## Core Participant Protocol

*This protocol sets out the role of a Core Participant and the application process.*

### **The role of core participants**

1. It is important to note at the outset that it is possible to provide information or evidence to an Inquiry, or to be a witness at any Inquiry hearing, without being designated as a Core Participant. The Inquiry Rules 2006 (the "**Inquiry Rules**") also include provision for the recognition of legal representatives for witnesses without needing those witnesses to be Core Participants.
2. A Core Participant is a person, organisation or other entity with a significant interest in an Inquiry. Core Participants are designated by the Chair of an Inquiry pursuant to Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules.
3. Core Participants enjoy participatory rights in an Inquiry including the following:
  - a. Subject to any restriction orders issued by the Chair under section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005, they are provided with disclosure of evidence which the Chair considers is relevant to participate in the Inquiry.
  - b. They have the opportunity to make opening and closing statements through their recognised legal representatives (unless the Chair directs otherwise).
  - c. In accordance with any protocol determined by the Chair, they are able to suggest lines of questioning at oral hearings through Counsel to the Inquiry or, where permitted in advance, put questions through their recognised legal representatives.

- d. Pursuant to the Inquiry Rules, they are able to apply through their recognised legal representatives to ask questions of witnesses during a hearing.
  - e. They may be provided with details of the Inquiry report shortly before publication.
- 4. Since the designation of Core Participant status affords an individual access to disclosure of documents on an ongoing basis, Core Participants and their legal representatives must agree to treat the information contained in the disclosure confidentially until any such information is published by the Inquiry. Confidentiality is important to the work of an Inquiry and it allows an Inquiry to undertake its work fairly.
- 5. Core Participants and their legal representatives are therefore required to sign confidentiality undertakings before they have access to Inquiry documents and other confidential information. The confidentiality undertakings set out that without the express permission of the Inquiry there is:
  - a. a prohibition on using the documents or information for any other purpose than taking part in the Inquiry's proceedings.
  - b. a prohibition on disseminating or circulating the documents or information provided by the Inquiry to a third party.

### **Rules governing the grant of Core Participant status**

- 6. The Chair of an Inquiry will have regard to Rule 5(2) of the Inquiry Rules when considering applications to be a Core Participant. Rule 5(2) states that when determining an application, the Chair must consider, in particular, whether:
  - a. the person played or may have played a direct and significant role in relation to 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.
- 7. Whilst applications are welcomed from individuals in their own capacity or on behalf of organisations where one or more of the circumstances mentioned in Rule 5(2) exist, the Chair is not obligated to designate any applicant a Core

Participant simply upon the basis that Rule 5(2) applies. The Chair will additionally have regard to Section 17(3) of the Inquiries Act 2005, which requires her to act fairly and to avoid any unnecessary cost. Indeed, the Chair has a wide discretion in considering applications, and this discretion will be exercised fairly, consistently, and objectively, with the terms of reference in mind.

### **Time-frame and format for Core Participant applications**

8. The Chair of an Inquiry may designate a person as a core participant at any time during the course of an Inquiry, provided that person consents to being so designated (Rule 5(1)).
9. In so far as is practicable, the Chair of the Nottingham Inquiry seeks to determine who should be designated core participants by **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025**
10. Applications are therefore invited for core participant status by **4pm Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025**.
11. Applications should not exceed 5 pages of A4 paper and must:
  - a. state the factual basis for the application, and in particular, state the applicant's connection with the matters being investigated by the Inquiry.
  - b. identify the topics within the Inquiry's Terms of Reference upon which the applicant can give relevant information and evidence.
  - c. indicate how the grant of Core Participant status will assist the Inquiry in the furtherance of its Terms of Reference.
  - d. confirm whether the applicant is represented or wishes to be represented by a legal representative.
  - e. if the applicant is legally represented, details of the legal representative.
  - f. confirm the applicant consents to be designated a Core Participant.
12. Applications should be submitted by email to the Solicitor to the Inquiry: [Solicitor@NottinghamInquiry.uk](mailto:Solicitor@NottinghamInquiry.uk)

### **Designation of recognised legal representatives**

13. Where the Chair grants an application for Core Participant status, a decision will then be made to designate recognised legal representatives pursuant to Rules 6 and 7 of the Inquiry Rules 2006.

### **Publication**

14. It is the Inquiry's intention to publish the names of all Core Participants and their Recognised Legal Representatives (subject to any applicable Restriction Orders).