



What people think,
feel and do



ICRIR

Baseline Polling – Survey 1



Key findings

18 December 2023



OPINIUM RESEARCH

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Project details

PROJECT NUMBER	UK24733
PROJECT NAME	Baseline Polling – Survey 1
CLIENT COMPANY NAME	ICRIR
PROJECT MANAGER NAME	Adam Drummond
PROJECT MANAGER EMAIL	adamdrummond@opinium.com
SAMPLE	NI: 16 th – 20 th November 2023 GB: 22 nd – 24 th November 2023
FIELDWORK DATES	1,382 Northern Irish adults aged 18+ 2,000 GB adults aged 18+

Methodology

Quantitative Methodology: Timings, Sample and Weighting.

The poll's data collection was conducted online, from the 16 to the 20th of November 2023. This utilized the LucidTalk Northern Ireland (NI) online opinion panel, which consists of 15,843 members. This panel is balanced to reflect the demographics of Northern Ireland at a total level.

The initial dataset comprised 2,260 people taking part, which was later refined to 1,382 records to better align with NI demographics, particularly in terms of gender and age distribution. The gender balance in the revised dataset was adjusted to 58% male and 42% female.

Weighting adjustments were then made based on multiple demographic factors, including age (segmented into four groups: 18-34, 35-54, 55-64, 65+), constitutional position (ranging from strongly unionist to strongly nationalist), gender (male, female, other), and region (Belfast and non-Belfast).

The methodology aimed to provide a robust and representative opinion sample of Northern Ireland. This approach was in line with LucidTalk's standard methodology, as demonstrated in their Belfast Telegraph quarterly polls. Adjustments and refinements in methodology were made in consultation with Opinium, ensuring that the final dataset and weighting scheme accurately reflected the demographic and political landscape of Northern Ireland.

The Great Britain sample was run on Opinium's political omnibus and designed to be representative of the GB adult population according to age, gender and education groups, region, working status, past vote, and political attention based on British Election Study targets.

NOTE: as Northern Ireland participants were the main focus of the survey, please assume that statistics in this report refer to that sample unless specifically flagged as being from the Great Britain sample.

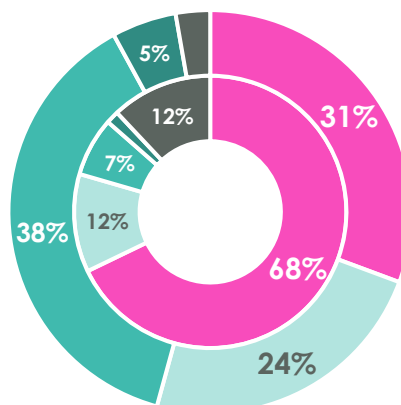
Commission Awareness

Two in three NI adults are aware of the Commission.

Overall, two-thirds (67%) of respondents indicated some level of awareness of the Commission. This breaks down into 5% who have heard a lot about it; 38% who know a little about it and 24% who had heard the name. Age-wise, awareness increases with age, starting from just over half (59%) among 18-34-year-olds to a notable three-quarters (76%) among those aged 65 and above. Regionally, the highest awareness is in the North (74%), closely followed by the East (70%), while Belfast and the South are relatively lower, at 63% and 68%, respectively.

On the other hand, about one-third (31%) of all respondents, and notably 37% of the youngest age group (18-34 years), have not heard of the Commission before. This lack of awareness is also more pronounced among Neutral respondents (33%) and those in Belfast (35%). On top of this, there is a high lack of awareness amongst GB adults, for whom 68% had not heard of it before and only 9% claim to know anything more than the name.

ICRIR Awareness (Outside - NI, Inside - GB)



- I had not heard of it before
- I had heard of it and know a little about it
- I had heard of it and know a lot about it
- Don't know / can't recall

Half of those who have heard of the Commission have little to no understanding.

