

Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery

Work plan 2025-26
December 2024

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Foreword from our Chief Commissioner

The Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (“the Commission”) was established to provide answers for those impacted by deaths and serious injuries related to the Troubles/Conflict, with its principal statutory objective being to promote reconciliation.

Our last work plan for 2024-25, published in April 2024, set out the work undertaken to put the necessary elements in place for the Commission to begin its work. Since 1 May 2024, the Commission has begun the serious task of investigating deaths and serious injuries. We are now publishing our work plan for the next financial year, 2025-26, to set out the range of work we will be undertaking in the coming year.

Since it was established in December 2023, the Commission has embraced an approach that places victims, survivors and families at the centre of its work, ensuring that their needs are recognised and understood. In addition, I have made clear the importance of the Commission’s commitment to three core principles:

- **Compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR):** Ensuring that all investigations and operations adhere to the standards set by the ECHR.

- **Respect for the principles of the 1998 Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement:** Upholding the agreements and understandings established in this crucial document.
- **Focus on providing useful information to those affected by the Troubles/Conflict:** Prioritising delivering meaningful and relevant information to victims, survivors, and their families.

Our focus for 2025-26 is to build on the foundations we have established and strengthen our engagement with victims, survivors, and their families, and ensure that our three-stage investigation process – Support, Information Recovery, and Findings – continues to provide the pathways to answers for Requesting Individuals and the promotion of reconciliation.

The focus for us will be to deliver with competence and care so that all who come to the Commission will be supported in their journey.



One of our key objectives is to embed the Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model across all aspects of our operations to help us effectively and sensitively support those victims, survivors, and families who come to us. A further key objective is the Commission’s principal statutory objective of promoting reconciliation. Our Board has proactively embraced a ‘due regard’ duty, ensuring that the promotion of reconciliation is interwoven throughout the work of the Commission.

However, we recognise the uncertain and contentious context in which the Commission sits. There continues to be ongoing hostility by some to the work of the Commission, which is to be expected given the contested nature of the legislation which brought the Commission into being. The Dillon et al. judgment in September 2024, whilst reaffirming the Commission’s independence to investigate, highlighted areas for further consideration, including the disclosure of information by the

Secretary of State. These areas rightly need to be addressed by the Secretary of State in the coming months and we stand ready to work with him on these issues.

My role as Chief Commissioner is driven by a commitment to ensuring that the legacy of the Troubles/Conflict is addressed with integrity, care, and an unwavering dedication to seeking the unvarnished truth. This is what the victims, survivors, and families rightly expect and deserve.

Sir Declan Morgan
Chief Commissioner

Introduction from our Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner

This work plan for the financial year 2025-26, the Commission's second, marks an important chapter in the Commission's journey, reflecting on the significant progress made so far and setting out our strategic goals and commitments for the year ahead.

As we move forward, we remain focused on delivering results and fulfilling our statutory obligations, ensuring that our work continues to serve victims, survivors, and families impacted by the Troubles/Conflict meaningfully.

Over the past year, we have moved from the early setup phase into a fully functional organisation. Significant effort by the programme team enabled the Commission to begin accepting enquiries from victims, survivors, and families from 1 May 2024. Increasing numbers of those individuals are now moving into the second stage of our three-stage process of Support, Information Recovery, and Findings.

Our outreach efforts have also expanded significantly, enabling us to engage with a wider range of voices and perspectives. This engagement is critical to building trust and ensuring the Commission builds connections.

Our Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model, formally launched in October 2024, has become a key part of our operations, ensuring that the wellbeing of Requesting Individuals is embedded in every aspect of our work.

As we look ahead to 2025-26, the Commission will focus on building and enhancing its credibility, demonstrating competence across



our operations and ensuring that a culture of care permeates our work. Our work will be informed by the lessons learned during our first cases and guided by the feedback we receive from those who come to us. Listening and responding to the needs of victims, survivors, and families will remain central to everything we do.

There are many complex factors that may affect the wider perception of the Commission and impact on the demand for the Commission's services. We will support business and workforce planning through a structured approach to managing cases alongside other policies.

Our core priority is to deliver outcomes, with compassion and diligence, for those people who come to us in search of answers.

Louise Warde Hunter

Louise Warde Hunter
Chief Executive Officer
and Commissioner

Our organisation

Our vision, mission, and values

Key messages

Our mission centres on the independent investigation of Troubles/Conflict-related deaths and serious injuries, with a deep commitment to victims, survivors, families, and reconciliation.

We are committed to the core principle of full compliance with human rights standards and to demonstrating our integrity in all our actions.

