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a c h i e v e

Delivering practical help and services to victims of the
conflict in Northern Ireland.

Victims Unit, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

A strategy to deliver practical help and services to the surviving physically and psychologically injured of violent, conflict related incidents and those close relatives or partners who care for them, along with those close relatives or partners who mourn their dead.

ministerial foreword

The Belfast Agreement of April 1998 states that it is essential to acknowledge and address the suffering of victims as a necessary element of reconciliation. The publication of this document is a key step forward in that process and we are delighted to endorse its content.

“Reshape, Rebuild, Achieve” sets out how the Northern Ireland administration will deliver practical help and services to those who have suffered most over more than 30 years of violence. We set out how, across a range of Departments, progress will be made on a variety of issues that we hope will make a positive difference to the lives of victims.

The issues involved in addressing the needs of victims are difficult and complex, but they are issues that we, the Executive and the Assembly, cannot afford to shy away from. The development and implementation of this strategy has demonstrated positively how Departments can work together to tackle the demanding problems in our society. It also shows clearly how the devolved administration can make a positive impact on peoples’ lives, and we are conscious of the need for the actions contained in the strategy to be responsive to the needs of individuals as well as those associated with victims’ groups.

This strategy has been developed by taking into account the views expressed during consultation and further constructive input from the Committee of the Centre. The details contained in this document are therefore a genuine product of the views of the people that will be most affected by its implementation. The Executive is committed to taking this strategy forward in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, and others, and will ensure that the measures outlined will be delivered in a proactive way. It is the responsibility of all of us to acknowledge the pain of the past, to learn lessons for the future, and ensure that those who have suffered most have their needs addressed.


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introduction: vision, values, themes and aims

- 1.1** The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government states that the Executive will "continue to pay special attention to the particular difficulties faced by victims of the Troubles". The development and implementation of this strategy is a major step in ensuring that such "special attention" is forthcoming.
- 1.2** In developing this strategy we are conscious that often it is not clear what is meant by the term "victim" and it is virtually impossible to come up with a comprehensive definition, particularly as an element of self-definition is involved. Indeed, some respondents to the consultation exercise suggested alternative words such as "survivor" or "casualty". However, a definition was used in the consultation which received broad support. It is intended, therefore, that the following definition applies whenever the word "victim" is used:

"The surviving physically and psychologically injured of violent, conflict related incidents and those close relatives or partners who care for them, along with those close relatives or partners who mourn their dead".

- 1.3** This definition will not be rigid or inflexible. The purpose of the strategy is to help those who have suffered as a result of the conflict and the definition should be seen in that light.

vision

- 1.4** Central to the delivery of the strategy is the following vision:

A society where the suffering of all victims is recognised; a community that acknowledges the pain of the past and learns lessons for the future; and an administration that provides, in conjunction with others, support and services in a proactive and sensitive manner to meet the needs of victims.

values

- 1.5** Underpinning the victims' strategy will be a series of values which will influence all steps taken to deliver the strategy. All actions will be:

Victim centred: victims should be the prime consideration in the delivery of the strategy. They should be afforded dignity and respect, and treated sensitively and confidentially, with recognition given to their individual circumstances;

Equitable: all victims, their close relatives, partners and carers should have equality of opportunity in relation to access to, participation in and benefit from, the services delivered;

Inclusive: the diversity of victims' experience, culture and lifestyles must be recognised and respected;

Focused: service delivery needs to be clearly focused on achieving specific results in a targeted manner with available resources; and

Integrated: services for victims should be delivered in a co-ordinated, consistent and effective manner, through partnerships between the relevant statutory, community and voluntary frameworks.

t h e m e s

1.6 This strategy contains a number of elements with actions spread across Departments and Agencies to deliver practical help and services. The key themes of the strategy are as follows:

- the strategy is relevant to individuals as well as those in groups;
- the strategy is drawn up to reflect directly comments made during consultation with victims;
- the devolved administration aims to make it easy for victims to obtain the information, advice and services they need, and have a say in the ongoing development of policy;
- partnerships and Trauma Advisory Panels have key roles in the delivery of the strategy;
- the devolved administration will continue to work closely with the Northern Ireland Office; and
- in line with the New Targeting Social Need policy, the Executive is determined to ensure that resources are allocated to those in greatest need.

