

Interested in contributing to  
a brighter future in Northern Ireland?



is seeking new members for its

# VICTIMS & SURVIVORS FORUM

CLOSING DATE  
FRIDAY 7 JULY 2023  
2 PM

## Affected by the Troubles in Northern Ireland?

The Commission for Victims and Survivors are seeking to recruit new members to their Victims and Survivors Forum. We want to hear from anyone who was, or continues to be, impacted by the Troubles and feel they can use their experience to influence change and build towards a better and more reconciled Northern Ireland.

## But I don't consider myself a victim...

That's ok. We never ask anyone to wear 'labels' they are not comfortable with. The term 'victim' is a definition in law for anyone impacted by the conflict. Although 1/4 of Northern Ireland's population has been directly affected by the Troubles, many would be reluctant to identify as a victim but still have a lot to offer through their lived experience of bereavement, injury, trauma, or becoming a carer for someone who experienced any of those things.

## What is expected of a Forum member?

**Time and commitment:** The Forum have scheduled quarterly meetings lasting approximately four hours during the working day. Additionally, members may be asked to take part in engagements during the year. These could include meetings with politicians, public servants, academics and international experts. Occasional travel may be required. The majority of meetings will take place in Belfast. The role of forum member is voluntary and is not remunerated, however, employed or self-employed members may be able to claim for loss of earnings or employee time for hours spent on Forum business. Travel expenses will also be paid.

**Sharing and drawing on personal experience:** Troubles-impacts can be felt in many ways. These could be outstanding truth and justice issues; issues around acknowledgement and memorialisation; segregation in communities, housing and education; ongoing presence of paramilitaries in communities; or mental health issues stemming from the conflict. This role is about drawing on your lived experience and does not require you to have any knowledge or experience of government policy and research. The Commission will provide a full induction programme, training and development, and pastoral support to members to help them develop in and navigate the role.

## What is the Victims and Survivors Forum?

The Forum is a group of volunteers founded in law to represent victims and survivors of the Troubles and help inform and shape policy and services. Forum members broadly represent community background, origin of harm or impact, type of harm or impact caused, gender, age and geographical location.

**Relationship building:** By its nature, the Forum brings together people with a range of backgrounds and viewpoints. Members need to be emotionally resilient and able to share and listen. They also need to be open and honest about any experiences they have had that could impact their ability to develop relationships built on trust and understanding.

## How would this benefit me?

**Personal growth and sense of fulfilment:** Many of our Forum members over the years have shared how cathartic their time on the Forum has been; feeling like their experiences mattered, and that they were able to draw on negative experiences and contribute to something positive. They also speak of the relationships and trust they have built with people they feel they never would have crossed paths with otherwise.

**Understanding of the workings of government and politics:** The Commission are an independent government body formally known as a Non-Departmental Public Body – or NDPB for short. Through your role on the Forum, you will learn how NDPBs sit in the overall structures of government, how governments develop laws, policies and practices across Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, and crucially, how you can help to influence them.

**Professional development:** Growing understanding of how government works combined with developing your skills of communication, influencing, forming strategic engagement plans, inputting into government policies and consultations are all directly transferable skills in a professional setting.

**Developing relationships with influential people:** Through the engagements the Commission and Forum undertake, you will have the opportunity to meet with politicians at a local, national and international level, international experts on issues such as Human Rights, and high-ranking civil servants who are tasked with writing laws and policies to be brought before politicians.

# Opening word from the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors



## HELLO

I am Ian Jeffers and I am the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors in Northern Ireland.

Thank you for considering applying to be a member of the Victims and Survivors Forum.

The Forum is made up of people with different backgrounds, beliefs, experiences and opinions but whose lives have been changed in some way by Northern Ireland's Troubles.



Our Forum members are a critical touchpoint for the Commission in all the work we undertake. Their guidance is rooted in the shared belief that we all must learn from the experiences of the past to shape a better future.

In the last few years, the Forum has been involved in a number of key issues relating to the legacy of Northern Ireland's past, and to the victims and survivors most impacted by it.