The Board has set out the following vision, mission and values which underpin the Commission's work:

Vision

A society that is more reconciled because the Commission has provided greater information to the public about deaths and serious injuries during the Troubles/Conflict.

Mission

An independent Commission 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.

Values

The Commission's Code of Conduct was published in December 2023 and sets out the values the whole Commission has adopted to guide its work – integrity, impartiality, openness, accountability, and respect. They are the standards of behaviour that can be expected of Commissioners, officers, and others working on behalf of the Commission.

Outreach: Engagement and Communications

Strategy Team progress and plans

Key messages

Public consultations: Between February and May, we conducted four essential public consultations on: our Operational Design Framework, our Trauma-Informed Approach, our Equality Scheme, and our Disability Action Plan.

Communication channels: To maintain openness and build credibility, the Commission has employed diverse communication channels, including newsletters, direct engagement with key interest groups, information-sharing events, and presentations to elected representatives.

The Commission’s work is a human endeavour. Engagement and outreach with people sit at its heart. The trust we build is vital to success. The Commission has sought to understand and meet the needs of those who might access its services, and this work has reflected the fact that the Commission’s remit is across the United Kingdom.

In 2024-25, we are making strides in raising public awareness and confidence through a comprehensive Outreach Strategy. The strategy seeks to inform and connect with victims, survivors, families, and stakeholders, and ensure the Commission’s services are transparent and well-understood.

Between February and May, we conducted four essential public consultations on; our Operational Design Framework, our Trauma-Informed Approach, our Equality Scheme, and our Disability Action Plan. The feedback from these consultations was invaluable, leading to practical amendments, such as enhanced clarity on [eligibility for investigations](#) and the development of a [Charter of Commitments](#). This Charter, introduced early in the investigatory process, establishes clear expectations, providing a consistent foundation for engagement.

Full details of these consultation feedback reports are available here: [Consultations - Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery](#).

To maintain openness and build credibility, the Commission has employed diverse communication channels, including newsletters, direct engagement with key interest groups, information-sharing events, and presentations to elected representatives.

Recent examples include: an update to the Committee for the Executive Office in September, highlighting our progress and plans, and a live [Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model webinar](#) in October 2024. These initiatives have been instrumental in keeping the public and stakeholders well-informed and engaged.

Progress through engagement

The work of the Commission extends outside Northern Ireland as families in Great Britain and beyond may also seek our services. In the current year outreach efforts have been expanded to these communities, connecting with support organisations and conducting directed engagements to raise awareness and establish confidence in our services.

The Commission's website has been essential to our engagement efforts. We are enhancing accessibility and user-friendliness, incorporating digital solutions, such as audio-visual materials, to accommodate diverse needs.

In 2025-26, our consultation, outreach, and communication approach will all continue to be strengthened and refined,

drawing from the insights gained over the past year. Through ongoing polling, consultation, and ongoing feedback from Requesting Individuals, we will continue to assess the Commission's reception in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

This data along with digital engagement analytics will allow us to monitor our impact and tailor our approach to ensure awareness raising and reach. Ongoing results from our consultation and polling efforts can be found here: [Consultations - Independent Commission for Reconciliation & Information Recovery](#).

In 2025-26, alongside the expansion of our investigative capacity, and delivery of Findings reports to victims, survivors, and families, we will deliver a robust engagement programme that focuses on

enhancing our credibility and demonstrating competence and care across our operations. Leaders from across the Commission including members of the Board, will seek to build and strengthen links with our stakeholder groups through meetings and events.

The Commission is committed to progressing dialogue with all those who have a part to play in promoting reconciliation through Information Recovery. The door to dialogue will always be open to all stakeholders. Listening and responding will remain central to sustaining outreach with key stakeholders and fostering long-term relationships in this challenging space.

Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model (TRIM)

Case Support Team progress and plans

Key messages

Each Requesting Individual who contacts the Commission is assigned a named Case Support Worker who is a consistent point of contact throughout their engagement to the conclusion of the investigative process in their case.

As we move into 2025-26, our focus remains on deepening and broadening relationships with external stakeholders, developing feedback loops to assess the effectiveness of the TRIM Framework, refining and embedding independent support services, and ensuring that all interactions are trauma and resiliency informed.

We continue to develop and integrate the Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model (TRIM) into the work of the Commission. The TRIM Framework is built on our commitment to focusing on those people whom we exist to serve and responding to their needs: it is at the core of how the Commission carries out its work.

Initially outlined in our Trauma-Informed Approach Consultation published in February 2024, the TRIM has been progressively refined based on feedback from victims, survivors, families, and stakeholders. The publication of the Framework for Implementing the Trauma and Resiliency Model (TRIM) in October 2024 reflects our commitment to openness and care and demonstrates the Commission's collaborative approach and active listening enabling us to improve.

