



Northern
Ireland
Office

Public Consultation

Addressing the Legacy of Northern Ireland's Past



easy read

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Introduction



More than 3,500 people were killed as a result of the Troubles. The hurt and suffering caused is still felt by people across Northern Ireland and beyond.



The Troubles affected lots of different people, including victims and survivors. People have been affected in different ways.



The Government is trying to find the best way to meet the needs of victims and survivors and to help Northern Ireland move to long-term peace.

We need to do this to make sure we truly heal and bring the society back together again.



This booklet explains some of the things that Government could do.

What do you think?



We want to know what you think.

Please tell us by:

- Completing our survey online at: www.gov.uk/nio

- Writing to us at:

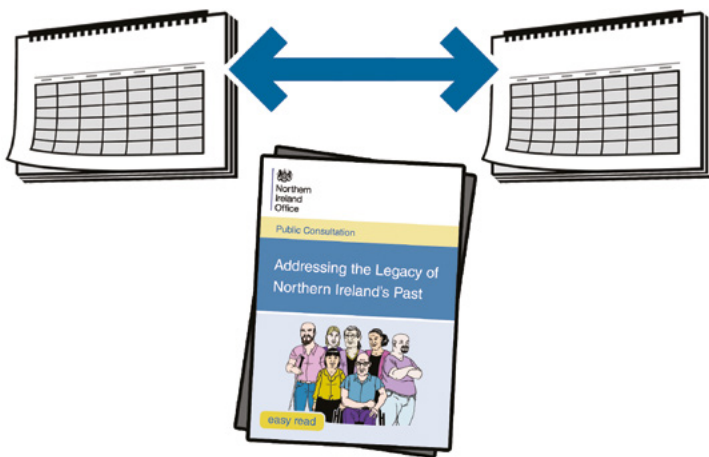
Legacy Policy Team
Northern Ireland Office
Stormont House
Stormont Estate
Belfast, BT4 3SH

If you have any queries, you can email us at:

legacyconsultation@nio.gov.uk



The consultation document may be available in other formats upon request.



The consultation will close on **Monday 10 September 2018.**

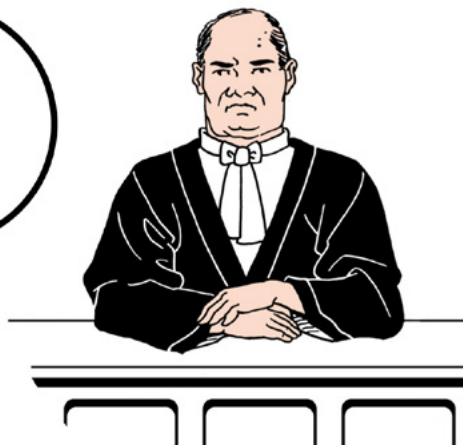
Current ways to address the past



At the moment lots of different organisations look into incidents related to the Troubles.



**Police
Ombudsman**



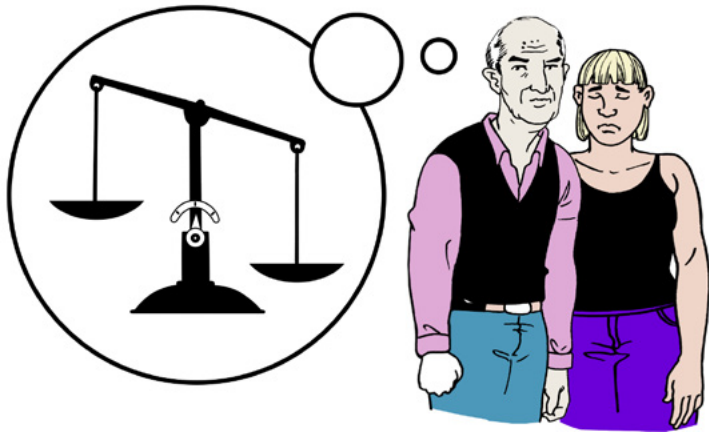
These organisations include:

- The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) who look into crimes to do with the Troubles;
- The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland who look into complaints that the police have not behaved properly;
- The Coroner who holds inquests to find out who the deceased person was and how, when, and where they died.

There are problems with the way of working at the moment.