a i m s

1.7 The aims of the victims' strategy are to:

1. promote and facilitate an improvement in the standard of services being provided to victims and to seek to address any identified gaps in service provision;
2. increase awareness in Government and the wider public sector regarding the needs of victims and to encourage a sympathetic and understanding approach to meeting those needs;
3. secure the implementation of policies and practices designed to meet the identified needs of victims in a strategic manner across the devolved administration and ensure that barriers to access are overcome;
4. ensure that all Government Departments and Public Authorities recognise the particular circumstances of victims and play their part in ensuring that barriers to social inclusion are overcome;
5. ensure that Government Departments and statutory agencies adopt a committed and co-ordinated approach to victims' needs, working, where appropriate, in partnership with voluntary and community organisations;
6. increase awareness among the public (especially victims and their representatives) to the approach of the devolved administration in meeting the needs of victims; and
7. meet the commitments on victims' issues contained in the Programme for Government.

1.8 The strategy will be reviewed and rolled forward from 2004 as some funding streams will be coming to an end around then (see Chapter Four) and there is a possibility that some victims' issues currently dealt with by the Northern Ireland Office, such as compensation and criminal justice, will be transferred to the devolved administration while the strategy is operational. Any new strategy, however, will of course be responsive to emerging needs.

1.9 The decision to develop and put in place a victims' strategy reflects the New Targeting Social Need policy, as some victims are among the most marginalised people in our society. This does not, however, mean the creation of what some have termed "post-code victims". Resources and services will be based on need, not on where people live. In addition, in

line with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Executive will implement the strategy with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in the consultation associated with this strategy and the responses received indicate that the assessments made in that exercise were correct.

- 1.10** The following chapters set out how the strategy is to be implemented, the structures and funding required to deliver the strategy, and how the strategy will be monitored and evaluated. Contact points for the organisations mentioned in this document are given in Annex A.

development and delivery of the strategy

development of the strategy

2.1 A consultation paper about this strategy was launched on 7 August 2001 with a closing date of 9 November 2001. 121 responses were received from a wide range of individuals, groups, organisations and elected representatives. Some of the respondents had held meetings and workshops to allow a spread of interested parties to contribute their views. The consultation paper itself had been developed from a large number of meetings between officials, Ministers and victims' groups and individuals not associated with groups. These meetings, along with the diversity of responses to the consultation paper, have helped to shape this strategy and it is therefore genuinely the product of positive engagement with those on whom it will have the most impact.

2.2 The key messages coming from the consultation exercise and findings from our research were that:

- **victims want recognition of their situation;**
- **more and better information on available services should be provided;**
- **practical help and services are required, particularly in the areas of health, education and learning, housing and developing business skills;**
- **the Trauma Advisory Panels have an important role to play; and**
- **partnerships would be vital in delivering the strategy.**

In January 2002, a summary of responses was issued to all those who had replied to the consultation exercise, and to other interested parties.

2.3 When developing this strategy and in the consultation exercise that preceded it, those with an interest in the strategy have emphasised continually that it needs to be much more than a document – people's lives should be affected positively by the strategy being implemented. The sections below set out some of the ways in which we hope this will happen and show in a practical way what this strategy aims to deliver.

delivering the strategy

These are the measures we will take to achieve the aims set out in the strategy.

Recognition

2.4 Victims told us that they wanted greater recognition throughout Government. In response, we will:

- beginning in the 2002-03 financial year, ensure that all Departments and Agencies where appropriate, reflect victims' needs in their corporate planning documentation using the common aims and themes as set down in Partners for Change, the Government's strategy for support of the Voluntary and Community Sector;
- by April 2002, ensure that all public consultation includes, where appropriate, victims groups and individuals;
- by September 2002, examine on a Northern Ireland Civil Service-wide basis, what additional staff training is required for those dealing with victims, particularly those delivering front line services;
- by December 2002, consult with Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), especially those providing education and/or outreach programmes to consider including victims in their target audiences; and
- by January 2003, pursue with relevant NDPBs how the use of arts and sport in particular might be used as therapeutic tools and how, for example, poetry, art and music might be used as methods of expressing the experiences of victims.