The TRIM Framework is aimed at creating a safe and supportive environment. Given the experiences that people have had in the past and the ongoing impacts of those experiences that victims, survivors, and families may still experience; it is critical that wellbeing is supported

in all aspects of the Commission's work. With the TRIM approach we hope that those engaging with the Commission will find themselves in a place where they are heard, where their life experience is acknowledged, and their questions addressed.

It is critical that we do all we can to mitigate any re-traumatisation that can be experienced when retelling events from the past. The TRIM approach teaches staff to recognise when this is happening and to support Requesting Individuals. We have put additional, independent support in place for Requesting Individuals and provide them with information about other support services. The Commission's independent support service has been refined and improved and will continue to evolve in 2025-26.

The TRIM recognises that those working with people who are experiencing high levels of stress or trauma can themselves experience stress and trauma. This is true across work areas within the Commission as people engage with the stories of loss, grief and distress, and with crime scene information and investigative materials.

Across the Commission, resiliency skills for wellbeing are essential to enable staff to look after their own wellbeing so they can look after that of others, particularly Requesting Individuals. The TRIM aims to train people and to generate a Commission culture that takes care of staff and encourages staff to take care of one another.

For those who take the step of coming forward to the Commission, we have committed to continuity of care. Each Requesting Individual who contacts the Commission is assigned a named Case Support Worker, who is a consistent point of contact throughout their engagement, to the conclusion of the investigative process in their case.

The Charter of Commitments was introduced in July 2024. This outlines our commitments and responsibilities to Requesting Individuals and what we ask of them as part of the process of working together. A support pack is under development to give to Requesting Individuals to make sure they have all the information they need to make informed decisions regarding their engagement with the Commission.

In parallel, we have introduced a Witness Charter designed to support the wellbeing of witnesses providing information to the Commission. This Charter ensures that witnesses feel supported and able to provide the best possible evidence. Measures can also be put in place to support witnesses providing evidence to the Commission and these will be discussed with each individual witness.

Commissioners have agreed the TRIM Framework, which requires their active and ongoing leadership. This Framework has put several commitments in place to help Commissioners assess delivery. Codesign opportunities will be

available for staff, people with lived experience, people engaging with the Commission, and relevant experts. This provides assurance to the Commissioners in their leadership role.

In line with our commitment to sustainability and developing an organisation that is well informed about the environment in which we work, the TRIM Team is developing E-learning modules on Safeguarding and Understanding Trauma and Resiliency, which are set to launch in early 2025. These modules will equip all staff with the tools to deliver trauma and resiliency informed services with care and consistency.

The Commission has built strong relationships with stakeholders and support groups across Northern Ireland and Great Britain through the TRIM. These relationships are invaluable in shaping the TRIM and building trust and credibility with the Commission.

As we move into 2025-26, our focus remains on deepening and broadening relationships with external stakeholders, developing

feedback loops to assess the effectiveness of the TRIM, refining and embedding independent support services, and ensuring that all interactions are trauma and resiliency informed. An action plan flowing from the TRIM Framework can be found on the Commission's website.

Through the TRIM, we aim to foster a culture of resilience and trust that strengthens the Commission in its investigative work aimed at providing answers to the questions from victims, survivors, and families.

Caseload and demand for services

Strategy and Investigation Teams progress and plans

Key messages

As of 9 December 2024, 120 individuals have asked the Commission to examine their case and have been registered. Of these, 24 Requesting Individuals' cases have been accepted and are in the Information Recovery stage.

In order to track and respond to demand, we are developing a demand forecast model and a strategic performance framework for implementation in 2025-26.

The Commission's Accountability Update published in September stated that 85 individuals had asked the Commission to look at their case and had been registered, with eight investigation requests accepted as of 31 August 2024.

Later in September, we reported to the Committee for the Executive Office that the numbers of registered enquiries had moved beyond 100.

As of 9 December 2024, 120 individuals have asked the Commission to examine their case and have been registered. Of these, 24 Requesting Individuals' cases have been accepted and are in the Information Recovery stage. We have accepted one request from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Further information on cases can be found on the Commission's website.

Over the coming year, the Commission anticipates that the caseload is likely to continue to increase, although understandably at this early stage, forecasting case numbers is complex.

In order to track and respond to demand, we are developing a demand forecast model and a strategic performance framework for implementation in 2025-26. These will be integral to enhancing planning, tracking, and reporting our progress and performance.