This includes their contributions to the delivery of a payment scheme for the severely and permanently injured (the Victims' Payment Scheme), presenting arguments to Government on the inadequacies of the UK Government's Legacy Bill, discussing how we inform and educate others about the past, and working with colleagues in The Executive Office and funded victims' organisations to devise a new government Strategy for Victims and Survivors.

Forum members have also helped the Commission with the promotion of its work over the years through various media appearances, podcast contributions, and public speaking events.

We know that the nature of the Forum as a public-facing group, working in a complex and emotive subject area is not suited to everyone. As such, we have developed an application process that invites you to reflect on your personal experiences and attributes so that as you work through this process you can decide if the role of a Forum member is right for you.

The process will begin with some short questions on the next page called an 'Expression of Interest' and further steps are outlined in the enclosed form.

If you are shortlisted, we may ask for some further information about your background and experiences of the Troubles to help us bring together a Forum that is as representative as possible of victims and survivors.

If you would like to submit an Expression of Interest in an alternative format such as online or verbally, please just contact my office to arrange this at either (028) 9031 1000, or [commission@cvsni.org](mailto:commission@cvsni.org).

I want to offer my thanks once again to any consideration you give to this important role and look forward to receiving any applications.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jeffers  
**Commissioner**

# The Victims and Survivors Forum

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## ABOUT THE FORUM

The Victims and Survivors' Forum was established under the Victims and Survivors (NI) Order 2006. Members are volunteers who give their time for consultation and discussion with the Commission for Victims and Survivors to help inform and shape our work in promoting the needs and interests of people most impacted by the Troubles/conflict.

Forum membership provides an opportunity for you to:

- Have your voice heard in shaping the work of the Commission.
- Draw upon personal experiences to contribute to positive change.
- Influence how government across Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland develop law, policies and practices which impact upon victims and survivors.
- Form relationships with people you may never have met otherwise.

## COULD THIS BE FOR YOU?

The Forum is made up of victims and survivors of the Troubles / conflict. Under the Victims and Survivors (NI) Order 2006 Victim or Survivor is a person who:

- Has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of a Troubles / conflict related incident.
- Provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis to a person injured as a result of a Troubles / conflict related incident.
- Has been bereaved as a result of a Troubles / conflict related incident.

## THE ROLE

The Forum has scheduled quarterly meetings which last approximately four hours during the working day. In addition, members may be asked to take part in engagements during the year. These may include meetings with politicians, public servants, academics and international experts. Occasional travel may be required. The majority of meetings will take place in Belfast.

The discussions had at Forum meetings help inform the Commission's work activities and shape the thinking of both the Commission and its stakeholders on a wide range of issues relevant to victims and survivors in areas of policy, research and communications work.

Key attributes and requirements of the role are:

- being a Victim or Survivor of the Troubles / conflict
- the ability to empathise and understand others' experiences
- good communication and influencing skills

You are not required to have any knowledge or experience of government policy and research. This role is an opportunity for you to draw on your lived experience and the Commission will provide a full induction programme, training and development and pastoral support to members to help them develop in and navigate the role.

By its nature, the Forum brings together people with a range of backgrounds and viewpoints. Members need to be emotionally resilient and able to share and listen. They also need to be open and honest about any experiences they have had that could impact their ability to develop relationships built on trust and understanding.

Members will be appointed for a period of three years, with the opportunity to extend their term for a further three years by agreement.

We welcome applications from all suitable persons. However, as women are currently under-represented on the Forum, we would particularly welcome applications from women.

The Commission has in place a Volunteer Policy which you can find [here](#).

The role of forum member is voluntary and is not remunerated, however, employed or self-employed members may be able to claim for loss of earnings or employee time for hours spent on Forum business. Travel expenses will also be paid.

# Forum Replenishment Process

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## THE PROCESS

All prospective members will be required to take part in a selection process. We want this to be as straightforward and accessible as possible, while ensuring that you have sufficient time to reflect on the requirements of the role. The selection process will have four stages:

**1. Provide us with an expression of interest. You can do this in writing or verbally.** If you would like to submit an Expression of Interest in an alternative format such as electronically or verbally, please just contact my office to arrange this at either **(028) 9031 1000**, or **commission@cvsni.org**.