Access and information

2.5 Victims told us that they wanted easier access to Government and better information about what Government does and the services it provides. In response, we will:

- set up a Freephone helpline to the Victims Unit (telephone 080 8127 3333). In addition, a textphone for those with hearing difficulties will be provided (telephone 028 9052 2343);
- publish alongside this strategy, a key contact list for Government Departments and Agencies;

- work collaboratively with the Northern Ireland Office to ensure that victims know which part of Government to access for help;
- by June 2002, develop and publish a model of the various Government and other structures involved with victims' issues;
- during the period covered by the strategy, work with relevant agencies, in consultation with victims and victims' groups, to deliver a range of seminars and information events designed to reach as wide an audience as possible;
- during the period covered by the strategy, take steps to develop and improve communication with those dealt with by the Victims Unit, for example, through the use of newsletters and fact sheets;
- update the Victims Unit website: www.victimsni.gov.uk with information of interest to victims and their representatives and respond promptly to any issues raised through the Victims Unit e-mail address: info@victimsni.gov.uk; and
- place articles in the in-house magazines of all Government Departments to publicise the work of the Victims Unit. The Unit is also willing to contribute articles to newsletters or pamphlets issued by victims' groups or by any community or voluntary organisation.

In addition to work being taken forward within Government, there are other information sources which may be of interest to victims. The three main ones known by the Victims Unit are:

- Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN) which is a project run by the University of Ulster and Queen's University, Belfast. The project is internet-based and can be accessed at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk>;
- the Chronology Project, run by Democratic Dialogue, is also internet-based and can be accessed at www.democraticdialogue.org/victims.htm; and
- the Institute for Conflict Research which has developed a website that can be accessed at www.conflictresearch.org.uk.

Health

2.6 Victims told us that their health needs were important. In response, we will:

- ensure that the forthcoming review of mental health policy and strategy considers the needs of victims;
- address the particular needs and difficulties of victims in relation to mental health through the development of a Mental Health Promotion Strategy to be published by June 2002;
- by March 2003, review the Health and Personal Social Services recommendations from the Bloomfield Report (1998) and the Social Services' Inspectorate Report (1998) "Living with the trauma of the troubles" and determine the extent of the implementation of the recommendations;
- by June 2003, carry out research to determine whether counselling would be helpful for victims who apply for access to coroner's inquest papers, as they can often be shocking and direct in content;
- by March 2003, ensure that all relevant Health and Personal Social Services staff are aware of how to respond to the health and social needs of victims and their representatives;
- consider the specific needs of victims when implementing the Social Services Inspectorate review of counselling; and
- through funding a worker in each Trauma Advisory Panel, allow an assessment of the need for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy courses in each Health Board area.

Education and learning

2.7 Victims told us that their education and learning needs should be addressed. In response, we will:

- by December 2002, examine the development of alternative programmes for getting intimidated young people back into education;
- by June 2002, investigate how services such as the Education Welfare Service and Behaviour Support Teams can interact with victims and victims' groups;

- by April 2003, examine how teacher development can address barriers to learning experienced by victims;
- by April 2003, examine how parent support, including the development of parenting skills, can be developed by schools and other agencies;
- by June 2003, examine how awareness raising of victims' issues can be addressed in the development of a new statutory curriculum for schools;
- by April 2003, publish for consultation a policy framework on the development of counselling support services to pupils;
- by December 2002, consider the specific needs of victims when developing strategies to engage with disaffected young people; and
- by 2003, begin to take forward comprehensive implementation of the Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy following consultation with, among others, victims and victims' groups.

Housing

2.8 Victims told us that housing issues were important. In response, we will:

- by September 2002, review the level of emergency payments for persons re-housed as a result of intimidation;
- by September 2002, evaluate the introduction of a tenancy support (victims) service in order to assist re-located families to settle in their new neighbourhood and to make contact with support organisations;
- by June 2002, produce advice literature which incorporates the role and distribution of housing support organisations;
- by April 2002, use Housing Support Officers to provide specialist information for victims with special housing needs; and
- by April 2002, undertake a housing benefit awareness campaign for those ratepayers who are owner-occupiers to encourage those on low income to apply for benefit.