The demand forecast model as outlined in this plan considers a range of factors including:

- The current caseload in the days of operation since launch provides a moving daily rate over the year.
- The population of potential Requesting Individuals is in the thousands given there were more than 3,500 deaths related to the Troubles/Conflict and many more thousands of incidences of

harmful conduct. The seriousness of injury that makes a person eligible will narrow that figure. We are looking to Northern Ireland and Great Britain health statistics to help us understand this better.

- Past numbers and patterns of uptake experienced in the first years of operation by legacy and trauma services related to the Troubles/Conflict such as the Victims' Payment Scheme, Historical Enquiries Team.
- Our assessment of wider awareness of, and engagement with, the Commission through responses to polling and publications.

Our current assessment of trends in numbers of incoming requests suggests that there was an "early adopter" surge in the first weeks of the Commission being launched in May 2024, with a further peak in September, following the publication of the Accountability Update which received significant media coverage. The Commission expects that the

case numbers will grow throughout 2025-26, in line with, and tempered by, the range of factors described. However, these factors will necessarily be affected by wider legal and political scenarios that add an element of uncertainty for potential Requesting Individuals.

The legal backdrop in the coming financial year is likely to include the following scenarios:

- A remedial order made under the Human Rights Act 1998. This will restore the right to bring civil proceedings arising from conduct that now falls within the Commission's remit. It will also make material we hold admissible as evidence in such proceedings. This could increase our caseload.
- Primary legislation when parliamentary time allows. This will address other matters such as: reforming and strengthening the Commission's independence, powers and accountability, restoring inquests, amending the disclosure regime under the Legacy Act, and enhancing

the Commission's powers in investigations that are unable to proceed as inquests.

- The Secretary of State's proposed Supreme Court appeal in Dillon et al. This could affect the law on the disclosure of sensitive information and on effective next of kin participation in cases that would otherwise be inquests.
- The inter-state case brought in January 2024 against the UK Government by the Irish Government at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Next steps may depend on developments in the foregoing scenarios.

These factors and scenarios are considered in our estimates. Due to the uncertain nature of latent demand, the Commission's approach is agile with regular data-driven and qualitative review and revision of our understanding. The demand forecast model also tracks external influences on public engagement, such as media coverage and judicial rulings related to Troubles/Conflict

cases. Recent analysis, for example, indicates a noted rise in engagement following specific media reports - a trend we will monitor carefully and continuously as we refine the model.

To address anticipated demand in 2025-26, the Commission's resourcing strategy for investigations remains flexible. The Commission's budget, including an Annual Managed Expenditure (AME) allocation, is designed to be varied depending on the level of demand for investigations. Staffing plans allow for responsive adjustments to align with operational demands.

Delivery and working methods

Investigation and Findings

Teams progress and plans

Key messages

Our operational capabilities will be enhanced to meet increasing demand while ensuring consistency and quality.

We are continuously refining our processes to ensure that every stage of our investigations is handled with care and professionalism.

The financial year 2025-26 marks a defining moment for the Commission as we deliver for increasing numbers of victims, survivors, and families. To do this we will build on the firm foundations established since the establishment of the Commission in December 2023 and the work commenced at the start of operations in May 2024.

In the first few months of the Commission, we laid the foundations through the work on key areas.	recruiting and training talented people, obtaining bespoke estates and, installing ICT - Operational Capability.
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These were:

- Putting in place good governance, corporate systems, organisational values, and core principles to support development of the Commission’s work - Enablers;
- Carrying out a range of engagements to explain the Commission’s approach and obtain insight and feedback to incorporate into design - Outreach;
- Developing an Operational Design Framework to set out how the Commission will carry out its investigations - Policy Development;
- Putting in place the capability required to carry out the Commission’s work through

With these foundations in place, the Commission was able to start operations on 1 May 2024 and to receive the first enquiries from victims, survivors, and families. As we transition into 2025-26, our approach will focus on improving these processes. This is crucial to ensuring that the Commission meets increasing demand and builds confidence in our service.

Our three-stage investigative process, as outlined in the Operational Design Framework, continues to underpin our work. Each stage is structured to support victims, survivors, and families, facilitating information recovery and the delivery of findings in a compassionate manner, including a robust process for the management of any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

The three stages of investigation



Stage 1: Support

This is the start of an individual's journey with the Commission. Dedicated Case Support Workers will help individuals and families better understand how the Commission may be able help them (and what it will not be able to do), the different options available to them, and the information the Commission will need to move to

the next stage. While this is the first stage of the journey, that support will be available throughout the entire process. The Case Support Team will provide a single point of contact and consistent, objective support for the Requesting Individual and

family throughout their time with the Commission. The team will respond to any questions and provide people with the space, time and information to make decisions that are right for them and the information recovery outcomes they seek.



