

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE INTERIM COMMISSIONER FOR VICTIMS & SURVIVORS

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN FUNDING IS NEEDED FOR VICTIMS

The Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors has today published an initial report on Funding available to victims in Northern Ireland. In it she notes that, to date there has been no long term strategic plan to fund or provide adequate services to victims and current funding will be dramatically reduced by 2007.

Bertha McDougall states that there is poor co-ordination of services and while there are many pockets of good practice these are not consistent across all areas of Northern Ireland and are not accessible to everyone.

The lack of co-ordination has led to duplication of funding, gaps in funding, over administration and an incomplete picture of provision.

“The over-riding impression is that services for victims are policy driven rather than focusing on specific and changing needs. Since 1998 Central Government has provided £36.4m in funding to victims and survivors while European funding has accounted for £7.6m.

Much of this funding is coming to an end and it is imperative that we establish a service that is adequately funded, resourced and strategically planned. Conservative estimates put the number of people directly affected by the troubles at over 120,000. These people and their carers need to be provided for in a sustainable way.

Current funding arrangements allow for one-off grants and group support, however, greater flexibility could benefit individuals”.

The Interim Commissioner is clear that while this is an initial report which outlines her concerns, she will be seeking to develop and research her findings further. This will be achieved in consultation with individuals and representative organizations and will be addressed in her final report to the Secretary of State.

- ENDS -

**For further information contact Sheila Davidson, DCP
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Notes to Editor

A full copy of the Interim Report on Funding Issues has been attached