The understanding among those who had heard of the Commission is relatively low. For how the Commission is being established, just under one fifth of NI residents (19%) either completely or somewhat understand, while over half (52%) have little to no understanding. In comparison, GB adults report more understanding as a fifth (22%) understand completely or somewhat and 44% say they do not really understand or do not understand at all.

In terms of what the Commission aims to deliver, nearly a third (31%) have some level of understanding, but more than a quarter (27%) lack a clear understanding. The gap in knowledge is most pronounced regarding the commencement of the Commission's services, where only about one sixth (16%) have a complete or partial understanding, compared to three fifths (60%) who do not understand at all.

Four in five of those who have heard of the Commission say this has been from traditional media.

Four-fifths (81%) of NI respondents who had heard of the Commission cited traditional media channels like newspapers, TV, or radio as their information source, showing a consistent pattern across all demographics. Social media was a notable source for about a quarter (24%) of respondents, with its usage significantly higher in the West (46%) and among the younger age group of 18-34 (30%). Interestingly, only a small percentage (4%) either don't know or can't remember how they heard about the Commission, indicating a clear awareness of the information sources among most respondents.

Comparatively, GB adults were less likely to have heard of the Commission through traditional media channels, as 37% had heard of it through this, a third through social media (36%) and a fifth through word of mouth (19%).

Nine in ten not aware of the Commission have heard of the Legacy Bill / Act.

A substantial majority (89%) of respondents who had not heard of the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) were aware of the Legacy Bill / Act. This awareness was notably higher among females (94%) compared to males (83%), and particularly high among those aged 18-34 (93%) and 55-64 (93%). This compares to much lower rates of awareness in GB, as a third (34%) of this who had not heard of the ICRIR had heard of the Legacy Bill / Act.

Legacy

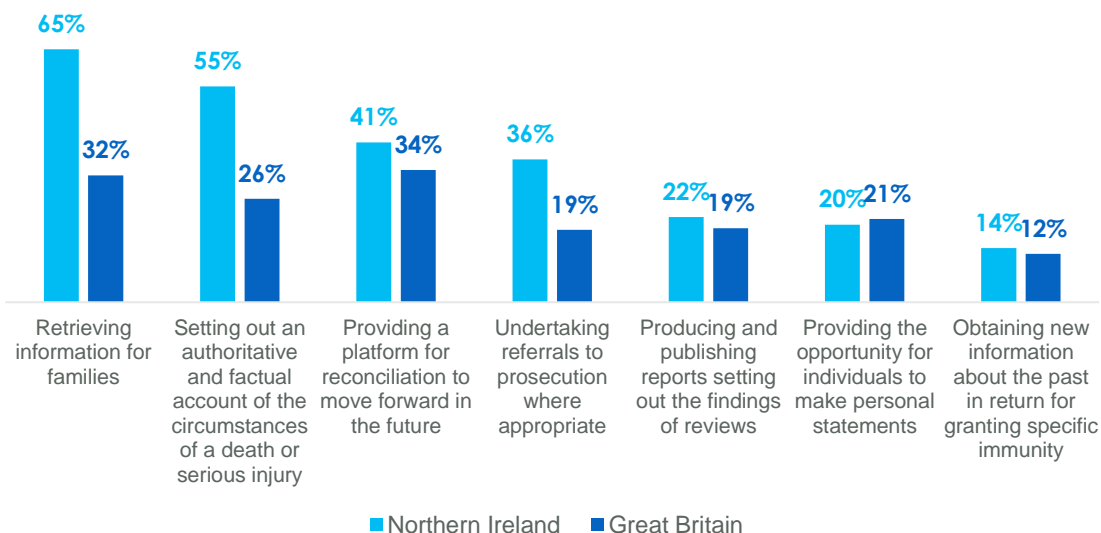
Nine in ten NI adults believe reconciliation is still needed in Northern Ireland.