Stage 2: Information Recovery

In this next stage, a team of investigators will gather information and evidence and seek to answer the questions the Requesting Individual and family have raised. The team will need a range of skill sets, to comb through archives, interview witnesses, and secure evidence. Investigators will work across a range of different cases at any one time to maximise progress and efficiency.

Each investigation will be overseen by a Senior Investigative Officer. Investigators will be able to require access to all material from any previous fact-finding and determination processes, as well as all material held by the state, no matter how sensitive. They may also undertake new investigative work. The Investigations Team will follow defined terms of reference for each

investigation, which will start with a scoping exercise, based on an approach to cold case reviews that follows internationally recognised best practice. This will inform the Commissioner for Investigations' decision on which of three investigative routes will be most appropriate for the case. All three routes will embed the features required for an ECHR compliant investigation.



Stage 3: Findings

The Chief Commissioner is responsible for the production of reports at the conclusion of investigations. In this work, they are supported by the Findings Team. A Findings Officer from the unit will be assigned to each investigation from an early stage and will independently challenge the direction of investigative work. As the investigation nears its

conclusion, the Commissioner for Investigations and his team will present their evidence to the Chief Commissioner who will assess and evaluate it to determine findings. Further investigative work may be requested. Reports will be produced to record the findings that have been made and to seek to address the Requesting Individual's questions. The Chief Commissioner will

provide the opportunity for an eligible person to make a personal statement to be published alongside the final report. Personal statements can be made by individuals to share how Troubles/Conflict-related events have affected, and continue to affect them or any other relevant persons.

As increasing numbers of cases move through the three-stage process of Support, Information Recovery, and Findings, the work of learning from feedback and progressing continuous improvement will be developed. This will include drawing on the expertise of established institutions like the College of Policing, ensuring that our investigative approach is aligned with best practice.

This will sit side by side with assurance and compliance work to ensure that all teams are complying with the full range of policies and procedures that are set out for all staff, including the Case Support Workers and Investigators, to follow. This provides assurances that policies are being implemented, and that victims, survivors, and families receive the best possible service from the Commission.

Building on a strong foundation

The systems and processes implemented during 2024-25 provide a robust foundation for our ongoing work. The Information Recovery Team developed essential operating manuals, conducted training, and focused on recruitment to ensure a strong investigative infrastructure. These systems are fully operational and supported by rigorous data security and privacy protocols that guide information recovery efforts.

Moving into 2025-26, we will monitor systems closely, adapting as necessary to meet evolving demands. Assurance and compliance activities will be undertaken so the Commission can

ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are being implemented correctly and consistently.

We have established effective agreements and protocols with key organisations to facilitate the efficient retrieval of critical information. These protocols will be routinely evaluated, ensuring good information flows with public authorities while upholding the Commission's independence.

Our information management practices are built on strict standards. We have developed a robust policy framework for data security and information handling and information management

will continue to be of central importance for 2025-26, with staff training and assurance activities to continue into the next financial year.

In 2025-26, we will continue to manage the Commission's caseload, in line with our policies. Cases will be categorised, in line with the case categorisation policy. The Commissioner for Investigations will conduct quarterly caseload reviews, adjusting as necessary to ensure each case receives the required attention and resources.

Key policies

Investigations, Communications, and Governance Teams

Key messages

Our policy framework of published policies, outlined in Annex D, encompasses key policies designed to uphold the Commission’s vision, mission, and values.

Our approach is grounded in a commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI), operational integrity, and corporate responsibility, reflecting our principal statutory objective of promoting reconciliation.

The Commission is committed to ongoing policy reviews to ensure alignment with best practices, evolving legal requirements, and feedback from the communities we serve.

A foundation for credibility, competence, and care

Since its establishment in December 2023, the Commission has prioritised governance supported by a comprehensive suite of policies that sit at the core of our operations.

Our approach is grounded in a commitment to Equality, Diversity and, Inclusivity (EDI), operational integrity, and corporate responsibility, reflecting our principal statutory objective of promoting reconciliation.

Our policy framework of published policies, outlined in Annex D, encompasses key policies designed to uphold the Commission’s vision, mission, and values. This structured framework helps us maintain the highest standards in all operational areas.

To ensure these policies remain relevant and robust, we engage regularly with key stakeholders, drawing on diverse insights and best practices. Each policy aligns with our statutory objectives and obligations, including compliance with the Equality Scheme, and the Disability Action Plan. Looking ahead to 2025-26, we will focus on sustainability and continuous improvement within our policy framework.