These are:

- It may not meet the different needs of victims and survivors;



- Many people think the way of working at the moment isn't fair;



- It may make the suffering of victims worse;



- It can be confusing;



- It can be slow;

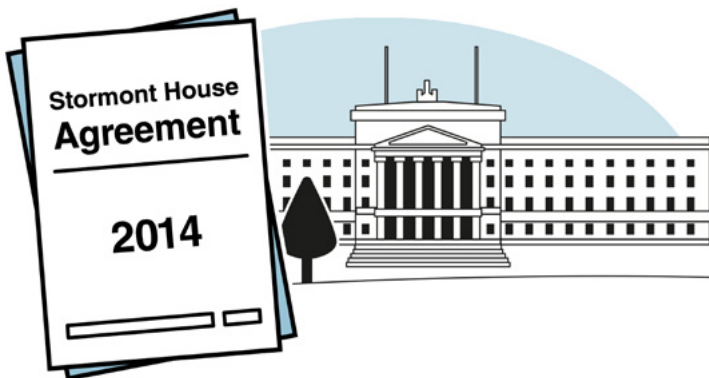


- It can be costly.

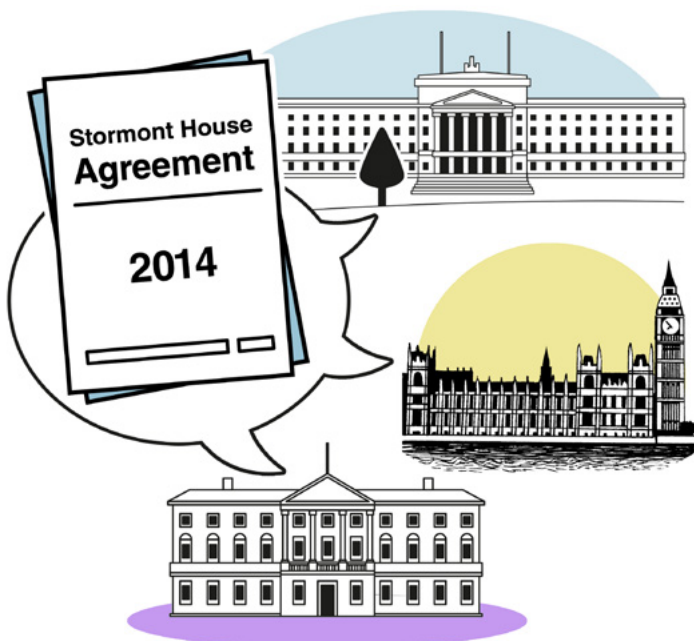
Changes need to be made to the way of working for the sake of our future.

Stormont House Agreement

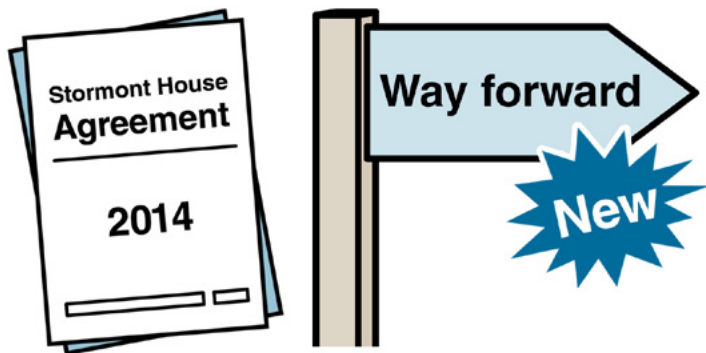
Legacy institutions



The Stormont House Agreement (SHA) was reached in 2014.



It followed many weeks of talks between the five main political parties in Northern Ireland, the UK Government, and the Irish Government.

