

Expert Advisory Panel for Official History of British Policy During the Northern Ireland Conflict

Terms of Reference:

1. Purpose:

- The Expert Advisory Panel is established to provide independent advice and guidance to the historians writing the official history of British policy during the conflict in Northern Ireland.
- The panel's primary function is to ensure the accuracy, objectivity, and comprehensiveness of the official history through its expert advice and guidance.

2. Membership:

- Members are invited in an individual capacity and are not acting as representatives of other organisations with which they might be affiliated.
- There is no fixed term, and members will not be employed or otherwise contracted by the UK Government.

3. Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement a transparent process for the selection of qualified and independent historians to write the official history. This may involve reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and making recommendations to the Secretary of State or appointing body.
- Offer advice on the overall structure and content of the project, ensuring it provides a comprehensive and objective account of British policy during the Troubles.
- Offer guidance on the selection and use of primary and secondary source materials, including any sensitive or classified documents.
- Ensure that the historians are supported to access fully all relevant materials.
- Identify any potential gaps in the historical record that might require further research.
- Advise on the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences within the historical narrative.
- Support a comprehensive and wide-ranging dissemination strategy (see below).
- Review and comment on draft outputs of the official history, ensuring factual accuracy, balanced interpretation, and adherence to sound historical methodology.
- Promote public engagement with the official history by participating in conferences, workshops, or other outreach activities as appropriate.

3. Dissemination Strategy:

- In collaboration with the appointed historians and relevant stakeholders, develop a comprehensive dissemination strategy to ensure this official history reaches a wide audience. This may include engagement with:
 - **Academic Community:** Organizing and participating in conferences, workshops, and presentations to ensure dialogue between the appointed historians and the broader academic community, both nationally and internationally.
 - **Wider Public:** Engaging with media outlets, community groups, and the wider cultural sector to promote public awareness and understanding of the period of the Northern Ireland conflict.
 - **Policymakers:** Facilitating discussions and presentations for policymakers and government officials to inform future policy considerations.

4. Meetings:

- The Expert Advisory Panel will convene at least six times a year, with additional meetings as needed.
- Meetings will be chaired by a designated member of the panel.
- Minutes will be kept of all meetings and made available to members within 1 week of a meeting. Once agreed, minutes will be published as soon as practicable.
- The Northern Ireland Office will provide secretariat and any other administrative support.

5. Conflict of Interest:

- Members of the Expert Advisory Panel are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest related to the project.
- Any member with a potential conflict will be recused from discussions or decisions related to that specific area.

6. Review:

- The terms of reference of the Expert Advisory Panel will be reviewed periodically and may be revised as needed, in consultation with the panel members.

7. Support:

- The Expert Advisory Panel can expect full cooperation from any government departments deemed relevant to the scope of the project, and will be supported to ensure this is the case by the Northern Ireland Office and by the Cabinet Office.