Upcoming and in-development

The Commission plans to pilot its draft case categorisation policy, implementing the full end-to-end process, with the aim of finalising it during the 2025-26 financial year. As the Commission’s work evolves, it may identify and develop additional policies to address emerging needs and priorities.

Environmental and sustainability policy Expected publication: 2025

Overview: Reflecting our commitment to sustainable practices, this policy will outline our approach to minimising environmental impact across our operations. It will address resource management, carbon footprint reduction, and our contributions to environmental sustainability, ensuring that our practices are environmentally responsible and aligned with global sustainability standards.

Policy reviews and continuous improvement

The Commission is committed to ongoing policy reviews to ensure alignment with best practices, evolving legal requirements, and feedback from the communities we serve. Continuous improvement is central to our approach, enabling us to adapt policies to enhance operational delivery. All published policies are accessible on the Commission’s website.

Equality, diversity and, inclusivity

Key messages

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission commits to: equality of opportunity: Ensuring equality of opportunity is afforded to everyone, cognisant of their religion, political opinion, race, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or dependants; and promoting good relations: Fostering understanding and positive relationships across diverse communities.

Approved by the ECNI in July 2024, our Disability Action Plan ensures accessibility and inclusivity for people with disabilities.

The Commission’s commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) is foundational to our remit. In line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, we launched a 12-week consultation on our Equality Scheme, which is under review by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI).

Formal approval is expected by the end of 2024, enabling us to ensure our approach remains inclusive, fair, and compliant with statutory obligations.

As we progress into 2025-26, the Equality Scheme 2024-29 and the Disability Action Plan 2024-29 provide essential frameworks for embedding EDI principles across all functions. These initiatives drive inclusivity, care, and operational sustainability while meeting statutory responsibilities.

Equality Scheme 2024-29

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission commits to:

- **Equality of opportunity:** Ensuring equality of opportunity is afforded to everyone, cognisant of their religion, political opinion, race, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or dependants.
- **Promoting good relations:** Fostering understanding and positive relationships across diverse communities.

Disability Action Plan 2024-29

Approved by the ECNI in July 2024, this plan ensures accessibility and inclusivity for people with disabilities.

Key actions include:

- **Infrastructure and accessibility:** Ensuring all offices are equipped with accessible infrastructure and assistive technologies.
- **Disability awareness training:** Staff training enhances respectful and effective interactions.
- **Accessible communications:** Public documents and consultations accommodate diverse needs.

Continuous training and accessibility

Ongoing training and enhanced accessibility measures will continue into 2025-26, embedding EDI principles throughout the organisation. These efforts demonstrate our professionalism and care for those we serve and our dedication to operational excellence.

Developing our organisation

Key messages

The Board of Commissioners will continue to shape the direction of the Commission throughout 2025-26. Through regular formal meetings, which are documented and publicly accessible on our website, the Board's scrutiny is essential to our organisational commitment to openness and accountability.

In 2025-26, we will roll out our learning and development plan, building on foundational training in trauma-informed care, the existing reconciliation legal framework, disability awareness, and EDI.

The Commission, through careful and conscientious engagement, is setting the groundwork for developing a historical record, reflecting the Commission's statutory obligation to publish the historical record to address the legacy of the Troubles/Conflict.

Growing capacity for 2025-26

As the Commission moves into 2025-26, we are focused on building on the foundations established over the past year and strengthening our ability to deliver. We are committed to continuous improvement by enhancing our processes and governance.

Our organisational culture is centred on demonstrating our competence and care in our delivery for victims, survivors, and families. This will require us to be responsive and adaptable in a changing environment.

Governance and strategic oversight

The Board of Commissioners will continue to shape the direction of the Commission throughout 2025-26. Through regular formal meetings, which are documented and publicly accessible on our website, the Board's scrutiny is essential to our organisational commitment to

openness and accountability. The Board's quarterly reviews ensure that the Commission remains agile and aligned with its objectives, supporting our credibility and fulfilling our mandate responsibly.

Promotion of reconciliation and developing thinking on the historical record

Following comprehensive consultations and stakeholder feedback, the Board has approved a proposal to embed the promotion of reconciliation, giving due regard, within all aspects of its work. This approach will be supported by training for staff on the existing legislative and policy statements on reconciliation. In parallel, the Commission, through careful and conscientious engagement, is setting the groundwork for developing a historical record, reflecting the Commission's statutory obligation to publish the historical record to address the legacy of the Troubles/Conflict.

Our organisational culture is centred on demonstrating our competence and care in our delivery for victims, survivors, and families.

