



**Commission for
Victims and Survivors**

*“Promoting **awareness** of matters relating to
the interests of **victims and survivors**”*

Welcome and Introduction:

- Welcome;
- Commission's Second Monthly Seminar;
- Series of seminar's on "live issues";
- Programme of engagement by the Commission.

Monthly Seminar Series:

Date	Topic	Venue
Friday 18 th January 2013 10:30 – 12:30pm	The Victims and Survivors Service and its operation to date	Board Room, The Spires Centre, Belfast
Thursday 14 th February 10:30-12:30pm	Historical Investigations and Information Recovery	Hilton Hotel, Belfast
Thursday 14 th March 2013 10:30- 12:30pm	Troubled Consequences: The Mental Health Impact of the civil conflict	Venue tbc, Belfast

Today's Seminar:

Agenda:

- Commission's Research Report – Historical Investigations and Information Recovery – Major Findings – Deloitte and the Commission
- Q and A on the Report

Today's Seminar:

Agenda:

- Amnesties, Prosecutions and the Public Interest: Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland – Professor Kieran Mc Evoy, QUB and HTR
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Close with lunch at 12:30

Aims of Today's Seminar:

- To disseminate the findings of the Report;
- To hear your views;
- To discuss the findings of the research;
- To inform you of new developments;
- To widen the discussion on Dealing with the Past.

Historical Investigations and Information Recovery

- Research part of developing the Comprehensive Needs Assessment;
- Part of informing victims and survivors needs in terms of truth, justice and acknowledgement;
- Focussed on the experience of victims and survivors;
- How or where we could make recommendations for improving that experience.



Research on Historical Investigations and Information Recovery

Colin Mounstephen

February 2013



Objectives of the research

- Experiences of victims and survivors who engaged with:
 - Historical Enquiries Team (HET);
 - Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPONI);
 - Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI);
 - Coroner's Service;
 - Criminal Cases Review Commission;
- Primary research with victims and survivors;
- Current processes / challenges facing processes;
- Good practice and any shortcomings;
- NGO support;
- Future needs.

Method

- Desk review of relevant policies and publications;
- 30 case studies with victims and survivors;
- Commission and NGO's identified spread of participants for case study;
- Consultation with service providers;
- Consultation with NGOs

The Case Studies

Organisation	Cases	%	Case Studies	%
HET	2,559	89	20	67
OPONI	127	4	5	17
PSNI	137	5	3	10
Coroner	29	1	2	6
CCRC	31	1	0	0
Total	2,883	100	30	100

- 21 were supported by NGOs / 9 without NGO support
- Interviews were undertaken between Oct 2011 and Jan 2012
- All completed consent forms / provided with details of the research

Findings

Experience and Expectations

- Different needs and different levels of needs:
 - various responses observed in someone's emotional and physical needs
 - depth of need varies greatly
 - one size does not fit all
- Variation in desired outcomes;
 - truth, justice, acknowledgement

Current Arrangements and Challenges

- Variety of historical investigation and information recovery processes delivered by five different bodies;
- Challenges
 - volume of cases
 - historic...time has elapsed (tracing witnesses)
 - inter-related cases (can't investigate in isolation)
 - interagency working – can be slow
 - independence – primarily deaths linked to army or police
 - communication (how, when, who with)
 - diversity of expectation among victims and survivors

Support for Individuals and Families

- Good practice
 - tailored approach
 - personal touch
 - flexibility / family friendly practice
 - family liaison officer
- Shortcomings
 - signposting other, independent support
 - inconsistent communication (frequency, medium of communication, sensitivity, where to meet, informing when team members change)

NGO Support

- Range of support:
 - social; emotional; practical; advice on process
- Individuals and families value support of NGOs;
- More involved / participation as a result:
 - a desired outcome for the process
- NGOs:
 - different levels of experience and capabilities
 - different relationships with historic investigation processes
 - some degree of community attachment to some NGOs

Looking Forward

Support for Individuals and Families

- Opportunity – to take forward in the context of Victims Service developments:
 - Primarily emotional and practical support. Advocacy support will be important for some individuals / families
 - Funding? Precedent in funding support for victims and witnesses in mainstream criminal justice system
 - Organic development of NGOs - need to better define scope of support / quality standards
 - Funding linked to quantity of support at set quality standards
 - MoU between statutory bodies and NGOs (as per DoJ and VSNI)

Practical Issues for Statutory Providers

- More explicit in explaining support options;
- As well as setting communication protocols at outset – monitor and change as necessary;
- Communication is critical if change in investigation team members / case passed to another agency;
- People want to be kept informed – communicate on timelines, stumbling blocks other issues;
- Quality of inter-agency working – transparency in requests / escalate problems

Overall

- Historical investigations and information recovery services are key in acknowledging & dealing with the past:
 - is there sufficient realism on timelines, resource arrangements and processes?
 - at the time of the research mechanisms were struggling
 - need to learn lessons
- Focus on greater customer care and understanding;
 - as per CJI report on care & treatment of victims and witnesses
- Access to support independent of the statutory service provider
 - help with issues of capability, confidence and trust
 - improve participation...help people get more out of the process

A Word of Thanks

- Deloitte would like to thank everyone who contributed to this research. In particular our team was acutely aware of the painful issues family members were relating to in participating in this research. We are most grateful for their contribution.

Impact of the Research:

- HIR Services represent a significant part of how we acknowledge and deal with the past;
- Highlighted the need for greater customer care and understanding;
- Highlighted the role of the NGO's and provided the evidence basis for continuation of funding for NGO's within the VSS Social Support Programme over the next two years;
- Highlighted the need for improvements in communication with victims and survivors;

Summary:

- Thank you for your participation today;
- This will inform the Commission and the Forum on current issues in Dealing with the Past;
- DWP Working Group is to report to the Commission by end of March 2013;
- Conference in the autumn.