An overwhelming majority, 87% of all NI respondents, believe that reconciliation is still needed in Northern Ireland. In terms of community background, the conviction is strongest among NET: Nationalists (94%) with a slightly lower, yet substantial, majority among NET: Unionists (80%). Notably, 89% of those who had heard of the Commission and 83% of those who had not, support the need for reconciliation. This is much lower in Great Britain, where only half (48%) definitively say that Northern Ireland still needs reconciliation but this is due to higher “don’t know” figures (39%). Only 14% said “no”.

Out of a list of possible outputs for the commission, the one anticipated to have the most positive impact, expected by two thirds (65%) of respondents, is retrieving information for families. Setting out an authoritative and factual account of the circumstances of a death or serious injury is the second most selected, (55) while 41% selected “providing a platform for reconciliation to move forward”. There were some differences on urban-rural splits, as retrieving information for families is more important for rural respondents (67%) compared to urban (61%). The same applies for setting out an authoritative and factual account of the circumstances of a death or injury, as 53% of urban respondents cite this as important, compared to 57% of rural respondents. Urban respondents are more interested in the reconciliation part of the ICIR’s remit, as 45% of urban respondents cite this compared to 37% of rural respondents.

As expected, responses from GB respondents were lower across the board: providing a platform for reconciliation to move forward (34%); retrieving information for families (32%) and authoritative and factual accounts of the circumstances surrounding deaths or injuries (26%).

Possible outputs with expected most positive impacts by Northern Ireland and Great Britain



Three in four want the Commission to comply with the Good Friday Agreement.

When combining those who view it as very or somewhat important, 75% of Northern Ireland participants believe it is important that the commission comply with the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement and 71% say the same for compliance with the European Court of Human Rights. Urban respondents were much more likely to say that the commission should be compliant with the European Court of Human Rights (81%) compared to rural respondents (67%). Conversely, 16% consider it not important for the Commission to be compliant with the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement, while this sentiment is slightly higher, at 23%, regarding compliance with the European Court of Human Rights. In contrast, the ECHR was seen as slightly more important by GB adults than the Good Friday Agreement, with 52% compared to 51%.

A significant majority, four out of five (80%) respondents, believe that providing new information to victims, survivors, and families will aid in reconciliation. Conversely, only about one in eight (13%) respondents perceive this approach as unhelpful, reflecting a widespread optimism about the role of information in the reconciliation process.

How important is it that...?



Three in five believe the Commission is not likely to succeed.

A majority, nearly three fifths (59%), think it is unlikely that the Commission will achieve its goal. Scepticism is much less of an issue in Great Britain, where a fifth (19%) think it is likely to succeed and a quarter (24%) think it is unlikely. Overall then the “don’t know” figures in GB are higher but the ratio of likely to unlikely is more optimistic.

Only a small fraction, around one sixth (17% of Northern Ireland adults), believe the Commission is likely to succeed, with more optimism among female respondents (21%) compared to male

respondents (13%). This optimism is more pronounced in the older age group, with nearly a quarter (24%) of those aged 65 and above believing in the Commission's likely success.

Drilling down, only a fifth of Northern Ireland respondents (22%) are completely or mostly confident in the Commission's ability to support victims and survivors professionally and safely, while confidence in delivering meaningful outcomes and discovering new information is even lower, at 11% and 13% respectively. In contrast, 38% lack confidence in the Commission's support for victims and survivors, and over half (53%) doubt its ability to deliver meaningful outcomes or find new information, indicating significant public scepticism regarding the Commission's effectiveness. Interestingly, while rural respondents are more likely to think information recovery is important (see above), they are more sceptical of the ICIR's ability to deliver information recovery. This is because 58% of rural respondents say they are not confident, compared to 49% of urban respondents.

Two fifths of NI adults are not confident in the Commission's impartiality.

Only about a quarter (27%) are completely or mostly confident in the Commission's impartiality, with the highest confidence level found among the older age group (43% among those aged 65+). However, 41% express a lack of confidence in the Commission's impartial judgment, with this scepticism 51% among Strongly Unionist (UK) respondents. GB adults are split on the issue, with a fifth (20%) saying they are completely or mostly confident and a further fifth (20%) saying they are not.