Accountability and reporting

The Accountability Update published in September 2024 provided an update on the first four months of the Commission’s operations. The Annual Report and Accounts for 2023-24 also sets out an update on the work undertaken from December 2023 to the end of March 2024, including covering the financial accounts and the performance report.

This annual work plan outlines the progress made in the financial year 2024-25 to date and the plans for the coming financial year 2025-26. Our intention is to develop a

four-year corporate plan which will include the priorities outlined in this work plan as representing year one. This will enable us to set out our vision, purpose and strategy for delivery over the medium term.

Learning and development: Investing in our people

A commitment to continuous learning is vital to our mission. In 2025-26, we will roll out our learning and development plan, building on foundational training in trauma-informed care, the existing reconciliation legal framework, disability awareness, and EDI. Tailored professional development

opportunities will equip our staff to handle the complexities of historical investigation, ensuring consistency and care in each interaction with victims, survivors, and families.

Supporting our team: Ensuring wellbeing

Recognising the importance of our Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model for the Commission’s staff, access to emotional support resources is in place for those working at the Commission. This commitment to staff wellbeing supports our effective operational delivery.

Our resources

Key messages

Budgets will be based on those for 2024-25 adjusted for one-off set up costs and ongoing expenditure, providing us with the resources we require for this plan.

Each facility is being developed with security and TRIM principles in mind to ensure that they promote safety and respect and are suited to the sensitive nature of our work.

Budgets will be based on those for 2024-25 adjusted for one-off set up costs and ongoing expenditure, providing us with the resources we require for this plan.

A strategic focus for 2025-26

As the Commission enters its second year of operations, efficient resource management is critical to sustaining the Commission’s ability to fulfil its mandate in a complex landscape. Effective deployment of resources will enable the Commission to deliver thorough, impartial investigations, engaging meaningfully with victims, survivors, and families, and operating independently of political pressures.

Governance and accountability

The Commission operates independently from the Northern Ireland Executive and the UK Government, funded directly through a Northern Ireland Office (NIO) grant. This structure safeguards our impartiality. The Framework Document published on the website sets out the requirements for both the Commission and the NIO to ensure that there is accountability for expenditure of public funds alongside operational independence for the Commission. This framework upholds our commitment to openness and responsiveness, establishing clear boundaries between operational decisions and reporting obligations

to the NIO. It allows us to maintain oversight while protecting the Commission’s independence, a balance that is crucial in building trust with those who come to us and with the wider public.

Budget allocation

We are in the process of finalising funding for 2025-26 with HM Treasury. This will include the principle that investigatory costs are included in Annually Managed Expenditure providing the Commission with the ability to respond flexibly to the number of cases we receive. Budgets will be based on those for 2024-25 adjusted for one off set up costs and ongoing expenditure, providing us with the resources we require for this plan. Finalised figures will be published with the parliamentary main estimates for 2025-26.

Infrastructure and facilities: Supporting trauma-informed environments

The Commission operates from its Belfast headquarters, with additional sites in Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Each facility is being developed with security and TRIM

principles in mind to ensure that they promote safety and respect and are suited to the sensitive nature of our work. By investing in modern, accessible, and secure environments, the Commission ensures that victims, survivors, and families can engage with us effectively. We are committed to maintaining sustainable facilities that adapt to the needs of those we serve while also being mindful of the environmental impact of our operations.

Staffing: Building capacity for the future

Building a skilled, diverse workforce is essential as we scale our investigative operations. The Programme Establishment Team which set up the Commission throughout 2024-25, successfully transitioned its responsibilities to the operational teams in October 2024. Moving into 2025-26, these teams are focused on scaling delivery and refining processes for continuous improvement. Recruitment efforts are ongoing and aimed at

attracting individuals whose skills and competences align with the Commission’s values of integrity, impartiality, respect, openness, and accountability.

Reflecting on the society we serve is crucial. Our September 2024 Accountability Update outlined our progress in building a diverse team. Since then, we have onboarded additional staff from various backgrounds, enriching our perspective and capacity.

Reporting on this is included in our Accountability Update which was published in September 2024. It details the makeup of the Commission’s staff in terms of diversity. In the time since that update, we have recruited and onboarded 57 more staff across a variety of directorates from a range of backgrounds. As at 9 December 2024, the Commission has 147 staff, with a further 109 people being onboarded and 22 roles in live recruitment.