Business skills

2.9 Victims told us that they wanted better opportunities to develop and use their business skills. In response we will:

- by June 2002, finalise a Business Birthrate Strategy which will focus on raising the enterprise rates of disadvantaged groups, including, where appropriate, local community groups and victim support groups in order to help them investigate the options of self-employment and facilitate them in starting up their own business; and
- make available to all individuals and organisations, including community groups and victims' support groups, a wide range of enterprise and business start-up programmes designed to provide practical assistance to those interested in setting up and running a business. These programmes have the aim of addressing unemployment, encouraging employment opportunities and encouraging local economic development activity.

Victims in rural areas

2.10 The issue of victims living in rural areas was highlighted in responses to the consultation, particularly the difficulties of transport and accessing help and support. Two organisations that may provide assistance are:

- the Rural Community Network (RCN) which recently published a document entitled "Rural Point – a sign posting directory of rural services and support". Contact details for the RCN are given in Annex A. Their website address is: www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org. This website can also be accessed through the Victims Unit website; and
- Rural Community Transport Partnerships which have been established with the help of grant-aid from the Rural Transport Fund for Northern Ireland. The Partnership aims to provide a framework for the necessary dialogue and co-operation between agencies at a local level so that transport needs can be identified and practical solutions developed. Again, contact details are given in Annex A. The website address is: www.rtf.org.

structures and other implementation issues

structures

- 3.1** It is clear from responses to the consultation, that we must make it easier for victims and their representatives to interact with Government bodies and examine how Government and other structures can be made more responsive.

Interaction with policy makers

- 3.2** The Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG) on victims is the key cross-departmental body tasked with taking this strategy forward and many of those who responded to the consultation feel it is important that the IWG interacts more with victims. While this point is accepted, there was no one clear view on how that could best be achieved. Similarly, there was a range of opinions as to how, apart from dealing with the IWG, victims could link with and influence policy makers. This essentially is a question of what, if anything, should replace the Touchstone group which was established by the Northern Ireland Office, not only to provide policy advice to Ministers, but also to act as a communication channel in terms of information exchange. The Touchstone group was made up of statutory and voluntary sector representatives and chaired by the NIO.

- 3.3** Although varied proposals were received as to what should replace Touchstone, two common themes emerged. The first was that some method of better involvement with policy makers was essential and the second was that this might perhaps be best done on a regional basis with representatives being selected to form a smaller advisory group. This is clearly an important area for the implementation of this strategy and we will:

- **by October 2002, engage with victims' groups and other interested parties to develop proposals for how victims can best link with policy makers.**

- 3.4** This interaction between victims and policy makers was, to some extent, addressed during 2001 with the running of the Recognition, Empowerment, Awareness, Learning (REAL) programme. The feedback from this programme was generally supportive and recognising the importance of this area, we will:

- **by June 2002, in conjunction with the voluntary and community sector, examine the need for delivering further capacity building.**

Capacity building involves training in a range of issues to develop the ability of those working in this area to be able to deal effectively with the issues which arise in victims/survivors groups. It may be that some of this needs to be done on a single identity basis, ie within one community rather than on a cross-community basis.

Trauma Advisory Panels

- 3.5** It emerged from both the responses to the consultation paper and the research carried out by the Victims Unit earlier in the year that the work of the Trauma Advisory Panels (TAPs) would be an important consideration in the development of this strategy. The TAPs were set up in each Health Board area to take forward work and develop partnerships in a range of areas relating to victims. While each Board has established a TAP, only the Western Board has appointed a full-time worker to co-ordinate the activities of that Panel, with funding for that post being provided initially by the local District Partnership.
- 3.6** The Victims Unit believes that for each TAP to develop its potential and link effectively with victims in its area, full-time workers should be appointed with guaranteed funding for a substantial period of time. As part of this strategy, we will:
- **fund a support worker in each Trauma Advisory Panel until 2004.**
- 3.7** The Victims Unit will continue to work closely with the TAPs and the appointed support workers to highlight at a local level victims' needs and contribute to the planning and development of services to meet those needs. This will allow, for example, an assessment of the need for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy courses in each Board area.
- 3.8** The TAPs might also provide examples of partnership working across a range of areas. Statutory service providers may be able to work better together as a result of having a common focus on victims' issues. This is already happening to a certain extent where, for example, the Social Security Agency and Northern Ireland Housing Executive are integrating some services with customer service officers being appointed in relevant offices.
- 3.9** As mentioned above, one District Partnership responded to the needs of victims by funding a support worker to take forward the work of the Western TAP. Other District Partnerships (now Local Strategy Partnerships) employed support workers under the Peace I Programme to take forward victims work in Armagh, Dungannon and Fermanagh. The Victims Unit has worked with these individuals in a range of areas over the past year, and will continue to work with them (and any others