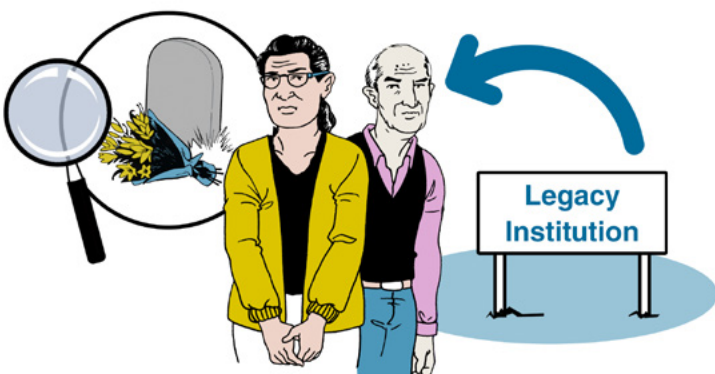
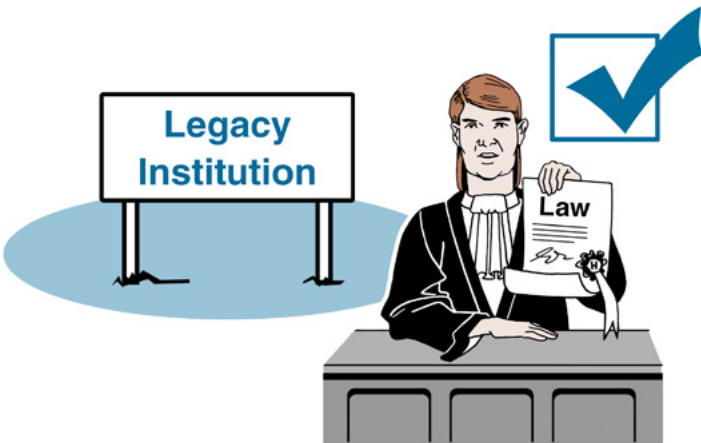


It described a new way of dealing with what happened in the past that tries to put the needs of the victims and survivors first.

This new way would mean setting up four new legacy institutions.

These legacy institutions would be organisations that would help people deal with information, justice and acknowledgment issues relating to the Troubles.

The Government thinks that the legacy institutions are the best way to try to meet the needs of victims and survivors.

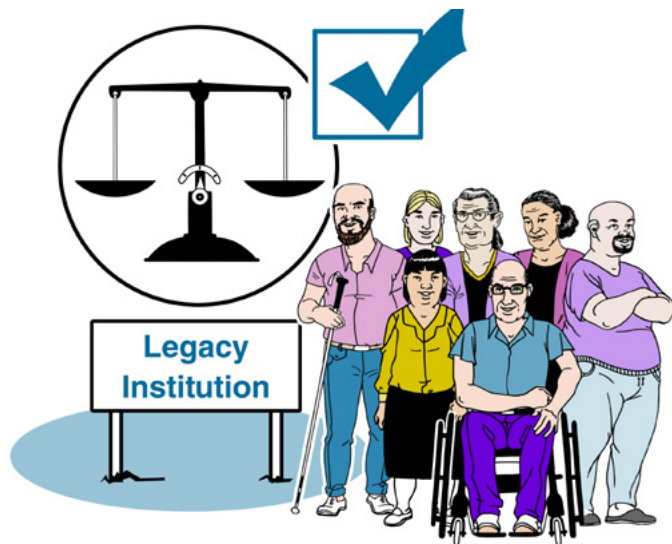


The institutions would:

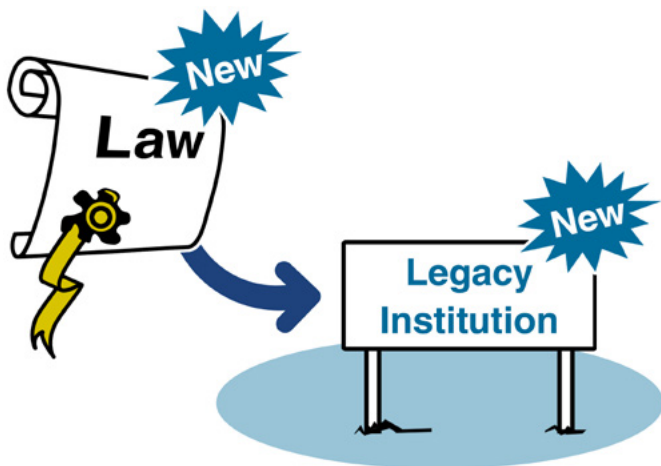
- 1 Promote reconciliation, which means helping to bring back positive relationships;
- 2 Uphold the rule of law;
- 3 Recognise the suffering of victims and survivors;
- 4 Help people to look for justice and find out information about the death of their loved one;



