

Ministerial Foreword

The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government contains a specific commitment to address the needs of victims. This commitment is backed up by five specific actions, one of which is to:

"during 2001/02, put in place a cross-departmental strategy for ensuring that the needs of victims are met through effective, high quality help and services".

As Ministers with specific responsibilities for victims in the devolved administration, we are pleased to endorse this consultation paper as an important step in developing the above strategy.

The issues involved in meeting 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. We are in a position to make a positive change to the lives of victims and have already taken steps to do so, such as establishing a Victims Unit in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. We realise, however, that more needs to be done across all the structures of the devolved administration and that is why we are committed to developing a cross-departmental strategy.

It is of course vital that such a strategy reflects the thoughts, opinions and needs of those that it will impact upon most. That is why, in this consultation paper, we are seeking your views on what should be contained in a strategy on victims if it is to actually make a practical difference to the lives of those who have suffered most over the past 30 years. There are specific questions contained in the consultation paper, but all comments will be welcome.

For the strategy on victims to be successful and to impact positively on those it will seek to help, it is essential that its development is informed by those who have a knowledge of victims, their needs and the services they require. We therefore encourage you to read this consultation paper and let us have your views, all of which will be valuable in developing a strategy that will truly reflect what needs to be done to improve the lives of some of the most marginalised people in our society.

Denis Haughey MLA
MLA

Dermot Nesbitt

Consultation Paper on a Victim's Strategy

Contents

Chapter One	Introduction and Background
Chapter Two	Vision, Values and Meeting Needs
Chapter Three	Programme for Government
Chapter Four	Aims of the Victims' Strategy
Chapter Five	Structures and Other Issues
Chapter Six	Monitoring and Evaluation
Annex A	Draft Action Plan
Annex B	Equality Impact Assessment
Annex C	Questions asked in the Consultation Paper
Annex D	Glossary
Annex E	Potential Funding Sources
Annex F Unit	Relationship Between the Victims Unit and the Victims Liaison

Introduction and Background

1.1 It has been recognised that over the past 30 years one of the most neglected groupings in society has been the victims of what has become known as "the troubles". Those who have suffered most from the effects of the violence in Northern Ireland have, at times, not been served well by society. The first major recognition that something practical needed to be done was the appointment by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) of Sir Kenneth Bloomfield as the Commissioner for Victims. This led to the publication of his report "We will Remember them" in April 1998. Alongside this, the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) produced a report entitled "Living with The Trauma of the Troubles." The recommendations of the SSI report were included in the Bloomfield report and in turn the recommendations in the Bloomfield report were accepted in full by the Government, which set up the Victims Liaison Unit within the NIO. Its remit was to progress work in the area and to co-ordinate the activities of the various Government departments.

1.2 The Bloomfield report was, on the whole, well-received and the majority of its recommendations have now been implemented.

1.3 The Good Friday Agreement of April 1998 stated that it was essential to acknowledge and address the suffering of victims as a necessary element of reconciliation and, following devolution, it became apparent that many of the issues which affected victims were the responsibility of the devolved administration. To take forward this very important area, three key steps were taken. Firstly, a Victims Unit was set up in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), which has the aim of raising awareness of, and co-ordinating activity on, issues affecting victims across the devolved administration. Secondly, the two Junior Ministers in OFMDFM were given specific responsibility for victims' issues and finally, in the Programme for Government, the Executive set out five specific actions designed to meet the needs of victims. These are outlined in more detail in Chapter 3. One of the key actions in the Programme for Government is to put in place a cross-departmental strategy to meet the needs of victims. This consultation paper is a vital part of developing that strategy.

1.4 In line with the New Targeting Social Need policy, the Executive is determined to ensure that resources are allocated to those in greatest need. The desire to develop and put in place a victims' strategy reflects that policy, as victims are among the most marginalised people in our society. 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.

