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Rt. Hon Arlene Foster MLA  
First Minister  
The Executive Office  
GD 36 Stormont Castle  
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19 May 2020

Via email: [arlene.foster@mla.niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:arlene.foster@mla.niassembly.gov.uk)

Dear Arlene,

I am writing to express my extreme concern that as the implementation date of 29 May approaches for the Victims Payment Regulations 2020. There appears to be no clarity regarding the opening date for the scheme, where the funding will come from and which government department The Executive Office will designate to exercise the administrative functions of the Board.

I am receiving significant numbers of calls on a daily basis from victims and survivors, enquiring as to when the scheme will be open for applications. There is no clear answer that I can give to people who have waited and campaigned for decades. Having achieved the legislation they now find themselves in a position of uncertainty as to when and, they fear, whether the legislation will be implemented.

People understand that we are in a state of emergency, but they cannot be expected to understand why there is no communication about the impact of the emergency on the implementation of the legislation, or any plan for how and when it will proceed.

It is critically important that a time frame and a plan for implementation is committed to, and communicated. Some delay is understandable in the current circumstances, but I am asking that the uncertainty about what is planned and when implementation will take place is ended before the date of 29 May is reached.

If there is any assistance that I, my office or the Victims and Survivors Forum can give to assist in progressing these issues we are very keen to give it, and I am always available to discuss this. However I do ask that a clear commitment to implement the law is made, and a time frame for doing so is communicated before

the implementation date of 29 May. To do otherwise will result in anxiety, distress and ultimately in legal challenge.

I have also sent this letter to Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, MLA.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith Thompson', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Judith Thompson  
**Commissioner for Victims and Survivors**