appointed to similar roles). Such workers are a particularly valuable way of reaching individuals who may not be associated with groups and for providing information and services on a local basis.

Northern Ireland Office

3.10 We referred earlier (section 1.8) to the role of the Northern Ireland Office in relation to victims and it is evident that having two Units within Government responsible for victims' issues can be confusing for victims. Both Units are conscious of this and have worked to clarify the position, but it is recognised that further efforts need to be made (see Annex B for current split of responsibilities). As part of this strategy, we will therefore:

- **by March 2003, examine, in conjunction with the NIO, how a potential transfer of its responsibilities for victims might be administered;**
- **provide further information which will make it clear which part of Government is responsible for a particular issue;**
- **ensure that the Victims Unit in OFMDFM and the Victims Liaison Unit in the NIO continue to collaborate and work closely together; and**
- **ensure that Ministers and officials continue to meet frequently to discuss relevant issues and examine potential areas such as joint exercises.**

Northern Ireland Memorial Fund

3.11 The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund (NIMF) is an independent charity established to provide help and assistance to individual victims in a range of areas. The Fund has, since it was established, developed a number of schemes to deliver practical help and it has received funding from both the NIO and OFMDFM. Its operation, however, as an independent charity, means that its role or function cannot be influenced by this strategy, although OFMDFM regards the NIMF as an important delivery mechanism for assistance to individuals, particularly those who may not be associated with groups, and as such will continue to work with the Fund.

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Working in partnerships

3.12 Working in partnerships will be key to the successful delivery of this strategy – both the partnership between statutory agencies and the partnership between the statutory and voluntary/community sectors. With regard to the partnership with the voluntary/community sector, the guidelines laid down in the “Compact between Government and the Voluntary and Community sectors in Northern Ireland”¹ and “Partners for Change – Government’s Strategy for support of the Voluntary and Community sectors”¹ will be followed – many Government agencies already have close relationships with the voluntary/community sector and it will be important to share best practice. It is essential that agencies dealing with victims’ issues are, and are seen to be, collaborative rather than competitive.

The role of the Churches/Faith Communities

3.13 The role of the Churches was highlighted in a number of responses to the consultation paper and while the Victims Unit has had some interaction with Church representatives, it is clear that this is an area that can be developed. The Churches/Faith Communities and their representatives provide help and support in a number of ways and are often a point of contact for those who may feel isolated and/or vulnerable. From this perspective, the Churches and Faith Communities are clearly an important communication channel with victims and can be used as a method of getting information to people, particularly individuals who may not be associated with groups. Equally, however, representatives of the Churches and Faith Communities cannot be expected to have the expertise to deal with all the victims’ issues they may face. During the period of this strategy we will:

- **work with the Churches and Faith Communities to provide relevant information to clergy and other representatives who may be contacted by victims.**

Research

3.14 During the course of 2001, the Victims Unit carried out research into service provision for victims and, in November 2001, issued a summary of the findings along with an action plan of how it was proposed the

1. These can be obtained from the Voluntary Activity Unit in the Department for Social Development - telephone 028 9056 9319

recommendations would be taken forward. This was in direct response to the comments that very often victims felt that research was not followed-up and that no changes or improvements were seen as a result. Many of the actions relating to that piece of research will be taken forward directly through the implementation of this strategy, but an issue still remains about how research is carried out and what happens to the information that is gathered. We will:

- **work with groups, organisations and Research Branch of the Equality Directorate within OFMDFM to determine standards, priority areas for research and, importantly, how the findings can be shared and acted upon.**

3.15 The issue of how children have been impacted upon as victims is of particular concern to the devolved administration and work here may tie in with the appointment of a Commissioner for Children and Young People and the development of a children's strategy.