About This Consultation Paper

1.5 This consultation paper seeks your views on the victims' strategy which is outlined in the following chapters. We would like to hear views on both the strategy itself and specifically on the questions asked throughout the paper. A summary of the questions can be found at Annex C . The consultation period will last from 7 August 2001 to 9 November 2001 and it is envisaged at this stage that the strategy will be published and in place around the end of 2001 and will cover the period up until 2004. It is vital that we receive as many comments as possible as they will help shape and inform the final strategy.

1.6 In developing a strategy we are conscious that it is often 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. For the purposes of this consultation, however, 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".

1.7 An Equality Impact Assessment on the victims' strategy can be found at Annex B .

1.8 To respond to this consultation paper, please send your comments in writing to:

The Victims Unit

Block A.4

Castle Buildings

Stormont

Belfast BT4 3SR

Or e-mail to: info@victimsni.gov.uk

This paper is being sent to MPs, MLAs, victims' groups, individual victims and a wide range of voluntary and community organisations. If you require additional copies of the consultation paper, please contact the above address or telephone 028 9052 3445. The paper is also available on our website: www.victimsni.gov.uk

Alternative formats of the consultation paper, including large type, audio tape or sign language video, will be made available on request by contacting the above address or telephone number.

1.9 The closing date for comments is 9 November 2001. All comments will be treated as confidential unless otherwise indicated in your response. All comments received will be considered when developing the strategy and a summary of responses will be issued to all those who reply to this consultation. The summary will also be placed on our website.

1.10 Thank you for your interest in this consultation paper and we look forward to receiving your comments.

Vision, Values and Meeting Needs

Vision

2.1 Central to the delivery of the strategy is the following vision:

A society where the suffering of 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

2.2 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;

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.

Meeting needs

2.3 Statutory, community and voluntary bodies need to recognise the specific needs of victims. Although not all of these can be addressed by the devolved administration, it is the responsibility of the Victims Unit to inform its partners in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors of the needs and requirements of victims. These needs will change over time and organisations need to put systems in place to allow them to respond flexibly.

2.4 Meeting the needs of victims will require sympathetic and understanding treatment and may call for a different approach to how certain activities are undertaken, including the examination of how potential barriers to accessing services can be overcome. The different approach does not mean preferential treatment, but may mean making changes to service delivery, so that victims receive standards of service on a par with those provided to other sections of society.

2.5 Victims are among the most marginalised and excluded people in our society and the strategy must take steps to overcome their social exclusion. It is essential that victims are able to access appropriate support to enable them to move on with their lives and become socially included. This takes a number of

forms and includes support for victims' organisations in financial and more strategic ways such as the provision of capacity building, but also includes activities to meet basic needs such as bus runs, shopping trips etc, which can have a positive impact on helping victims to rebuild their lives and reduce their social exclusion.

2.6 Provision also needs to be made, within available resources, for an appropriate level of psychological and psychiatric support. The ongoing work of the Area Boards' Trauma Advisory Panels needs to be developed and built upon so that, where appropriate, multi-agency approaches are developed in relevant areas. Lessons can be learnt from the joined-up approach adopted in the aftermath of the Omagh bomb by the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Programme for Government

3.1 The Programme for Government, which was published in February 2001, makes the following point:

"Among the most vulnerable individuals in society are the victims of our prolonged conflict, along with those who care for them and the relatives of all victims, whether surviving or dead. This society has a special obligation to ensure that those who suffered so much in conflict will have their needs addressed in peace".

There are five specific actions contained in the Programme for Government which relate to victims. These are:

- during 2001/02, put in place a cross-departmental strategy for ensuring that the needs of victims are met through effective, high quality help and services. This will be facilitated by an inter-departmental working group on victims;
- during 2001/02, ensure that capacity building takes place among victims' groups and also, importantly, among policy makers, to raise awareness of victims' issues;
- during 2001/02, ensure that contact has been made with as many victims' groups and individuals as possible, including organisations working in the disability and trauma fields that provide services to victims, as well as other people;
- during 2001, inform the community about the presence and aims of the Victims Unit; and
- by April 2002, assess what improvements to services for victims have taken place and what further steps need to be taken.

