



What people think,
feel and do



ICRIR

Baseline Polling – Survey 2



Key findings

23 April 2024



OPINIUM RESEARCH

58 Great Sutton St
London, EC1V 0DG
T +44 (0)20 7566 3190
helloUK@opinium.com



Project details

PROJECT NUMBER	UK24733
PROJECT NAME	Baseline Polling – Survey 2
CLIENT COMPANY NAME	ICRIR
PROJECT MANAGER NAME	Adam Drummond
PROJECT MANAGER EMAIL	adamdrummond@opinium.com
SAMPLE	NI: 7 th – 12 th March 2024 GB: 6 th – 8 th March 2024
FIELDWORK DATES	1,292 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 7th to the 12th of March 2024. This utilized the LucidTalk Northern Ireland (NI) online opinion panel, which consists of 16,467 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 1,292 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

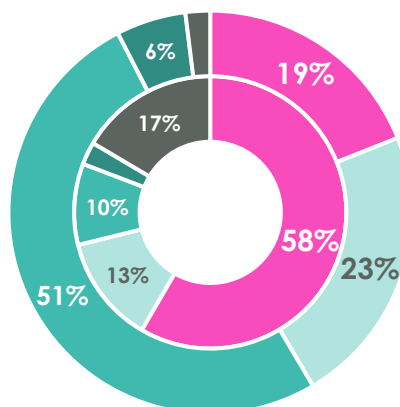
Big increases in awareness of the ICRIR since November.

Overall, almost four-fifths (79%) of NI respondents indicated some level of awareness of the Commission. This has increased significantly from the last round, where two-thirds of NI adults had heard of this (67%). This breaks down into 6% who have heard a lot about it; 51% who know a little about it and 23% who had heard the name. Familiarity increases with age too; just over seven in ten (71%) 18-44-year-olds say they are aware of the Commission but this rises to a notable three-quarters (85%) of those aged 45 and above.

Only a fifth (19%) of all respondents had *not* heard of the ICRIR, and this is down again from the last round of polling where 31% had not heard of the ICRIR. This lack of awareness is more pronounced among younger (under 45 year old) respondents (26%).

Awareness amongst GB adults has undergone a significant change. From the first survey, 68% had not heard of the ICRIR before and only 9% claimed to know anything more than the name. Now, however, a quarter of GB adults (25%) say they have heard of the ICRIR in one way or another, up from 20% in the previous round.

ICRIR Awareness (Outside Ring - NI, Inside Ring - GB)



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

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

Four-fifths (83%) of NI respondents who had heard of the Commission cited traditional media channels like newspapers, TV, or radio as their information source - very close to the 81% who had heard of the Commission through these sources the last time. Numbers who had heard of the Commission through social media were even more stable (24%), staying at the exact same level as the last poll. Other sources (word of mouth and via organisations) were also, at most, 3 points off from November and not statistically significant.

Comparatively, GB adults had a much greater variance compared to the November poll. In November, having heard of the ICRIR was much more evenly spread: 37% had heard of it through traditional news and media; a third through social media (36%) and a fifth via word of mouth (19%). Now, however, newspapers and traditional media sources make up a majority (51%) of the citations for having heard of the ICRIR, suggesting that media pick-up among UK-wide news sources has had an effect.

GB and NI divided on what the key objective of the Commission is.

A majority (54%) of Northern Irish adults believe the Commission's key objective is information recovery from Troubles-related deaths and serious injuries. This is the most cited objective and increases among younger age groups as 60% of 18-44 year olds think this is the key reason for the Commission's existence. Other reasons among the total NI adult population include promoting reconciliation (16%); supporting victims and survivors of Troublers related incidents (15%); supporting Veterans (7%) and seeking prosecutions for Troubles-related incidents.

