

# **Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery**

A guide for the victims, survivors and  
families who have been impacted  
directly by the Troubles/Conflict  
in Northern Ireland



# How the Commission can help you

The Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery is committed to serving victims, families and survivors by thoroughly investigating and establishing the facts of past events, to provide an acknowledgement of the wrongdoing, in a way that is sensitive to the trauma experienced and assists with the promotion of reconciliation.

If you have unanswered questions, and want the death of your loved one or the incident that caused you serious harm to be investigated, you can contact us to explore together what the Commission can do.

## Our values

We are an independent and impartial organisation. Our values are the foundation for our work and support our culture within the Commission. These help us to do our work to the highest standards and to hold ourselves accountable for how we treat people.

- integrity
- openness
- respect
- impartiality
- accountability.

## Key facts

The Commission can

- investigate deaths and serious injuries which are related to the Troubles/Conflict and which occurred between 1 January 1966 and 10 April 1998
- investigate an incident on request from a victim or survivor with a serious injury
- investigate a death on request from a close family member of the deceased
- investigate an incident even if your case has already been reviewed or investigated in the past
- consider requests for investigations from people living anywhere in Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Ireland and further afield
- publish a report setting out the circumstances of the event and the findings of the investigation.

## Key principles

There are three essential principles to the Commission's approach:

- Compliance with the European Convention for Human Rights (ECHR)
- Respect for the principles of the 1998 Belfast Good Friday Agreement; and
- Focus on providing useful information to those affected by the Troubles/Conflict.

# First Steps

If you are a victim or survivor of the Troubles/ Conflict or are a close family member of someone who was killed, you can ask us to carry out an investigation for you.

At this first stage, even if you are not sure if you want an investigation or that your case can be looked at by the Commission, you can contact us by telephone, Freepost or email.

Telephone: 028 9036 2093

Email: [casesupport@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:casesupport@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk)

Freepost: Freepost ICIR

Opening hours are on our website:  
<http://icrir.independent-inquiry.uk>

To help support you throughout your time with the Commission, we will provide you with a dedicated Case Support Worker. They will:

- keep in regular contact with you
- bring in the Commission's investigative officers and findings officers for specific explanations during the process
- help you provide feedback and challenge to the investigation, and
- remind others in the Commission of your wishes and needs.

They will respond to your questions and help you understand how the Commission works, including helping you to prepare for your involvement in decision-making at different stages. As far as possible, the same Case Support Worker will stay with you throughout the investigation of your case for consistency. You may choose to be accompanied by a relative, friend or other person unconnected with your case, for example a lawyer.

That person will not be there to speak on your behalf, but to help you explain your perspective to the Commission.

It is important you feel ready to make your request. Your Case Support Worker will give you space and time to take the steps that give you confidence in the requesting process.

You can discuss the different types of investigations we provide with your Case Support Worker and which of these would be most appropriate to the circumstances of your case. To help with this, your Case Support Worker will bring in a Senior Investigative Officer who will have carried out some background work and will be able to talk to you about how the Commission's approach might apply in your case. While not definitive, they will try to give a sense of the likely timescales and possible outcomes, to help inform your final decision about whether to make the formal request.

You will be closely informed about progress and involved in key decisions about your case where appropriate. Your Case Support Worker will explain to you what level of input and influence you will have at each decision point.

We want you to be confident when you make a request that we have understood your concerns and that the way forward to the information recovery and findings stages is clear. If we think there is a reason why your request might not be accepted we will talk to you about this at an early stage to explain if there is more information from you that could help with the determination.

# Information Recovery

Once your request has been accepted, your case will proceed to the information recovery stage and we will confirm the next steps with you.

A team of expert investigators will plan and carry out a thorough examination of your case. This team has the powers they need to recover information. They will have access to all the material generated from any previous investigations, as well as any material held by the state, no matter how sensitive it is. They can undertake new investigative work and, where relevant, seek forensic and other expert witness input.

The Commission has strong powers regarding accessing evidence, requiring people to give evidence or securing physical evidence. There are consequences for those who do not comply, including a fine of up to £5,000 for each breach.

In some cases, if there is sufficient evidence to support a prosecution, the case may be referred to the relevant prosecutor.

Your Case Support Worker will keep in touch with you at all stages. If you need additional emotional support, we can arrange this for you with specialist services. Your Case Support Worker will also arrange meetings with the Senior Investigative Officer when needed.

Different ways the Commission can require information:

- through general requests to individuals or organisations
- powers to require people to attend for questioning
- powers to require people to provide evidence
- powers to require state authorities to provide information the Commission requires
- powers to require co-operation of PSNI and some other bodies
- powers to impose fines on those who refuse to attend for questioning or who refuse to provide evidence.



# Reporting our findings


The evidence that emerges from our investigations will be rigorously assessed by the Chief Commissioner and his team. The findings will then be published in a report. The report will seek to answer the questions you had at the beginning of your journey with us and to present other findings that have been made. It will set out the circumstances of the death or serious injury and may name those who are found to have committed the acts.

You will be provided with the proposed report to review. It is our aim that you will already have a strong understanding of what the report will contain, as you will have been kept informed throughout its development. You can ask us to explain anything of concern and suggest changes before the report is published.

You will be able to make a public statement about the impact of the incident on you and your family, and you will also be involved in decisions about how the report should be published, for instance, you may want a public reading or other type of event.

As with the earlier stages of the investigation, your Case Support Worker will offer support and make sure your needs are considered.

When you reach the end of the information recovery journey, your Case Support Worker will be able to refer you for specialist emotional support should that be helpful.



## Next steps

If you have been affected by the Troubles/Conflict, whether as a victim, or survivor who suffered serious harm, or as a close family member of someone who was killed, please contact us to discuss what we can do to help you. You can do this by telephone, Freepost or by email. The next step following your contact will be for us to arrange to meet you in person to discuss what information you are looking for.

## How we handle your data

How we use the data you provide to us in meetings, calls and written communications is set out in our privacy notice, which is available on our website <https://icrir.independent-inquiry.uk/contact-us/our-privacy-notice/>. Our Case Support Workers will be able to explain to you what will happen to information that you provide in your interactions with us and answer any questions you may have. We will not hold your data for longer than necessary unless we are under a legal obligation to keep it.

## How to contact the Commission about an investigation request

Telephone: 028 9036 2093

Email: [casesupport@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:casesupport@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk)

Freepost: Freepost ICRIR

Website: <http://icrir.independent-inquiry.uk>