3.2 These actions clearly demonstrate the commitment of the Northern Ireland Executive to victims and form the basis for work already carried out and importantly, work required to deliver the victims' strategy.

Aims of the Victims' Strategy

4.1 The aims of the victims' strategy are to:

- ensure that all Government Departments and Public Authorities recognise the particular circumstances of victims and play their part in ensuring that barriers to social exclusion are overcome;
- develop and secure the implementation of policies and practices designed to meet the identified needs of victims in a strategic manner across the devolved administration;
- ensure that Government Departments adopt a committed and co-ordinated approach to victims' needs, working in partnership with voluntary and community organisations;
- meet the commitments on victims' issues contained in the Programme for Government;
- ensure that services provided for victims reflect their particular needs, are equal to those offered to others and that barriers to access are overcome;
- promote and facilitate an increase in the standard of services being provided to victims and to seek to address any identified gaps in service provision;
- secure appropriate funding and ensure that any grant aid is distributed and monitored collaboratively by the statutory sector;
- increase awareness among the public (especially victims and their representatives) to the approach of the devolved administration in meeting the needs of victims;
- determine how best statutory agencies can work with those in the voluntary/community sector; and
- 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.

Each of these aims are explained in more detail below.

Implementing Policies and Priorities

4.2 While not all Government Departments and Agencies will be delivering front-line services to victims, it is recognised that the needs of victims are wide ranging and therefore no Department or Agency can claim not to have an involvement in this area. In recognition of that, an Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG) on Victims has been established, on which each Department is represented. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Social Security Agency are also represented, as they are key players in service delivery. The Working Group meets on a regular basis and its role is to determine a strategic, policy-led approach to victims' issues across Departments. In addition, it seeks to raise awareness of victims' issues, develop a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of services and examine funding issues.

4.3 The activities of the Working Group are informed by regular updates from the Victims Unit but the Group is aware that it needs to improve its interaction with victims and their representatives in order to gain first hand knowledge of service-delivery issues.

***Question 1:** How best can the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Victims interact with victims and their representatives?*

Meeting Commitments in the Programme for Government

4.4 The five actions contained in the Programme for Government are all being taken forward. The strategy for victims will be put in place during 2001/02; capacity building for victims' groups and policy makers has taken place; contact with victims' groups and individuals and organisations is continuing; a variety of methods (including this consultation exercise) have been used to raise awareness of the Victims Unit and research has been commissioned to examine the current level of services to victims.

4.5 The Programme for Government actions are clearly the starting point in developing and delivering the strategy, but the strategy is designed to cover a longer period than many of the actions refer to. It is therefore important that further actions are developed in the strategy to take forward service delivery issues.

Delivery of Services

4.6 The objectives of the strategy refer to both the delivery of services and the standards of services that victims can expect. In order to meet both these objectives it is important that victims can see practical examples of how the strategy will make a difference and, to this end, a draft Action Plan has been developed. This sets out a broad list of actions which could be included with associated target dates, where appropriate. Some of these can clearly be identified as the responsibility of one Department or Agency but others will require the collaborative, joined-up approach that is the key to the successful delivery of the strategy. Your views are sought on which of these actions, or others, should be given the highest priority when it comes to allocating resources. The draft Action Plan is detailed at Annex A.

***Question 2:** Does the draft Action Plan contain meaningful targets, the implementation of which will lead to a noticeable improvement in the services provided for victims?*

***Question 3:** Are there targets or target areas which should be included in the draft Action Plan which currently are not?*

It is planned that an update on progress against the targets contained in the draft Action Plan will be issued approximately half-way through the period covered by the strategy. This may coincide with consultation on the development of a new strategy to run from 2004.

