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Convicted IRA killer was paid £80k from Omagh victims fund

By Barry McCaffrey

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A CONVICTED IRA killer turned Special Branch informer was paid more than £80,000 in money from the Omagh Victims Legal Fund, it emerged yesterday.

In 1988 self-confessed killer Sean O'Callaghan walked into a police station in central London and confessed to the May 1974 murder of UDR soldier Eva Martin and the murder of RUC Special Branch officer Peter Flanagan at a bar in Omagh six months later.

It later emerged that throughout the 1980s he had worked as an agent for Garda Special Branch foiling many planned PIRA attacks.

In 1990 he was sentenced to life imprisonment but was released six years later.

After being released from prison he worked as a special adviser to Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble and as a pundit on the Provisional IRA.

However, it has now emerged that convicted killer Mr O'Callaghan was paid more than £80,000 in money by the Omagh Victims Legal Fund between March 2001 and August 2003 to assist with media and fundraising.

Mr O'Callaghan's employment came at a time when the Omagh families were attempting to raise £1million to launch a civil action against five men who it is claimed were leading members of the Real IRA.

Mr O'Callaghan's employment by the group ended at the same time as the British government agreed to provide £800,000 in funding to the civil action. Michael Gallagher, whose son Aiden was among the 29 people and two unborn children killed by the 1998 Real IRA bomb, confirmed that Mr O'Callaghan had been employed by the victims' fund for a two and a half year period.

"I know that Sean worked for H2O


solicitors firm for a period and dipped in and out of the victims fund," he said.

"As far as I am aware he did mostly media things.

"I know that he has a horrendous past and that it may be hard for some people to accept that he was employed by the fund but he publicly apologised for the terrible things that he did and went to prison for it.

"Like many of the people in government today he was given a second chance despite the terrible crimes he committed.

"We believe the only way we will get to the truth about what happened in Omagh is when the British and Irish governments allow a cross-border inquiry to take place."

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