The ability to criticize state agencies such as the Northern Ireland Executive and Police Services Northern Ireland, and undertake independent public communications was seen as the most significant way to build trust, chosen by 55% of respondents. This was followed by:

- Transparency in the Commission's formal links and relationships with state agencies (53%)
- Keeping requestors and family members informed of investigation progress (46%)
- The ability to bring legal challenges against the government and other public authorities (43%)

One in four of those who have heard of the Commission believe it has taken the right approach.

Only a quarter (25%) of those who had heard of the Commission believe it has taken the correct approach. This is a little higher among GB adults at 29%. The perception of the Commission having mostly or completely taken the correct approach is highest among the older age group (36% among those aged 65+). However, this is higher than the 16% who believe the Commission has mostly or completely taken the wrong approach, with this belief notably high in the North region (31%).

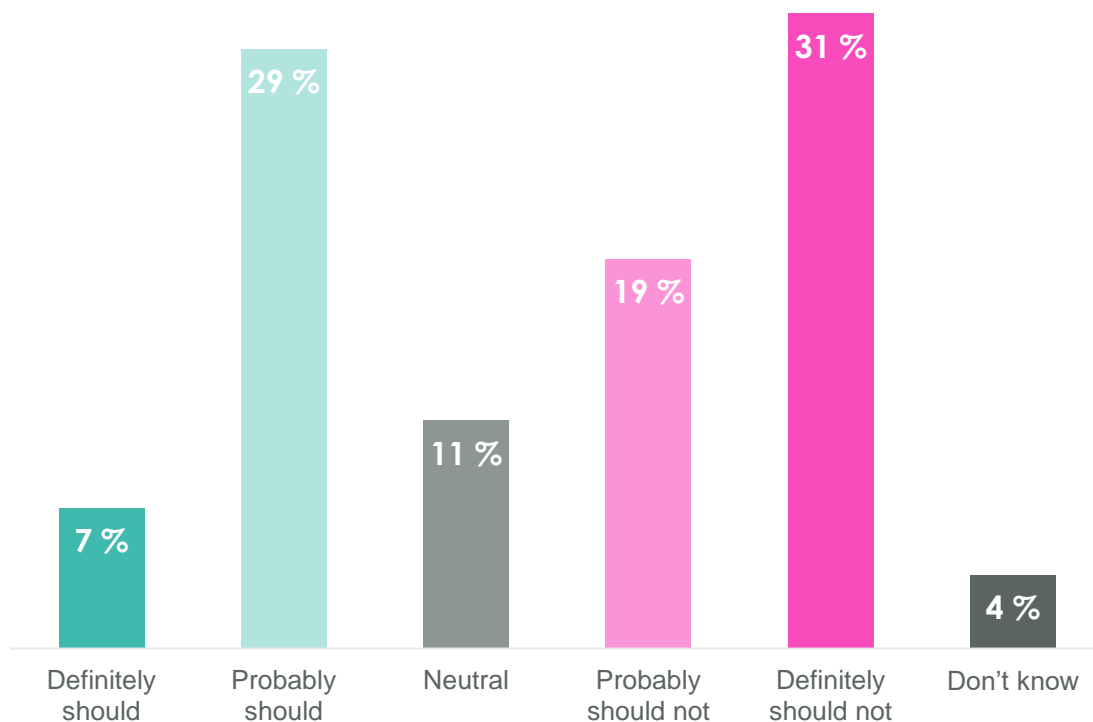
Conditional immunity

Half oppose granting conditional immunity.

About 36% of respondents believe the Commission should offer conditional immunity, with 7% strongly advocating for it. Conversely, half of the respondents (50%) opposed granting conditional immunity, with 31% firmly against the idea. Notably, a significant proportion (around 52%) of male respondents and older age groups (55-64 and 65+) were more inclined to reject conditional immunity. A plurality of GB adults think that the commission should give conditional immunity, with a quarter (25%) saying “should” and a fifth (22%) saying “should not”. Urban respondents are more likely to support conditional immunity (41%) compared to 33% of rural respondents.