Funding

4.7 Funding for victims' issues is currently provided from a variety of sources. The main sources are a specific measure in Peace II, the Victims Unit in OFMDFM, the Victims Liaison Unit in the NIO and the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund. In addition, there are a number of other potential funders which are detailed at Annex E (page 26). The number of funding bodies can lead to confusion for those applying for funding and the application process itself can often be lengthy and time consuming for organisations. It is a major responsibility of funders to ensure that funding is dealt with in a transparent and co-ordinated manner and to make the application process as simple as possible.

***Question 4:** How can funders make the funding process easier to understand and access?*

4.8 Over the period of the proposed strategy, some of the major sources of funding, including Peace II, will draw to a close. It is essential therefore, that funders examine strategically, in conjunction with victims and their representatives, how funding can best be channelled in future years. In particular, the Victims Unit, working with the Department of Finance and Personnel, will need to ensure that adequate funding provision is made in any future Spending Reviews. In turn, victims' groups will need to work with funders to examine long-term sustainability and the best methods of achieving that.

Increasing Awareness

4.9 Increasing awareness of victims' issues relates to two main areas i.e. awareness among the public and awareness among service providers. In relation to the public, the Programme for Government and the Victims' Strategy itself will be strong tools in raising awareness but it is important to think beyond these documents. Involvement with elected representatives will be one method of reaching a wider audience and a carefully thought through approach to relevant publicity will also play a role. The Victims Unit will establish a named contact for each group and will organise a series of relevant seminars and conferences (see section 5.5). This will be supplemented by printed material.

***Question 5:** What other methods can be used to raise awareness of victims' issues?*

4.10 Among Government Departments and associated agencies a variety of methods will also be used to raise awareness. These will include the dissemination of information through the Inter-Departmental Working Group and the Departmental Contacts Group (which consists of nominated individuals from each Department who can assist with specific cases). In addition, capacity building for policy makers will be examined and staff training, particularly for those delivering 'front-line' services, will be reviewed.

Partnership Approach

4.11 In delivering services for victims, there are two main partnerships that need to be examined – the partnership between statutory agencies and the partnership between the statutory and voluntary/community sectors. Many of the mechanisms outlined above for increasing awareness can also be used to encourage a partnership approach to dealing with victims' issues. These include the Inter-Departmental Working Group and Departmental Contacts Groups but may also consist of smaller sub-groups established to examine specific issues for example, staff training.

***Question 6:** What statutory sector partnerships need to be developed?*

4.12 With regard to the partnership with the voluntary/community sector, the guidelines laid down in the 'Compact Between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland' and 'Partners for Change – Government's Strategy for Support of the Voluntary and Community Sector'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.

Question 7: *How best can the statutory sector work in partnership with the voluntary/community sector?*

Research

4.13 Although much research has already been undertaken in the victims' sector, both of an academic and more practical nature, it is important that those working in this area are aware of what is actually happening. This need is reinforced by the commitment in the Programme for Government:

"by April 2002, [to] assess what improvements to services for victims have taken place and what further steps need to be taken."

4.14 To meet the Programme for Government commitment it was necessary to undertake a baseline study which was completed recently. The findings of that research will help to shape the strategy and will be re-examined in approximately twelve months time when the level of service provision is again assessed.

4.15 There is also an issue about what research is being carried out and what happens to it once completed. A view has been expressed that research is often not followed up by action. There is a potential danger that important pieces of research could be "lost" because of the volume of activity.

Question 8: *How best can those who carry out or commission research engage with victims to ensure that relevant research is carried out and followed up on?*

¹ These can be obtained from the Voluntary Activity Unit in the Department for Social Development. Telephone Number: 028 9056 9319.

Structures and Other Issues

Structures

5.1 In delivering the victims' strategy, it will be important to ensure that appropriate structures are in place to achieve a focused and targeted approach. Some potential structures have been addressed earlier in this paper but this section concentrates on the relationship between the devolved structures and the NIO and, importantly, on how victims and victims' groups can best articulate their needs to Government.

