

**MEETING OF THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON
VICTIMS**

CASTLE BUILDINGS

10.00AM, TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2000

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Terms of Reference
5. Programme for Government
6. Report from Victims Unit
7. Departmental reports
8. Report on the Social Security Agency Project
9. Capacity Building for victims groups.
10. Any other business.
11. Date of the next meeting.

MEETING OF THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON
VICTIMS

CASTLE BUILDINGS

10.00AM, TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2000

1. Apologies ✓
2. Minutes of the last meeting ✓
3. Matters arising - further meeting with A Lignin - output
will have a clear line between victims VU
4. Terms of Reference and VLU.
5. Programme for Government - By April 2002 - public opinion there
- need to be
6. Report from Victims Unit (complete survey) how as
improvements
in services
7. Departmental reports
8. Report on the Social Security Agency Project
9. Capacity Building for victims groups.
10. Any other business.
11. Date of the next meeting.

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL
WORKING GROUP ON VICTIMS
ROOM E4.18, CASTLE BUILDINGS
10.00AM, TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2000**

In Attendance:

Alex Boyle	Environment	
Margaret Boyle	Social Security Agency	
Colin Watson	Culture, Arts & Leisure	
Noel Cornick	Agriculture & Rural Development	
Stephen Cowan	Private Secretary	
Fergus Devitt	Victims Unit, OFMDFM	
Anne Flanagan	Higher & Further Education, Training & Employment	
Leslie Frew	Health, Social Services & Public Safety	
Don Harley	Social Development	
Denis Haughey MLA	Junior Minister, OFMDFM	(Joint Chair)
Christine Jendoubi	Education	
Stephen MacDonald	Assistant Private Secretary	
Michael McAvera	Victims Unit, OFMDFM	(Secretary)
Dermot Nesbitt MLA	Junior Minister, OFMDFM	(Joint Chair)
Billy Stevenson	Victims Liaison Unit, NIO	
David Sterling	Finance & Personnel	
Barbara Swann	Enterprise, Trade & Investment	
Graham Thompson	Victims Unit, OFMDFM	

1. Introduction

Mr Nesbitt welcomed everyone to the meeting and indicated that apologies had been received from Mike Maxwell, John McConnell and Nigel Carson for whom Barbara Swann, Alex Boyle and Colin Watson were deputising respectively. Apologies were also received from Alan McArthur.

Mr Nesbitt pointed out that since the last meeting of the Working Group the Executive had agreed the draft Programme for Government, which contains an explicit commitment to meet the needs of victims. He emphasised that this demonstrated the commitment of each individual Minister and his/her Department to this important area of work.

Mr Nesbitt also reported that since the last meeting he and Mr Haughey had begun to meet with individuals and organisations working in this field, including George Bain, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund and his fellow director Daphne Trimble. They had also met with representatives from the Western Health Board's Trauma Advisory Panel. Mr Nesbitt commented on the excellent work being undertaken by both organisations and that he was heartened to see how people from often diametrically opposed positions were working together to improve the delivery of services in this field.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3. **Matters arising from the minutes**

Mr Nesbitt pointed out that many of the subjects would be raised during the course of the meeting. He mentioned that he had hoped to report on a further meeting between himself, Mr Haughey and Adam Ingram. This meeting had, however, been postponed until 22 November where it was expected that, amongst other things, the division of responsibilities between the Victims Liaison Unit (VLU) and the Victims Unit (VU) could be finalised.

4. **Terms of Reference**

Mr Nesbitt said that following the last meeting a working definition of 'victim' had been agreed via correspondence as follows:

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

Mr Devitt led a discussion on the proposed draft terms of reference. During the discussion Mr Nesbitt confirmed that victims should not be given preferential treatment. He felt that what was intended was that victims should be offered equity of treatment in their general dealings with Departments and Agencies. Departments and Agencies should, however, demonstrate an understanding of the specific needs of victims and offer as sympathetic an approach as possible bearing in mind the particular and often tragic individual backgrounds.

The members of the group agreed the proposed terms of reference, subject to point 6 being amended to include a form of words to cover Equality and Human Rights issues.