Priority themes and actions for 2025-26

Credibility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver our first Findings reports and/or refer first cases for prosecution to relevant prosecutors.• Develop and implement phase 2 of our communications and engagement strategy to enhance public understanding of the Commission and to obtain regular feedback on public sentiment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish the strategy framework for long-term delivery of the Commission’s statutory principal objective to promote reconciliation and statutory function to publish an historical record.• Deliver our second and third accountability updates in March and September 2025.
Competence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource and enable the Information Recovery Team to investigate all circumstances of cases and address the questions raised by Requesting Individuals.• Enhance the operation of the Investigations Oversight Committee by continuous improvement of case management process.• Accelerate recruitment and readiness of the Findings Team in order to produce reports in 2025-26.• Continue to refine our approach to managing and forecasting our Annually Managed Expenditure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen our recruitment, selection and onboarding activity for the Commission’s staff and ongoing training so that they are highly skilled, demonstrate the Commission’s values, and act with integrity.• Exercise our functions in compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights, deploying our professional legal skills and services with pragmatism, innovation, and collaboration.
Care	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead the integration of the Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model across the Commission’s work.• Provide high quality support to Requesting Individuals via Case Support across the lifetime of an investigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the potential for principles used in mediation to assist with the resolution of questions from victims, survivors, and families.

ANNEX A - Figure 1: Code of Conduct values and behaviours

Integrity

Putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests. Acting in line with other applicable professional obligations and standards.

Openness

Being truthful and straightforward in your communications and your engagement while respecting confidences and keeping information safe.

Respect

Treating everyone with whom you interact with courtesy, irrespective of their background or beliefs. Engaging in constructive, respectful and professional dialogue even in the case of differing opinions.

Impartiality

Behaving in a fair and objective manner, treating all equally, remaining open minded and taking decisions based on evidence.

Accountability

Operating within legal requirements, including the European Convention on Human Rights, the Equality Act 2010 and equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland, the requirements of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023, and within the objectives and policies of the Commission. Being willing to justify decisions, actions and omissions.

ANNEX B - Figure 2: TRIM principles

The Commission has developed a Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model (TRIM) to support victims, survivors, and their families. This model is integral to the Commission’s culture and standard operating processes, ensuring safety and support throughout engagement.

Key principles of the TRIM:

Supportive environment: Creating a safe, supportive, and responsive environment that acknowledges the prevalence of trauma and its effects on individuals and communities.

Individualised attention: Attending to the specific needs of victims, survivors, and their families, ensuring accessibility in communications, safe meeting spaces, and supportive interactions.

Integrated approach: Embedding trauma and resiliency-informed practices across all areas, including investigations, policy development, communication, workforce wellbeing, and learning and development.

Leadership and vigilance: Demonstrating strong and compassionate leadership at every level, fostering a culture of continuous learning, evaluation, and reflection.

Promoting reconciliation: Focusing on healing and resilience to support ongoing engagement and improve outcomes for all stakeholders.

The Commission emphasises a trauma-informed approach in its operations. This approach is detailed in our Operational Design Framework which outlines the Commission’s commitment to understanding and addressing the emotional and psychological needs of victims, survivors, and families. By integrating trauma-informed principles, the Commission aims to foster trust and provide sensitive support throughout our investigative processes.

For comprehensive information on the Commission’s Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model (TRIM), please refer to the [TRIM Framework](#) available on our website.

ANNEX D - Published policies

Operational policies

- [ICRIR Framework for Implementing the Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model \(TRIM\)](#)
- [ICRIR Charter of Commitments to witnesses](#)
- [ICRIR Approach to Section 14 Notices and Compliance – Public Policy Statement](#)
- [ICRIR How the Commission shares and publishes information](#)
- [ICRIR The Operational Design Framework](#)
- [ICRIR Charter](#)
- [ICRIR Information Recovery – Investigations](#)
- [ICRIR Handling a Request](#)
- [ICRIR Reviewing Decisions in Investigations](#)
- [ICRIR Case Categorisation](#)
- [ICRIR Policy on Conflicts in Investigations](#)
- [ICRIR Policy on off-site meetings](#)
- [ICRIR Safeguarding Policies](#)
- [ICRIR Policy on Unreasonable and Vexatious Behaviour](#)
- [Policy and Process on designation of Officers with the powers of a Police Constable](#)

Corporate policies

- [ICRIR Recruitment Principles](#)
- [ICRIR Pay Policy](#)
- [ICRIR Modern Slavery Policy](#)
- [ICRIR Complaint Handling Procedure](#)
- [ICRIR Policy for the Declaration and management of Outside Interests](#)
- [ICRIR Code of Conduct](#)
- [Disability Action Plan 2024 – 2029](#)
- [ICRIR Framework Document](#)
- [Gifts and Hospitality Policy](#)



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