5.2 In terms of the relationship between the NIO and the devolved administration, there is a recognition that, for the foreseeable future, both the Victims Liaison Unit in the NIO and the Victims Unit of OFMDFM will need to exist. This is because certain matters, particularly compensation and criminal justice issues, remain the responsibility of the NIO. Both units have recognised that confusion can exist over the respective roles and earlier this year issued an explanatory statement of responsibilities. This is reproduced at Annex F.

5.3 The Junior Ministers in OFMDFM with responsibility for victims' issues, meet with their NIO counterpart on a regular basis and this is supplemented by frequent contact between officials of both units. The Units aim to collaborate rather than compete but it is important that this message gets across to those in the community.

***Question 9:** What steps, if any, do OFMDFM and the NIO need to take to ensure that victims know the relevant part of Government to access for help?*

5.4 The other main area to address in terms of structures is determining how best victims and victims' groups can make their views known to Government. The Touchstone Group was established by the NIO not only to provide policy advice to Ministers, but also to act as a communication channel in terms of information exchange. Since Touchstone was established however, the landscape has changed somewhat, in that there is now a Victims Unit in OFMDFM and, additionally, the Civic Forum has had two victims representatives appointed to it. Discussions with Touchstone members would indicate that there is an acceptance that its role and structure needs to adapt to reflect these changing circumstances.

5.5 While recognising that not all victims or victims' groups are yet comfortable with being present in situations where certain others are present, it is also true that in many instances victims or victims' groups have a common interest in better service provision. It may be, therefore, that conferences or seminars on certain themes could be held that would allow an exchange of information and views which could be fed through to service providers.

***Question 10:** If such seminars or conferences were to be held, what subjects should they address?*

5.6 While such events would provide an opportunity to help influence policy, it might also be important to have a smaller group of people representing victims' views which could be used directly by Government as a "sounding board" for policy initiatives. This group, would, in effect, be a replacement for Touchstone.

***Question 11:** If the Touchstone Group is to be replaced, what should replace it? Who would be on any new group and how would they be selected?*

Other Issues

5.7 A view has been expressed by some people that a Victims Commissioner should be established. While there is no clear view about what the Commissioner would do, it is envisaged that he/she would, in some way, provide a "voice" for victims and act as a watchdog over the implementation of policy and service delivery. The cost of a Commissioner would have to be met from Government funds, which could leave less money for service provision and help.

Question 12: *Should a Victims Commissioner be appointed? If yes, what should their role and remit be and how would a Commissioner fit with the other potential structures outlined in this Chapter?*

Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 The ongoing monitoring of the implementation of a victims' strategy will take a number of forms. Firstly, at a political level, the Assembly will be assessing whether, and how, the commitments contained in the Programme for Government have been met. Secondly, the IDWG will receive regular reports and will be able to assess the commitment and level of activity of participating organisations in the key identified areas. Thirdly, OFMDFM will have an overseeing role and will use its influence to ensure that the commitments made to victims by the Executive are adopted and followed through.

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

Annex A

Draft Action Plan

- 1.** Beginning in the 2002-03 financial year, all Departments and Agencies will ensure that victims' needs are reflected in their corporate planning documentation.
- 2.** By March 2002, ensure that all public consultation includes, where appropriate, victims' groups and individuals.
- 3.** 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.
- 4.** In conjunction with the voluntary/community sector, by March 2002, examine the need (where appropriate) for delivering further capacity building, including on a single identity basis, ie within one community rather than on a cross-community basis.
- 5.** By June 2002, clarify what literacy and numeracy needs exist among victims.
- 6.** By March 2002, consult with Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), especially those providing educational and/or outreach programmes to consider including victims in their target audiences.
- 7.** By March 2002, ensure that education and training needs for staff at all levels in the Personal Social Services have been identified to enable them to deal with the personal and community consequences of the Northern Ireland conflict.
- 8.** By September 2002, review the level of emergency payments for persons re-housed as a result of intimidation.
- 9.** 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.
- 10.** By June 2002, produce advice literature which incorporates the role and distribution of housing support organisations.
- 11.** By April 2002, use Housing Support officers to provide specialist information for victims with special housing needs.
- 12.** By June 2002, examine how LEDU, the small business agency, can best offer advice to victims on the availability of enterprise programmes, such as the Community Business Start-up Programme, which is aimed at reducing unemployment, increasing employment opportunities and encouraging participation in local economic development activity.
- 13.** In order to ensure that relevant groups are fully aware of the programmes and assistance available, LEDU will ensure by September 2002 that not less than 50% of the LEDU resource allocated to Enterprise Awareness activities will be directed to individuals and activities in disadvantaged areas, including the targeting of local community groups and victim support groups where appropriate.