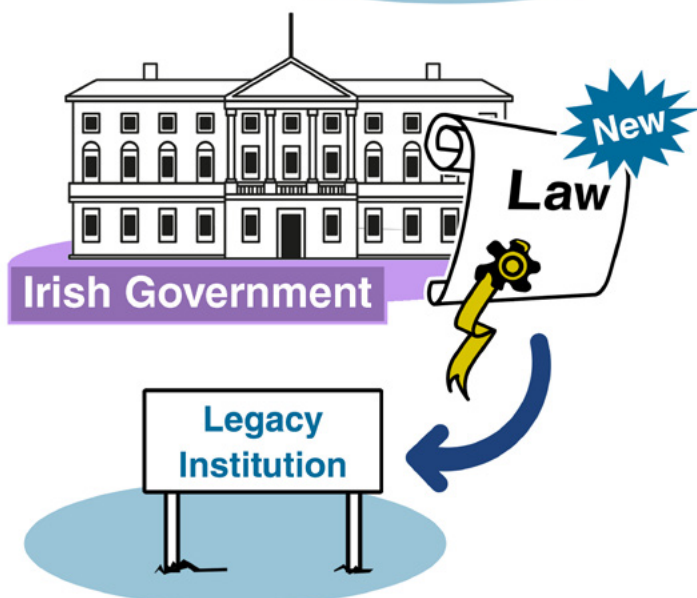
5 Meet human rights responsibilities;



6 Be open, fair and treat everyone equally.



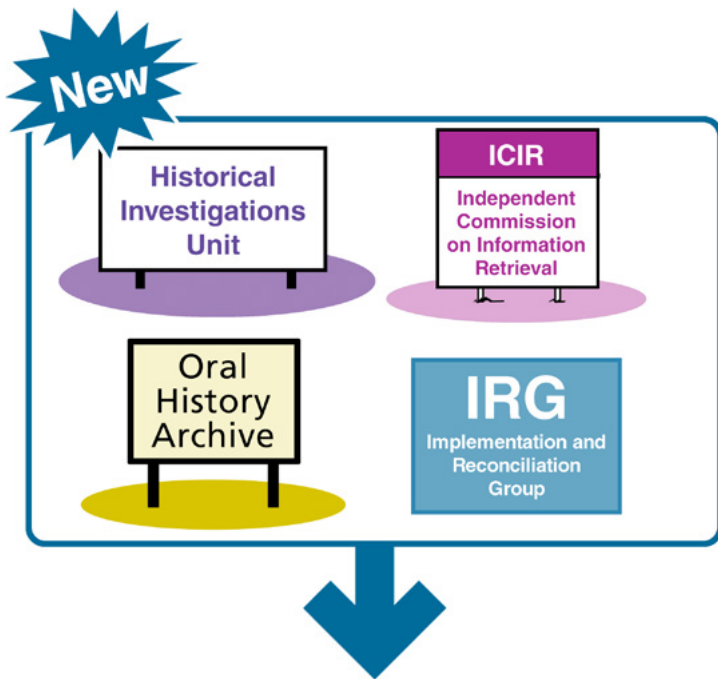
A new law would be needed to create these institutions.



The Irish Government said they will make the laws needed to make sure they can work together with the new institutions to support them.

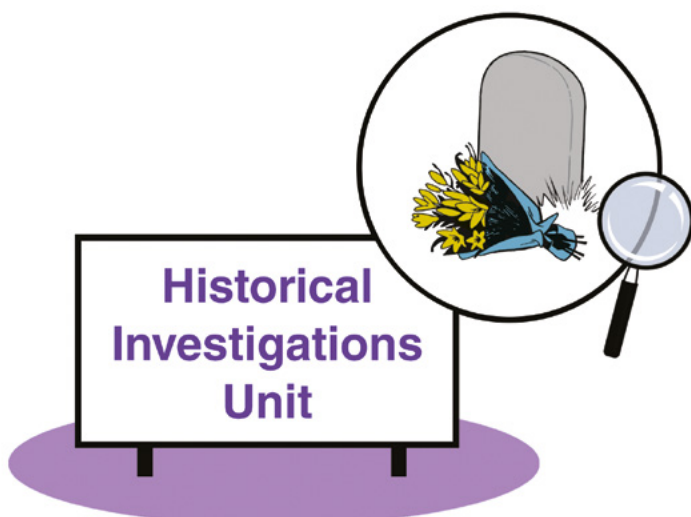


A new law has been drafted as part of this consultation, for people to look at.