Action: VU

5. **Programme for Government**

Mr Nesbitt commented that both he and Mr Haughey had become aware that, politically, not as much was being done to meet the needs of victims as should be although the five specific commitments contained in the draft Programme for Government were an important step forward.

Mr Devitt gave a brief rundown on what was, and would be, happening under each of the five action points set out in the draft Programme for Government. In relation to the first point he said that the VU would prepare a draft cross-departmental strategy document and put it out to the group for comment. After some discussion on whether the timescale could be met, given the need for consultation, it was agreed that the draft strategy document would be put to the group before 20 December 2000. Mr Devitt also pointed out that the strategic plan of the Victims Unit would be subject to an equality assessment.

Mr Devitt outlined the planned series of visits by officials from the VU to approximately 35 of the main victims groups. It was agreed that the VU would provide feedback on these visits for the information of the working group so that information could be disseminated throughout Departments. It was also agreed that the VU would provide a list of the organisations to be visited, including contact names.

Action: VU

6. Report from the Victims Unit

Mr Haughey joined the meeting and invited Mr Devitt to report on the work of the VU. The following activities were highlighted:

- A rolling programme of visits had been planned which was hoped to be completed early in the new year;
- A meeting with the nominated departmental contacts had taken place the previous week. A similar meeting is expected to take place every two months;
- The VU had been called before the Committee of the Centre in October – mainly as a fact finding exercise for the Committee on issues such as funding, relationship with NIO, etc;
- Meetings had taken place with the Human Rights Commission and the Community Relations Council; and
- A meeting was held with Housing Branch of the Housing Executive, with consideration being given to inviting NIHE to join the Interdepartmental Working Group.

7. Departmental updates

Mr Haughey thanked everyone for the returns provided, particularly DHSSPS and the SSA, which have already initiated substantial programmes of work in this area. He commented that it was apparent from the returns received that little was being done on a cross-departmental basis at present thus highlighting the need to develop a strategy. Mr Devitt agreed to provide the group with a précis of the Departmental updates prior to the next meeting. Mr Stevenson suggested that the VLU should contribute to the next round of updates. Ms Swann noted that £6m had been spent by the NIO on victims' issues and asked if there had been any analysis of what had been achieved. It was pointed out that not all of the £6m allocated had yet been spent but Mr Stevenson went on to explain that some work would be done over the next 6 months on an evaluation of what NIO has done in this respect. Mr Sterling suggested that some kind of database be set up to keep track of how money earmarked for victims is being spent. Mr Haughey felt that some way of identifying what money was being spent on victims should be devised and it was agreed that the VU and VLU would consider this issue and bring forward proposals to Departments.

Action: VU & VLU

8. Report on the Social Security Agency project

Ms Boyle gave a short report on the approach and methodology taken by the team undertaking the SSA's 'People Affected by the Troubles' project. Both the VU and the VLU were consulted at the beginning of the project and both were involved in the workshops which took place in Belfast and Londonderry. The project team had gained a better understanding of the difficulties faced by individuals accessing their services and many areas for improvement had been identified e.g. privacy issues, difficulties getting through on the phone, complicated forms, attitude of some staff, etc. Recommendations for improvements will be made and included as part of the SSA's wider report on their ongoing customer services review.

9. Capacity building for policy makers

Mr Nesbitt expressed his disappointment that only three Departments had nominated people to attend the advisory group overseeing the development of the capacity building programme. He thanked those who had participated and expressed his wish to see every Department represented throughout the forthcoming five-day programme. In particular he felt that it would be important for all members of the Interdepartmental Working Group to attend the opening seminar scheduled for late January 2001. Mr Thompson gave a short update on progress and said that the details of the programme were expected to be finalised within the next few weeks. He said that the inputs from the Departments which had attended the advisory group had been very well received. It was agreed that as soon as details of the venue and the dates are known they would be passed on to the Group.

Action: VU

10. Any other business

Mr Nesbitt commented that the situation with regard to European funding was still unclear. It was anticipated that a sizeable measure designed to meet the needs of victims would be implemented, although it was expected that reasonably stringent criteria would be attached to the measure.

11. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 20 December 2000 at 2.00pm.

Michael McAvera
Secretary

GROUPS TO BE MET BY VICTIMS UNIT IN FIRST ROUND OF VISITS		
Organisation	Contact	Telephone Number
An Crann/The Tree	Kathy McKimm	028 90 240209
BASE 2	Jeff Maxwell	028 90 237707
Bloody Sunday Trust	Colm Barton	028 71 288868
CALMS (Community Action for Locally Managed Stress)	Elaine Porteous	028 71 268698
Coleraine/Ballymoney UDR	Liz Clarke	028 70 327778
Cross	Moira Keily	028 90 874850
Cunamh	Deirdre O'Hara	028 71 288868
DPOA (Disabled Police Officers' Association)	Frank Toner	028 90 035900
FACT (Families Against Crime by Terrorism)	Janet Hunter	028 92 660077
FAIR (Families Acting for Innocent Relatives)	William Frazer	028 37 552619
Family Trauma Centre	Arlene Healy	028 90 204700
FTV (Fermanagh Terrorist Victims)	Jim Dickson	028 66 324978
GIVE (Give Innocent Victims Equality)	Irene Bell	028 91 817972
HAVEN (Help and Advice with Victims Every Needs)	Mark Black	028 90 293306
HURT (Homes United by Ruthless Terrorism)	Gareth Porter	028 38 344719
Kairos	Shelagh Livingstone	028 90 314444
Lifeline	Isobel Bennett	028 90 658328
New Life Counselling Service	Sr Kathleen Savage	028 90 391630
NOVA	Brian Devlin	028 38 335173
Omagh Community Trauma Team	Michael Duffy	028 82 252599
Omagh Support and Self Help Group	Michael Gallagher	028 82 244920
PAIN (Positive Action for Innocent Victims in North Down)	Tom Sheridan	028 91 888804
Relatives for Justice	Eilish McCabe	028 90 220100
SAVER (South Armagh Victims Encouraging Recognition)	Reatha Hassan	028 37 551537
SDAHW (South Down Action for Healing Wounds)	David Scott	028 40 631259
Shankill Stress Group	Mina Wardle	028 90 205305
Strabane Befriending and Counselling Service	Jeff Barr	028 71 886154
Survivors of Trauma	Brendan Bradley	028 90 749944
United Serviceman's Club Victims Survivors Group)	David Davis	028 71 329144
VAST (Victims and Survivors Trust)	Brendan Loughlin	028 90 222181
Victim Support	Oliver Wilkinson	028 90 244039
VOICE (Victims of Injustice Campaigning for Rights)	Loretta Lynch	028 67 723807

WAVE	Sandra Peake	028 90 779922
West Tyrone Voice	Dr Hazlett Lynch	028 81 662848

Watson, Seamus

From: Watson, Seamus
Sent: 08 December 2000 13:24
To: McAnea, Paul (NISSA)

Paul

Details of the case discussed on the phone for a "PR" job.

Allison McClintock, NINO - NA 55 45 92 B -
She applied for WFTC, however she was told that her claimed couldn't be processed as the system showed that she was deceased from the 14/6/98.
Obviously she is very much alive - but her daughter Kori - NINO JT 100701B did die 7/6/98.

Allison went to the Ombudsman - who contacted us.

Una Breslin from Foyle SSO got an Audit trail done on her NINO to see if we could find out who/when the date of death was input. Foyle Office have since amendment her record.

But the audit was unsuccessful - having talked to the security specialist co-ordinated it would appear that we are unlikely to find out when date of death was recorded.

Chris Thompson had a meeting with the Ombudsman and he explained this, but that it was obvious that the mistake had been made by the Agency and as such we would need to do something about it, given the circumstances

He suggested we organise a home-visit to Mrs McClintock to apologise. Also to see if we could make arrange a consolatory payment or compensation.

If there is anything else you need to know, please let me know.

Keep me up to date, so I can pass it on to Chris

Many Thanks
Seamus
X69175