- 14.** By March 2002, the Rate Collection Agency will undertake a housing benefit awareness campaign for those ratepayers who are owner-occupiers, to encourage those on low incomes to apply for benefit.
- 15.** By September 2002, consider how the concept in the book 'Lost Lives' might be given physical expression.
- 16.** 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 and art might be used as methods of expressing in a cathartic way the experiences of victims.
- 17.** By June 2003, examine the feasibility of mapping memorials (trees, flowerbeds or other areas) using Ordnance Survey's mapping techniques, which could be used on a website.
- 18.** By September 2002, examine the feasibility of developing a project involving the interviewing of victims which would allow them the opportunity to record their memories and feelings in the knowledge that what they say today would not fade away.
- 19.** By June 2003, carry out research to determine whether counselling would be helpful for victims who apply for access to coroners' inquest papers, as they can often be shocking and direct in content.
- 20.** By June 2002, examine how awareness raising of victims' issues can be addressed in the development of a new statutory curriculum for schools.
- 21.** By April 2003, examine how teacher development can address barriers to learning experienced by victims.
- 22.** By April 2003, examine how parent support, including the development of parenting skills, can be developed by schools and other agencies.
- 23.** By June 2002, examine how counselling support for pupils can be best made available in schools.
- 24.** By December 2002, consider the specific needs of victims when developing strategies to engage with disaffected young people in schools.
- 25.** By December 2002, examine the development of alternative programmes for getting intimidated young people back into education.
- 26.** By June 2002, investigate how services such as the Education Welfare Service and Behaviour Support Teams can interact with victims and victims' groups.
- 27.** Consider the specific needs of victims when implementing the review of counselling.

ANNEX B

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which came into force on 1 February 2000 states:

"A public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:-

(a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;

(b) between men and women generally;

(c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and

(d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to its obligations above, a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group".

2. As the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister is classed as a "public authority" as outlined above, it is committed to adhering to the principles of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 when implementing policy. It is recognised, however, that each policy will not necessarily have an impact in terms of all of the nine Section 75 categories.

3. An equality impact assessment aims to identify whether, within each Section 75 category, the policy under consideration creates differential impacts between groups or has the potential to enhance equality of opportunity between groups. In this consultation exercise therefore, the equality impact assessment seeks to determine whether a victims' strategy will impact differentially on any of the Section 75 categories.

4. Entirely accurate and current statistics on deaths related to "the Troubles" are difficult to obtain, but those quoted in the report "We will Remember them"¹ (which drew heavily on the work carried out by the Cost of the Troubles Study) give a statistical analysis which can be used as the basis for an equality impact assessment. The details given in "We will Remember them" indicate that by 3 December 1997, 3,585 people had been killed in Northern Ireland since 1969. Of those killed:

- 91% were male;
- 37% were under 24, 53% under 29 and 74% under 39; and
- the death rate was higher in the Catholic population (2.5 per 1000 for Catholics and 1.9 for Protestants).

5. Analysis of injuries is much harder to examine as no reliable data sources exist. It is, however, estimated that between forty and fifty thousand people were

injured as a direct result of the conflict. There will also be a large number who, while not injured, have been affected by the death or injury of a loved one.