The next sections in this document explain what each of these institutions would do.

Historical Investigations Unit (HIU)



The Historical Investigations Unit (HIU) will work on cases of Troubles-related deaths that have not been solved, looking for justice for those involved.



**Historical
Investigations
Unit**



The Historical Investigations Unit would be an independent institution. This means it would work separately from Government to look into Troubles-related deaths.

**Historical
Investigations
Unit**

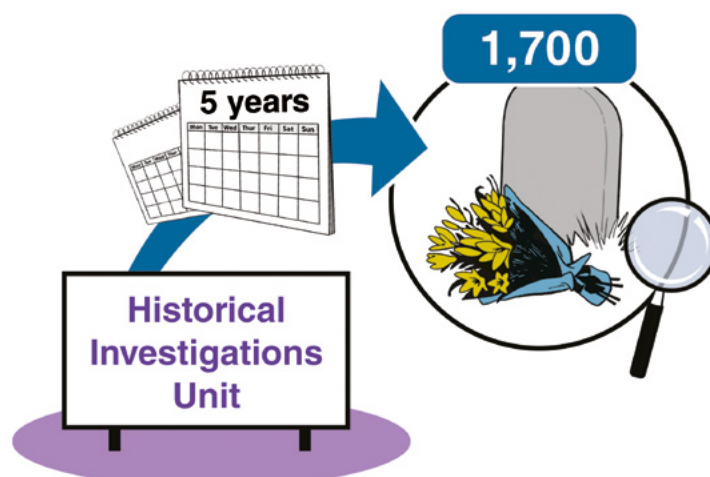
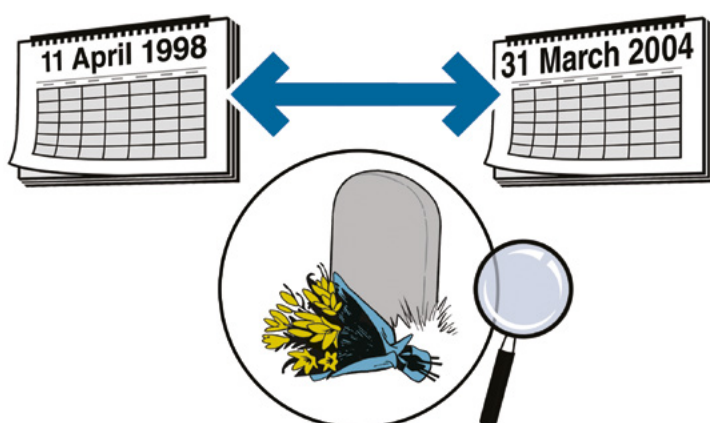
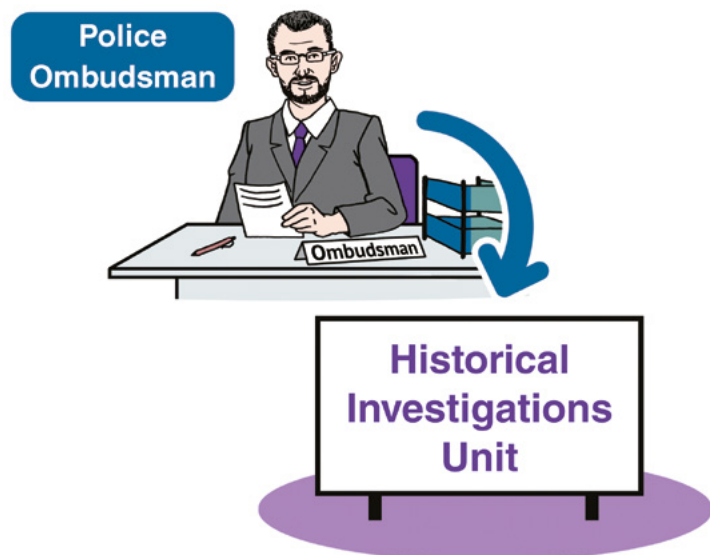


The HIU would work in a way that is fair and the unit would have policing powers to carry out criminal investigations.