Linkages outside Northern Ireland

3.16 It is clear that the conflict in Northern Ireland has reached beyond this country, particularly to Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, but also into the wider world. It is also evident that lessons can perhaps be learnt from other countries emerging from conflict. During the period of this strategy, we will:

- **work to build and expand our knowledge in these areas, including, where appropriate, inviting international speakers to seminars, and communicating examples of best practice throughout contacts in Northern Ireland.**

Celebrating achievements

3.17 It was pointed out during the consultation exercise that very often there are only negative images and negative perceptions associated with victims and that this could perhaps be challenged by somehow celebrating the achievements of people who also happen to be victims. This is viewed as a very positive suggestion and during the first year of this strategy we will:

- **work with victims and victims' groups to explore how this area might be taken forward.**

A Victims' Commissioner

3.18 One of the specific questions asked in the consultation paper was whether a Victims' Commissioner should be established. Again, a wide range of responses was received to this question with a diverse range of opinions being expressed. As some respondents pointed out, if this strategy is implemented properly and efficient structures put in place, then any perceived need for a Commissioner would be eroded. Some respondents felt that the appointment of a Commissioner would be a positive move as such a person could provide a voice for victims, while others felt that no clear role existed, and that the money to fund a Commissioner could be better spent on providing services. There was also a range of views as to whether a Commissioner should be a victim or should come from Northern Ireland. Given that no clear view emerged during the consultation as to whether a Commissioner should be appointed and, having considered the matter carefully, we are not convinced of the need for a Commissioner at this stage and do not intend to proceed in this area, although the situation will be reviewed in due course.

3.19 The Office of Parliamentary Ombudsman and Commissioner for Complaints (see Annex A for details) exists to ensure the people of Northern Ireland are served by a fair and efficient public administration that is committed to accountability, openness and quality of service. If victims or their representatives feel that they have not been treated fairly by a public body, it is important that they contact the Ombudsman who will either take up the complaint or advise on how the complaint can be pursued.

Truth and justice

3.20 One of the areas that received comment in the consultation that preceded the development of this strategy was the issue of truth and justice. This is an important and sensitive matter for a wide range of victims but it is also an issue that is being examined currently by a separate project. The "Healing through Remembering" project which is completely independent from the devolved administration, issued a consultation document recently seeking views on the development of truth and justice processes for Northern Ireland. The project is due to submit its findings to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the British and Irish governments later this year. In light of this, it is felt that it would not be appropriate to comment further on these issues at this stage. The Healing through Remembering project can be contacted on 02890 739601 or at www.healingthroughremembering.org

3.21 Linked with the issue of truth and justice is the area of storytelling ie allowing people the chance to have their individual story listened to and/or recorded. This has been taken forward to an extent by certain organisations and some victims groups have also begun to examine how individual or collective stories might be recorded. As this, however, is one of the main issues that may be addressed by the Healing Through Remembering project, the Victims Unit will not be taking the issue forward at this stage.

Strategy beyond 2004

3.22 This strategy is scheduled to run until 2004 which some may regard as a short timescale for a strategic document. However, there are external factors which mean that planning beyond 2004 would be problematic at this stage. One of these factors relates to funding which is explained in more detail in Chapter Four. The other main factor relates to the possibility that, following the Assembly elections scheduled for 2003, some functions relating to victims that are carried out currently by the Northern Ireland Office may transfer to the devolved administration. The strategy will, however, be reviewed and rolled forward from 2004 and will be responsive to emerging needs and developments.

funding

4.1 Funding is a key issue for victims and victims’ groups and will obviously impact directly on the implementation and delivery of this strategy. Significant resources are already spent on a wide range of areas delivering services to victims and the actions in this strategy show how these resources will be used more effectively. There are several important issues relating to funding, including access, simplicity and variety, as well as ensuring that those seeking funding are kept informed about developments.

4.2 We are aware that more needs to be done to make the funding process clearer. In order to address that, we will:

- **in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund, hold a series of information seminars in a number of different locations to provide practical help in relation to the funding process and to discuss effective monitoring and evaluation. It is anticipated that these seminars will start in early Summer 2002.**

4.3 There are several specific government funding “streams” for victims that exist at the moment and these are summarised in the table below.