This is, overall, a very different result to Great British adults, for whom reconciliation was most widely believed to be the key objective (28%), followed by information recovery (20%). Other reasons include supporting victims and survivors of Troublers related incidents (13%); supporting Veterans (11%) and seeking prosecutions for Troubles-related incidents (9%).

Legacy

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

An overwhelming majority, 85% (down very slightly from 87% in the November poll) of all NI respondents, believe that reconciliation is still needed in Northern Ireland. In terms of community background, the conviction is still strongest among Nationalists (91%) with a slightly lower, yet substantial, majority among Unionists (79%). This is much lower in Great Britain, where only half (49%) definitively say that Northern Ireland still needs reconciliation. However, this coincides with higher “maybe” figures (37%), suggesting people remain uncertain. Only 14% said “no”.

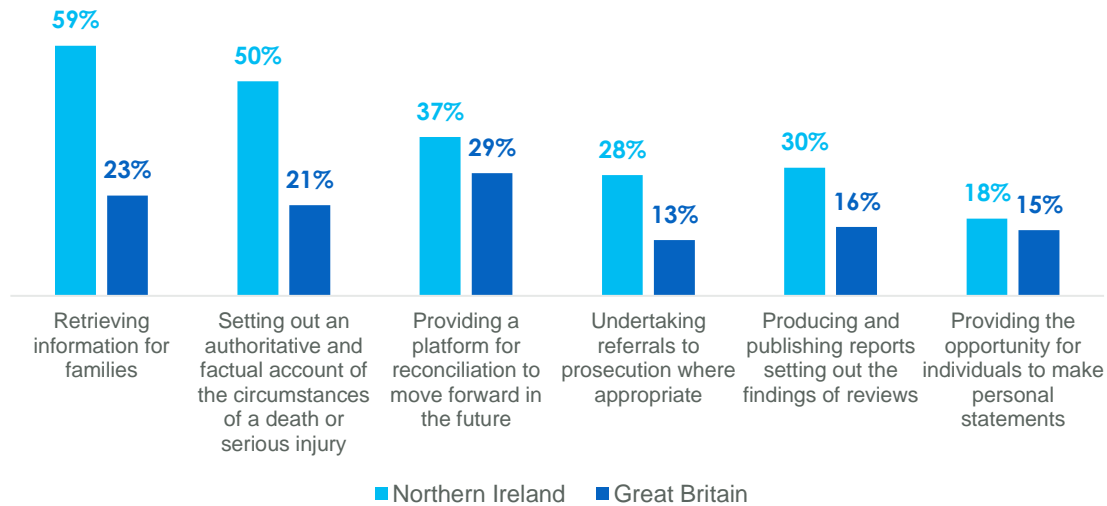
Comparing the second wave of polling to the first wave, ‘retrieving information for families’ remains the most positively perceived impactful output of the Commission among NI respondents. Both waves report similar figures with around two thirds citing this response (first wave 65%, second wave 59%). The second most impactful output, ‘setting out a factual account of events’, shows a slight decrease from the first wave (55%) to the second (50%). ‘Providing a platform for reconciliation’ sees a marginal increase from the first wave (41%) to the second (37%).

In terms of demographic differences, rural respondents’ emphasis on retrieving information for families is consistent across waves, with a slight decrease from 67% to 59%. Similarly, urban respondents’ views on setting out a factual account remained fairly stable (53% in the first wave compared to 51% in the second).

However, there is a notable shift in the urban-rural divide regarding the platform for reconciliation, which showed a decrease among urban respondents from 45% in the first wave to 36% in the second, aligning more closely with rural respondents at 38%.

As expected, responses from GB respondents were lower across the board: ‘providing a platform for reconciliation to move forward’ was an expected positive outcome for nearly 1 in 3 (29%), followed by ‘retrieving information for families’ (23%) and ‘setting out an authoritative and factual accounts of the circumstances surrounding deaths or injuries’ (21%).

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



Two-thirds believe the Commission is not likely to succeed.