The HIU would investigate the following cases:

- Deaths that were part of the caseload of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Historical Enquiries Team (HET) and need to be investigated further;



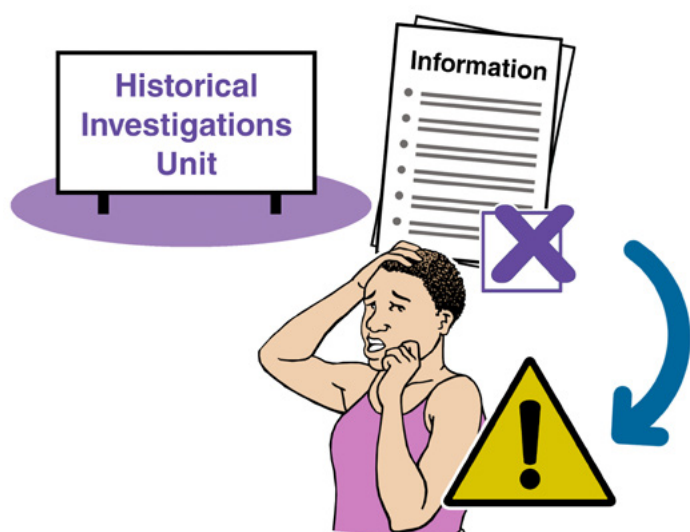
- Deaths that are part of the caseload of the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland Historical Investigations Directorate (HID) and need to be investigated further;
- Also, Troubles-related deaths which happened in Northern Ireland between 11 April 1998 and 31 March 2004 and have not been reviewed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

The HIU could also look into old cases. For example, if new evidence is found that could lead to someone being prosecuted.

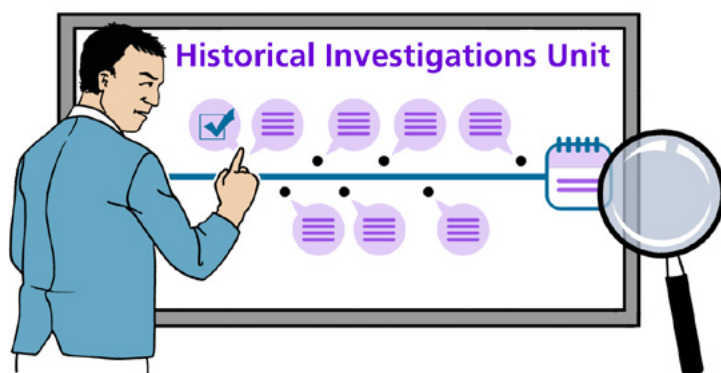
The HIU would likely have 1,700 deaths to look into and would aim to complete their work in 5 years.



The UK Government would have to give the HIU information it needed by law.



Information could not be shared further if it would risk causing harm. For example, if it put someone's life at risk.



The HIU would normally look into cases in the order that they happened.

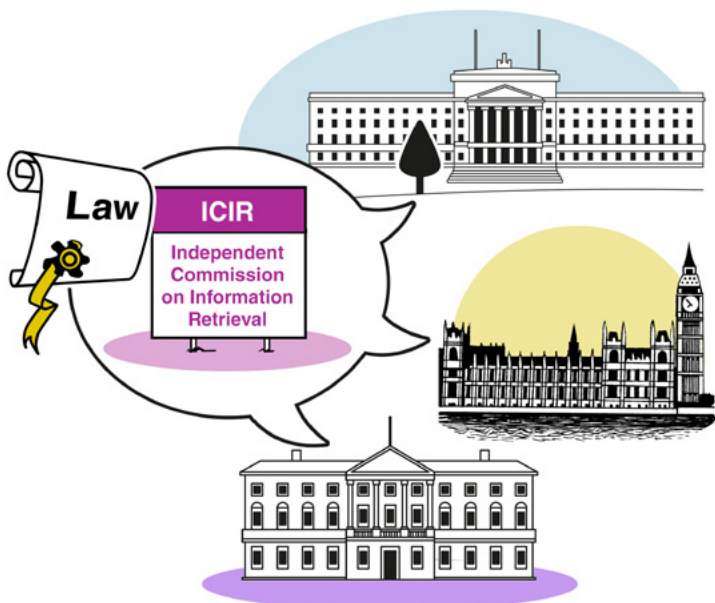


Staff members would help families who have cases looked at by the HIU.