Over a third (37%) of respondents, distributed across different demographics, believed that granting conditional immunity would be helpful, with 8% considering it very helpful. On the other hand, nearly half of respondents in Northern Ireland (47%) viewed this approach as unhelpful, with 27% strongly holding this opinion.

Do you think there should be conditional immunity granted in exchange for information recovery?



Majority support granting conditional immunity if information leads to a criminal prosecution.

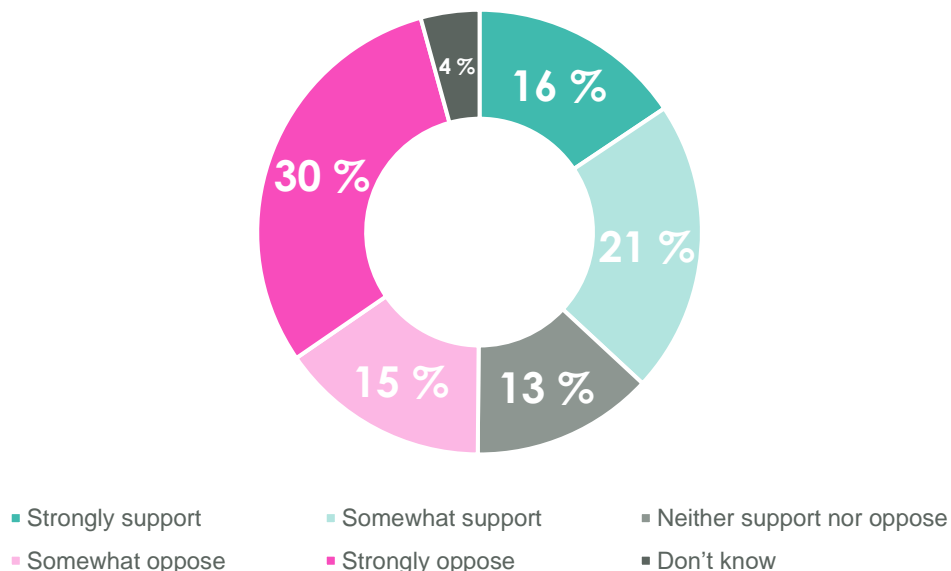
The highest support for granting conditional immunity (at 56%) was for when information provided leads to a criminal prosecution. This suggests a strong preference for outcomes directly contributing to legal accountability. This was also the highest amongst GB adults, for whom 46% said they feel conditional immunity would be appropriate on these grounds.

On the other end, the least support, at only a fifth (18%), was for granting conditional immunity when an individual provides a true account without new information. This indicates a clear reluctance to offer conditional immunity in cases where the contribution does not bring forth new insights or evidence, highlighting a desire for tangible progress in information recovery and justice.

Almost half oppose the five-year deadline.

Over a third (37%) of respondents supported the plan to operationalize the Commission from summer 2024 with a five-year deadline for requests. This period allows for conducting work to recover information related to requests made within the timeframe, after which no new investigations capable of leading to criminal proceedings will be initiated. On the other hand, 46% opposed the proposal. Net support is higher in GB, where 31% support but only 12% opposed the proposal.

Do you support or oppose the five-year deadline?



Almost half of those opposing the Commission support extending its lifecycle.

For those initially opposed to the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery's operational plan, the most popular change that could sway their support was the Commission's power to extend its lifecycle, with 46% favouring this. This change was especially



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preferred by female respondents (54%) and the 18-34 age group (62%). This is slightly lower, but still notable, amongst GB adults at 34%. Urban respondents are more likely to think that the power to extend the ICRIR lifecycle will make them change their mind, as 53% believe this compared to 44% of rural respondents.

Additionally, 21% of the opposers indicated that a clearer demonstration of accountability in decision-making by the Commission might lead them to support the proposal.

About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think**, **feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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