Verbal Expressions of Interest would be sent as an audio/video recording and must be a maximum of 10 minutes. They must provide the same information requested in written submissions.

A shortlisting panel will review all applications and assess them against agreed criteria.

**2. The applicants who are shortlisted will be required to undertake some simple online tests to assess their emotional intelligence and resilience.** This is to ensure prospective members reach the required threshold of emotional intelligence and resilience and recognise the personal impact of the role. At this stage, we may also ask you for some further information on your personal background.

**3. This stage of the process will be a scenario-based discussion, akin to those had at a typical Victims and Survivors Forum meeting.** The topic would be provided in advance. This will help give you a picture of the role requirements in practice. This will also give the Commission the opportunity to observe the personal skills and attributes you have outlined in a diverse physical environment.

**4. The final stage of the process will be a panel conversation chaired by the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors.** This will give you an opportunity to share any thoughts or ask questions you may wish to address, and the panel the opportunity to have a conversation with you in an individual setting.

To ensure that we convene a final Forum that is broadly representative of victims and survivors' experiences and demographics, we will consider your contributions to the selection process, alongside other influences such as the makeup of the Forum.

As the Forum will engage with the Commission's Youth Panel, members invited to join the Forum will be asked to undergo a Basic Access NI check.

Expressions of Interest can be submitted electronically via the following web pages, as an email attachment sent to [commission@cvsni.org](mailto:commission@cvsni.org) or in hard copy to Commission for Victims and Survivors, 4th Floor Equality House, Belfast BT2 7DP. Verbal submissions can be made to 07xxx xxxxx.

If you have any queries about the process, or require any adjustments to help you make your application, please contact Marie Neill on (028) 9031 1000.

## CLOSING DATE

The closing date for applications is Friday 7 July 2023 at 2pm.

## SECTION 1: YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	<input type="text"/>		
Email	<input type="text"/>	Phone	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>		

## SECTION 2: VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS DEFINITION

A victim or survivor of the Troubles is outlined in law. The ways in which people may meet this definition include:

- Being bereaved as a result of the Troubles/conflict
- Being physically injured as a result of the Troubles/conflict
- Having experienced trauma or an impact on their mental health as a result of the Troubles/conflict
- Providing, or having provided, care for someone with physical or mental health support needs sustained as a result of the Troubles/conflict

I can confirm that one of more of these descriptions applies to me.

## SECTION 3: WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BRING TO THE FORUM?

The Commission and Forum are always looking for ways in which we can learn from the past so that we help to shape a better future.

We do this by growing our understanding of many different views and experiences and using these collective voices to try and influence government approaches to addressing the past, providing support services to victims and survivors, and using our learning to help prevent any return to violence.

To help you answer this question, some suggested reflections might be:

- How you as an individual have learned or grown from your experience(s).
- What you think others can learn from you.
- What you can learn from others.
- How you think this shared learning helps in the 'bigger picture' of moving forward from the legacy of violence.

**Please complete your answer to this question in the text boxes on the following pages. (Max. 1000 words)**

**What do you think you could bring to the Forum? (Max. 1000 words)**

**What do you think you could bring to the Forum? (Max. 1000 words)**

# Complete an Expression of Interest



Online: Submit an Expression of Interest digitally via the form on our website. on our website at [www.cvsni.org](http://www.cvsni.org).



By post: Return a hard copy of the form to our address at [Equality House, 4th Floor, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast BT2 7DP](#). Hard copies can be requested by calling us on (028) 9031 1000 or available for download on our website.



Email: You can also return the form by email attachment to [commission@cvsni.org](mailto:commission@cvsni.org). An electronic version of the form can be downloaded from our website.



Audio Message: The Commission will also be accepting audio Expressions of Interest detailing the same information required in the written form. Audio messages can be [sent via WhatsApp](#) and must not exceed 10 minutes. Contact our office for further details.

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