



Date Approved	22 September 2025
Date of Previous Approval	March 2025
Date of Next Review	September 2026

Date of Review	Amendments
March 2024	No amendments required
March 2025	No amendments required
September 2025	Addition of Commissioner at 2.2 Terms of Reference to be reviewed annually

Commission for Victims and Survivors Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Terms of Reference

1.0 Constitution and Purpose

- 1.1** The Commissioner as Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer are responsible for ensuring that there are effective arrangements for governance, risk management and internal control.
- 1.2** The Chief Executive supports the Commissioner by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurance on governance, risk management, the control environment and the integrity of financial statements and the annual report.
- 1.3** To provide support in these functions, the Board shall establish an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to review the comprehensiveness of assurances on systems of internal control, risk management and corporate governance. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is independent of all Commission for Victims and Survivor’s operational activities.

2.0 Membership

- 2.1** The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee comprises three external members.
- 2.2** The Board Chairperson/Commissioner will appoint the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

2.3 A member of the Commission for Victims and Survivor's Finance and Corporate Affairs Team will provide the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee with a secretariat function.

3.0 Responsibilities

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will advise the Board and Chief Executive in the following areas:

- The strategic processes for risk, control and governance and the Governance Statement.
- The accounting policies, the annual report, and accounts, including the process for review of the accounts prior to submission for audit, levels of error identified, and management's letter of representation to the external auditors.
- The planned activity and results of both internal and external audit.
- The adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity, including external audit's management letter.
- Assurances relating to the management of risk and corporate governance requirements for the Commission for Victims and Survivors.
- Proposals for tendering for Internal Audit services or for purchase of non-audit services from contractors who provide audit services.
- Anti-fraud policies, whistle-blowing processes and arrangements for special investigations.
- The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will also annually review its own effectiveness and report the results of that review to the Board.
- A summary of whistle blowing cases, grievances, complaints, and disciplinary cases.

4.0 Rights

4.1 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may:

- Co-opt additional members for a period not exceeding a year to provide specialist skills, knowledge, and experience.
- Procure specialist ad-hoc advice at the expense of the organisation, subject to budgets agreed by the Board.
- Avail of suitable induction training and continuous professional development training for members.

4.2 The Committee is authorised to investigate any activity within its terms of reference and to seek any information it requires to perform its duties.

5.0 Access

5.1 Internal Audit and External Audit will have free and confidential access to the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

6.0 Meetings

- 6.1** The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will meet at least four times a year (potentially including a workshop). The Chairperson of the Committee may convene additional meetings, as deemed necessary.
- 6.2** A minimum of two members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee must be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate.
- 6.3** In the event of any member being unable to attend a meeting, the Chairperson will brief them on the business conducted. If the Chairperson is unable to attend a committee meeting, the two remaining members will decide who undertakes chairing duties for that meeting.
- 6.4** The Commissioner as Chair of the Board may attend meetings of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Chief Executive, the Head of Finance and Corporate Affairs, representatives from Internal and External Audit and a representative from the Sponsor Department will normally attend meetings of the Committee.
- 6.5** The Audit and Risk Committee may ask any other officials of the Commission Office to attend to assist with its discussions on any matter.
- 6.6** The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may ask any or all of those who normally attend but who are not members to withdraw to facilitate open and frank discussion of matters.
- 6.7** The Board or the Accounting Officer may ask the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to convene further meetings to discuss issues on which they want the Committee's advice.

7.0 Information Requirements

- 7.1** For each meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the Chairperson shall confirm the agenda with the secretariat.
- 7.2** Standing agenda items are:
- Draft minutes from the previous meeting to be approved
 - An opportunity for members to declare any conflicts of interest on agenda items
 - A schedule of matters arising, and progress made since the previous meeting

- A report summarising any significant changes to the organisation's strategic risks and a copy of the Corporate Risk Register
- A progress report of internal audit:
 - Work performed (and a comparison with work planned)
 - Key issues emerging from the work of internal audit
 - Management response to audit recommendations
 - Changes to the agreed internal audit plan
 - Any resourcing issues affecting the delivery of the objectives of internal audit
- A progress report (written/verbal) from the External Audit representative summarising work done and emerging findings (this may include, where relevant to the organisation, aspects of the wider work carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office, for example, Value for Money reports and good practice findings)
- Management assurance reports including audit recommendations, budget, project, risk evaluation and GDPR.
- Fraud and whistleblowing reports.

7.3 As and when appropriate the Audit and Risk Committee will be provided with:

- Proposals for the terms of reference of internal audit /the internal audit charter
- The internal audit strategy
- Internal Audit's Annual Opinion and Report
- Quality assurance reports on the internal audit function
- The draft annual report and accounts, including all appropriate assurance statements
- The draft Governance Statement
- A report on any changes to accounting policies
- External Audit's management letter/report to those charged with governance
- The External Audit Strategy and plan.
- A report on any proposals to tender for audit functions (as necessary).
- The organisation's risk management strategy.
- Anti-fraud policies.
- Disaster recovery, contingency and crisis planning.
- Management assurance reports.
- An annual report on the management of major incidents, "near misses" and lessons learned.
- Any other papers or issues materially relevant to the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee or deemed appropriate to be brought before the Committee.

7.4 An annual programme of work will be prepared which will define the frequency with which information should be reported.

7.5 The draft minutes will be circulated to Committee members within two weeks of the meeting and agreed formally at the next meeting of the Committee. Papers required will be with members at least five working days in advance of the meeting.

8.0 Conflicts of Interest and Conduct

8.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members will apply the principles of public service as set out in the Commission for Victims and Survivor's Code of Conduct. This will include advising of any external interests which may conflict with duties and responsibilities in accordance with Commission for Victims and Survivor's Code of Conduct arrangements.

9.0 Reporting

9.1 Once approved by the Committee, the Minutes of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings will be provided to the Board and published on the Commission for Victims and Survivor's website.

9.2 The signed minutes of the Audit and risk Assurance Committee are the formal feedback mechanism to the Board and these may be accompanied by supplementary briefings from the Audit and Risk Assurance Chair as appropriate.

9.3 The Committee will provide an Annual Report to the Board, timed to support finalisation of the Commission for Victims and Survivors Annual Report and Accounts and the Governance Statement. The Committee's report will summarise its conclusions from the work it has done during the year. The report contents will align with best practice.

9.4 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will undertake an Effectiveness review every two years.

9.5 Individual Audit and Risk Assurance Committee member's performance will be assessed annually.

10.0 Review and Approval

10.1 The Board will review this Terms of Reference annually.

>Ends<

