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## HET deserves proper funding

(Editorial, [Irish News](#))

Concerns which have been raised over the funding of the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) will cause dismay among those hoping this unit would finally provide some answers to bereaved families.

The HET, which was set to review 3,268 murders between 1969 and 1998, was pledged £32 million over a period of six years by the then secretary of state, Paul Murphy, in 2005.

However, the team's head, Dave Cox, has revealed that last year's funding, totalling £4 million, came out of the PSNI budget, although the Northern Ireland Office is insisting the police service has not lost out.

Nevertheless, there appears to be some issue with regard to funding, which has echoes of the difficulties faced by the Police Ombudsman's office, which also investigates past murders.

Given the extent of collusion over decades of violence, it was inevitable that the establishment of a unit to examine historical cases would be greeted in some quarters with considerable scepticism.

There were even those who predicted the team would be quietly wound up after a few years with little to show for their efforts.

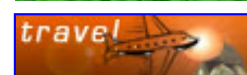
If that was the British government's intention then it would be particularly cynical and cruel as it raised the hopes of relatives that they would, at long last, find out the circumstances surrounding the death of a loved one.

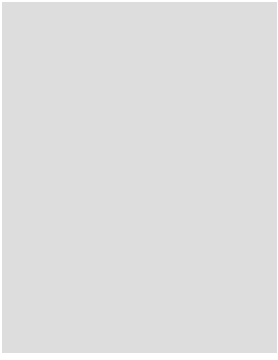
In fairness, the HET has managed to provide information, for the first time, to a number of families, some of whom had received only the scantest of details at the time of a murder.

There is also no doubt that many of those who have suffered will have a realistic view on the prospects of a prosecution.

However, they may have questions which can be answered and they are entitled to be heard and treated with compassion and respect.

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Those hoping to receive information do not deserve to face any uncertainty over this process.

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