Type of Funding	Period Covered	Total Amount Available	Available to	Contact Points	Purpose of Funding
EU programme for Peace and Reconciliation. (Peace II)	2000-2004 (although funds can be spent up until 2006).	£6.67m	Groups/organisations developing significant projects which must satisfy strict criteria	Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust.	To encourage peace and reconciliation. Targeted mainly at training and re-employment.
Core-funding.	2002-2004	£3m	Groups working with victims and survivors.	Provided by the NIO, but no decision yet taken as to who will administer.	To allow work of groups to continue and develop.
Strategy Implementation Fund.	2002-2004	£3m	Government Departments and agencies.	Victims Unit, OFMDFM.	To allow Government Departments and Agencies to take forward projects to assist victims.
Small grants scheme.	2002-2004	£750,000	Groups/projects working with victims and survivors.	Administered on behalf of the NIO by the Community Relations Council.	Grants for relatively small amounts of funding to allow groups or projects to carry out specific pieces of work.

Peace II

- 4.4** The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace II) will provide £6.67m until 2004, although projects awarded funding can spend it up until 2006. The Northern Ireland Executive has provided £1.67m of this funding with the remainder coming from the European Social Fund. This funding will be directed mainly towards training, reskilling and re-employment. Projects applying for funding will need to satisfy strict criteria and will be subject to monitoring of how the funds are spent and what is achieved with them. A consortium led by the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT) has been appointed as an Intermediary Funding Body to process claims and make awards.

Core funding

- 4.5** Core funding of victims' groups was provided initially in 2000 by the NIO and the scheme outlined above is an extension of the initial scheme. The first round of funding is currently being evaluated and therefore no decisions have yet been taken as to how this funding for 2002-2004 will be administered or what the funding criteria might be.

Strategy Implementation Fund

- 4.6** The Strategy Implementation Fund is an innovative approach to funding financed jointly by the Victims Unit and the NIO. The Unit secured funding of £1.5m over two years from the Northern Ireland Administration and this was matched by the same amount from the NIO. It is envisaged that the Strategy Implementation Fund will be accessed by Government Departments and Agencies to fund projects and services of direct benefit to victims.

Small grants scheme

- 4.7** The small grants scheme, which will be administered by the Community Relations Council from money provided by the NIO, will provide grants for small amounts of funding to allow groups or projects to carry out specific pieces of work or activities.
- 4.8** The key Government funding sources as outlined above represent a range of responses to funding issues. It is believed these address important areas of funding, such as a mix of funding for groups and activities, Peace II money and the Strategy Implementation Fund that Departments can access. This latter Fund is particularly important as many respondents felt that while the development of a victims' strategy was a positive step, it needed to be properly resourced. The provision of £3m over two years will undoubtedly provide important resources that

Departments can use to take forward projects and initiatives. In addition, the Victims Unit has a limited amount of funding which will be used to help deliver actions contained in this strategy, such as the development of the Trauma Advisory Panels and delivering capacity building.

- 4.9** The Department for Social Development is developing a database with plans to eventually include details of all Government and non-Government funding to the voluntary and community sector. When complete, it will enable funders to identify the areas receiving funding and any gaps in provision. Development of a pilot database is scheduled to begin in April 2002.

Northern Ireland Memorial Fund

- 4.10** The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund (NIMF) is an independent charity established in 1998 by the NIO to provide assistance to individuals in a wide range of areas. To date, it has spent approximately £1.5m on six schemes covering areas such as small grants, education and training, pain relief, amputee and wheelchair assessment and respite breaks. The NIO and OFMDFM have provided the majority of the funding to the NIMF and it is seen as an important channel of delivering help and assistance to individuals, particularly those who do not belong to victims' groups.
- 4.11** A recent independent evaluation of the NIMF has made a number of recommendations for the future of the Fund and its schemes; these are being considered at present by the Fund's Board of Directors.

