



External Advisory Group Terms of Reference (December 2025)

Introduction and Purpose

1. The Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) powers and duties derive from the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023. The primary role of the ICRIR will be to provide information to families, victims and survivors of Troubles/Conflict-related deaths and serious injury, and in doing so to fulfil its principal objective of promoting reconciliation. The ICRIR will have full police powers to conduct criminal investigations as part of any investigations and will produce findings report following any investigation.
2. The ICRIR has a statutory duty to carry out reviews of deaths and other harmful conduct that were caused by conduct forming part of the Troubles/Conflict where a valid request has been received. The Commissioner for Investigations provides organisational leadership of the ICRIR's investigative functions.
3. The ICRIR Board has collective responsibility for ensuring the ICRIR fulfils its statutory purpose and objectives. The External Advisory Group (EAG) has been established by the ICRIR Board to advise the Commissioner for Investigations (and the wider Commission) on strategic matters relating to investigations, including providing expert insight to assist the Commissioner for Investigations to discharge his/her duties. It will provide a "critical friend" role so that methodologies, information recovery processes, and use of the Commission's powers are all focused on delivering good quality outcomes for those making requests.
4. The Northern Ireland Troubles Bill ('the Troubles Bill') is currently in its passage through the UK Parliament. It will reform the governance and functions of the ICRIR and rename it the Legacy Commission. Earliest estimated commencement of that Bill is November 2026.

Remit

5. The External Advisory Group will be given briefings by the Commissioner for Investigations and those acting on his/her behalf

about strategic investigative objectives and approaches so that it can provide expert advice and input for the Commission to consider. This will include proposals and workstreams relating to the transition of ICRIR to Legacy Commission Information briefed and advice given will be in confidence but with the agreement of the Chief Commissioner, the Chair of the Group may publish a summary of the Group's opinion via the Commission.

6. Conduct of specific cases and individual operational decisions will remain matters for the Commissioner for Investigations and relevant ICRIR officers and any Committees or sub-Committees of the Board so tasked, in line with the relevant terms of reference.

Membership

7. The External Advisory Group are public appointees, appointment and functions are subject to compliance with key principles of public appointment. The Commission has determined that, although not within the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, where relevant and proportionate, the principles in their Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments¹ will be applied (which also reflect the key principles in the Cabinet Office Governance Code on Public Appointments) to assure transparency and fairness.
8. The External Advisory Group will include (but not be limited to) those who have experience in law, human rights, law enforcement, experience and knowledge of the Troubles/Conflict in Northern Ireland, those with oversight experience, those with trauma and resiliency informed experience as well as those with experience advocating for victims and survivors.
9. Appointment of EAG members will be approved by the Board in consultation with the Chair of the EAG, if one is in post at the time of appointment.
10. A minimum of five members are required for a meeting to be quorate.
11. The External Advisory Group will have an independent Chair who will be appointed by the Chief Commissioner. The Chair will be responsible for leading discussions, working with the Commissioner for Investigations to identify appropriate topics and areas for support and challenge, and for representing the whole Group membership's views to the Commission. In doing this they may be invited to attend the ICRIR Board.

¹ [CPANI Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in NI.DOCX](#)

12. There shall be two Co-Chairs who shall also be appointed by the Chief Commissioner, to provide resilience to the Chair and support meetings and the EAG as appropriate.
13. The Co-Chairs shall have the same powers and responsibilities as the Chair. These powers are to be exercised jointly or by one Co-Chair acting on behalf of both where one is unavailable, and only when the primary Chair is unavailable or has a conflict of interest. In the absence of the Chair, the Co-Chairs are authorised to exercise all the functions of the Chair.

Duration/Term

14. The External Advisory Group will dissolve and cease to operate without notice on the day the provisions relating to the transition of ICRIR to the Legacy Commission come into force, unless the Board determines otherwise.
15. The Board may dissolve the External Advisory Group without notice at any time.
16. Dissolution will effect termination of Chair, Co-Chairs, and all members' appointments.
17. Reappointments of existing members or Chair/Co-Chairs for further terms must comply with paragraph 4.1 of the Code of Practice (NI). Reappointment of existing members must have approval of the Board in consultation with the Chair; reappointment of Chair or Co-Chair will be done by the Chief Commissioner.

Responsibilities

18. The External Advisory Group will:
 - Offer guidance and expert advice on strategic matters relating to investigations.
 - Offer guidance and expert advice about the systems and methodologies for the conduct of investigations in line with the Commission's objectives of independence, reconciliation, and the Commission's TRIM model.
 - Offer guidance and expert advice on internal and external engagement and support, staffing expertise and training.
 - Offer guidance and expert advice relating to the transition of ICRIR to Legacy and the effect of that transition on the above matters.

- Upon request, offer specific advice to help resolve obstacles or difficulties that the investigations teams may face.

Meetings

19. Meetings of the External Advisory Group will be held regularly (minimum quarterly). The Chair may convene additional meetings, in consultation with the Commissioner for Investigations.
20. The Commissioner for Investigations will work with the Chair to determine the officers best placed to provide briefings and assist the Group.