6. The statistics outlined above would indicate that, potentially, there will be a differential impact on some of the groups covered within Section 75 as the make-up of the victims "population" may differ from that of the general population ie particularly in terms of gender, but also potentially in terms of age, disability, religious belief and political opinion.

7. It is the view, however, of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, that any differential impact is not adverse and is therefore justified. In addition, the development of a victims' strategy has the potential to enhance equality of opportunity between groups by taking action to redress disadvantage.

¹ "We will Remember them": Report of the Northern Ireland Victims Commissioner; The Stationery Office; April 1998.

Annex C

Questions asked in the Consultation Paper

- 1.** How best can the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Victims interact with victims and their representatives (section 4.3)?
- 2.** Does the draft Action Plan contain meaningful targets, the implementation of which will lead to a noticeable improvement in the services provided for victims (section 4.6)?
- 3.** Are there targets or target areas which should be included in the draft Action Plan which currently are not (section 4.6)?
- 4.** How can funders make the funding process easier to understand and access (section 4.7)?
- 5.** What other methods can be used to raise awareness of victims' issues (section 4.9)?
- 6.** What statutory sector partnerships need to be developed (section 4.11)?
- 7.** How best can the statutory sector work in partnership with the voluntary/community sector (section 4.12)?
- 8.** How best can those who carry out or commission research engage with victims to ensure that relevant research is carried out and followed up on (section 4.15)?
- 9.** What steps, if any, do OFMDFM and the NIO need to take to ensure that victims know the relevant part of Government to access for help (section 5.3)?
- 10.** If such seminars or conferences were to be held, what subjects should they address (section 5.5)?
- 11.** If the Touchstone Group is to be replaced, what should replace it? Who would be on any new group and how would they be selected (section 5.6)?
- 12.** Should a Victims Commissioner be appointed? If yes, what should their role and remit be and how would a Commissioner fit with the other potential structures outlined in this Chapter (section 5.7)?

Annex D

Glossary

IDWG	Interdepartmental Working Group (on Victims)
LEDU	Local Enterprise Development Unit
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
SSA	Social Security Agency
SSI	Social Services Inspectorate

Annex E

Potential Funding Sources

Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust

22-24 Mount Charles
Belfast, BT7 1NZ
Tel: 028 9024 5927
Fax: 028 9032 9839

Community Relations Council

6 Murray Street
Belfast, BT1 6DN
Tel: 028 9022 7500
Fax: 028 9022 7551

Awards for All (Lottery Grants)

2nd Floor, Hildon House
30-34 Hill Street
Belfast, BT1 2LB
Tel: 028 9055 9090
Fax: 028 9055 1444

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund

The County Hall
Westminster Bridge Road
London, SE1 7PB
Tel: 020 7902 5500
Fax: 020 7902 5511

The Prince's Trust

The Honorary Secretary
Northern Ireland Committee
70-72 Lisburn Road
Belfast, BT9 6AF
Tel: 028 9020 0850
Fax: 028 9020 0860

This list should not be regarded as comprehensive as other funding sources may be available.

Annex F

Relationship between the Victims Unit and the The Victims Liason Unit

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

- Support for Ministers in the devolved administration;
- Development of a suitable programme under 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 an inter-departmental working group on victims' issues;
- Ensuring that the commitments on victims contained in the draft Programme for Government are met;
- Articulating the case for victims within the devolved administration.

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

- Support for Ministers in the NIO;
- Provision of core funding to victims' support groups;
- Management and provision of grant aid to the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund;
- Ensuring victims issues are dealt with in the reserved and excepted fields in Northern Ireland, particularly in areas such as compensation, criminal justice, security and dealing with 'the disappeared';
- Articulating the case for victims in the reserved and excepted fields.

Both organisations have responsibility for:

- Improving the capacity and professionalism of victims' organisations and introducing core values and standards for groups to adhere to;
- Implementing the findings of the Bloomfield report:
- Building networks for victims and victims' organisations to share experience and best practice.