Sustainability

- 4.12** The work of the voluntary and community sector and Government is complementary and this is particularly true in relation to work with victims. The victims' sector, like many others in the voluntary/community sector, is concerned with the long-term issue of sustainability. As recommended by the Harbison Report, we will:

- **by June 2002, ensure that a Task Force is established to consider the long-term sustainability of the voluntary and community sector, including the needs of victims.**

This task force will examine how the contribution made by the voluntary and community sector in general, including work with victims, can be sustained in light of the impending changes to funding programmes which will occur when the current round of European Funding ceases. The Task Force will identify what action is necessary to diversify support for the whole sector in the context of an agreed definition of sustainability. This will take into account work with victims.

Other funding issues

- 4.13** “Grant Tracker” is an interactive software package, developed by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), which contains information on sources of funding available to the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. Grant Tracker users will be able to shortlist potential funders which match their projects’ funding requirements. In addition, NICVA provides a funding advice service. Contact details are given in Annex A. The Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT) has published “**Funding for Voluntary Action 2002 – A Guide to Charitable Trusts for Northern Ireland**” which gives details of charitable trusts and related funding. Copies can be obtained from NIVT whose contact details are given in Annex A.

Compensation

- 4.14** Compensation was raised in several responses to the consultation exercise and while clearly important, it is an issue that has not been passed to the devolved administration and is therefore currently outside the scope of this strategy.

monitoring and evaluation

5.1 It emerged from the consultation exercise that there were some concerns that a strategy would be put in place, but not acted upon. This is not the intention of OFMDFM and this section sets out how progress against the strategy will be monitored and communicated to those who are affected by it.

5.2 There are several levels at which the strategy will be monitored:

- at a political level, the Assembly will be assessing how the commitments in the Programme for Government relating to the strategy are being taken forward. Additionally, the Committee of the Centre which scrutinises the work of OFMDFM has taken an active interest in the development of the strategy and has had evidence from both Ministers and officials. That scrutiny and interest will continue;
- the Interdepartmental Working Group will continue to meet and will receive regular reports, enabling it to assess the commitment and level of activity of participating organisations in the key identified areas;
- OFMDFM itself will have an overseeing role and will use its influence to ensure that the commitments made to victims by the Executive and this strategy are adopted and followed through; and
- we will produce a summary of activity on a yearly basis and pass that to all interested parties. This will also contain details about how the various targets associated with this strategy have been taken forward.

Strategy review

5.3 The strategy needs to be responsive to emerging findings, either from research or elsewhere. A sub-group of the IWG will formally review the strategy after nine months of operation and will make recommendations for any amendments.

main contact details

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Victims Liaison Unit

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SHSSB Trauma Advisory Panel

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NHSSB Trauma Advisory Panel

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Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust

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The Community Transport Association

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**Northern Ireland Council for
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Special European Programmes Body
6 Cromac Place
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Freephone: 0800 0273872
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**Parliamentary Ombudsman &
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Northern Ireland Memorial Fund
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Healing Through Remembering
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split of responsibilities between the victims unit and the victims liaison unit

The following are the current responsibilities of OFMDFM's Victims Unit:

- Management of a specific victims' Measure under the European Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II) to address victims' needs;
- Development of a separate programme of activities designed to meet the strategic needs of victims;
- Ensuring the needs of victims are addressed in the devolved administration including management of the interdepartmental working group on victims' issues;
- Articulating the case for victims within the devolved administration;
- Support for Ministers in the devolved administration.

The following are the current responsibilities of the NIO's Victims Liaison Unit:

- Provision of core funding to victims' support groups;
- Management and provision of grant aid to the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund;
- Ensuring that victims' issues which fall within the excepted and reserved fields in Northern Ireland are addressed. This covers issues and needs arising in areas such as compensation, criminal justice and security. It also includes "the Disappeared";
- Prioritisation and allocation of central Government funding for victims;
- Primary responsibility for implementing the findings of the Bloomfield report;
- Support for Ministers in the NIO, particularly the victims' Minister.

Both Units have responsibility for:

- Improving the capacity and professionalism of victims' organisations and encouraging groups to adhere to core values and standards;
- Building networks for victims and victims' organisations to share experience and best practice.

If you would like further copies of the Strategy please contact:

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Website: www.victimsni.gov.uk

If you need any of the enclosed documents in an alternative format please contact us by one of the methods above

April 2002