In the most recent data, scepticism remains high, with almost two-thirds (63%) of NI respondents deeming it unlikely that the Commission will succeed in promoting reconciliation. This is a slight increase in scepticism compared to nearly three-fifths (59%) who said the same previously. There is a notable divide between male and female perceptions of likelihood, with the latest figures showing 16% of men and 11% of women believing it likely, representing a shift towards greater scepticism among women from the previous figure of 21%.

Furthermore, the latest data echoes previous sentiments of rural respondents' scepticism about the Commission's effectiveness. Nearly two-thirds of rural NI respondents (65%) feel the Commission is unlikely to achieve its goal, aligning with the earlier finding where 58% of rural respondents were not confident in the Commission's ability to deliver information recovery. This consistency in rural scepticism is juxtaposed with their recognition of the importance of information retrieval as a key aspect of the Commission's work.

Commissions approach to report writing is broadly supported, with least support around the definition of accuracy.

There was testing on each of the Commission's approaches and definitions of how they would write reports. This fell under four sections: clarity, accessibility, consistency and accuracy.

The first to be tested was the Commission's definition of clarity. A strong majority of NI respondents (74%) support the use of plain language and a narrative style that addresses specific questions, with slightly more men (75%) than women (72%) endorsing this.

The definition of accessibility, with reports available in various formats, is also widely favoured, receiving 77% approval, with the highest support among those identifying as neutral regarding Northern Ireland's status (89%).

A definition of consistency in report formatting is similarly backed by 76% of respondents. Support is particularly high (84%) among both the younger age group (18-44 years) and those identifying as neutral on Northern Ireland's constitutional status.

Lastly, the definition of accuracy, summarising critical evidence while excluding less relevant details, has more mixed reviews, with 55% support and a notable 24% opposition. The older age group (45+ years) shows more scepticism, with 21% finding it to be the wrong approach.

Overall, the support across approaches looks like so:

Approach	Right Approach	Wrong approach	NET Score
Accessibility	74%	3%	+72%
Consistency	76%	6%	+71%
Clarity	74%	8%	+66%
Accuracy	55%	24%	+31%

All approaches have a positive net approval and, for the most part, are seeing fairly similar levels of support. The stand-out factor is accuracy, which may indicate that respondents share some of the more writing and tone-based approaches like accessibility, consistency, clarity but are more sceptical of Commission's broader approach which would encompass "accuracy".

Across all approaches, Alliance Party supporters consistently show strong approval, particularly for clarity (91%) and accessibility (89%). Sinn Fein and DUP voters are more critical, especially regarding accuracy, where both groups have increased scepticism compared to the overall population. Rural respondents are generally more supportive of the approaches than urban respondents, except for accessibility, where urban support (82%) exceeds that of rural (75%). The findings indicate broad support for the Commission's methods but also highlight areas where clarity and the relevance of evidence could be improved.

A majority support the use of a Case Support Officer in engaging with victims and information holders.

Involving the Case Support Officer in the process for reporting and post-reporting engagement with the Commission garners majority support, with over half (55%) of NI respondents fully endorsing it. Men (59%) are slightly more in favour than women (52%). A significant proportion (35%) agree somewhat, indicating some reservations or a need for more information.

The approach is most strongly supported within the neutral community (71% approval) and least among DUP voters (48%) and Sinn Fein supporters (47%). Age-wise, younger respondents are more likely to endorse it than the older age group (61% of 18-44 years support it, compared to 52% of 45+ years). Urban and suburban respondents are more in favour too (57% and 62%, respectively) compared to rural respondents (51%).



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In summary, the Commission's approach is broadly accepted, particularly the aspects of clear communication and involvement of individuals or families throughout the process. There are indications of cautious optimism, with many respondents being somewhat supportive, highlighting a need for the Commission to continue to build trust and transparency in its engagements.

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.

www.opinium.com | research@opinium.com | 0207 566 3190

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