When the HIU have completed their work, families would get a written report.

Independent Commission on Information Retrieval (ICIR)

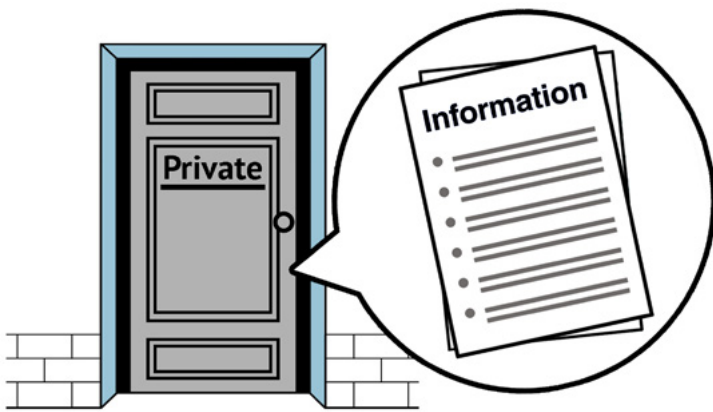


The Independent Commission on Information Retrieval (ICIR) would be an international institution set up by legal agreement between the UK and Irish Governments.



The ICIR would help families find information about the deaths of relatives who were killed in relation to the Troubles.

This will help them find out the truth.



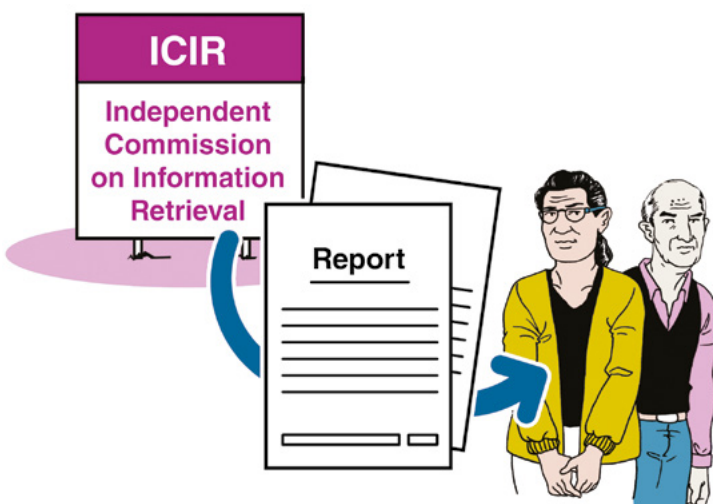
This would be done in private.



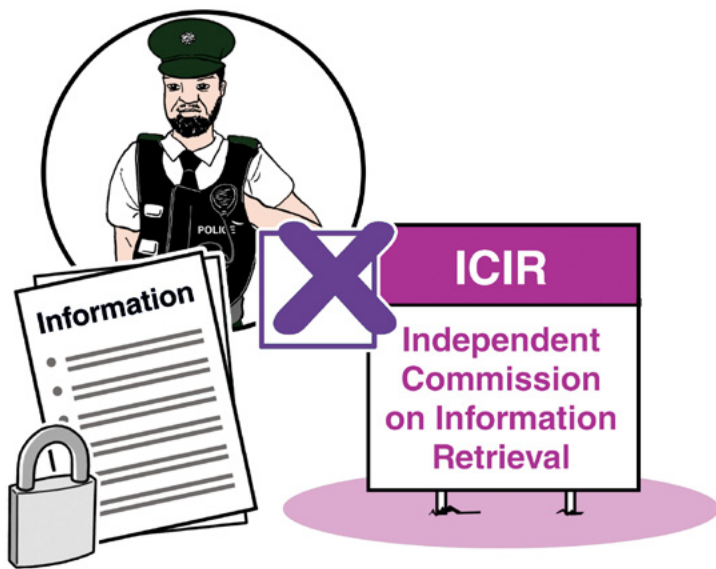
The ICIR would only look for information if asked to do so by families.



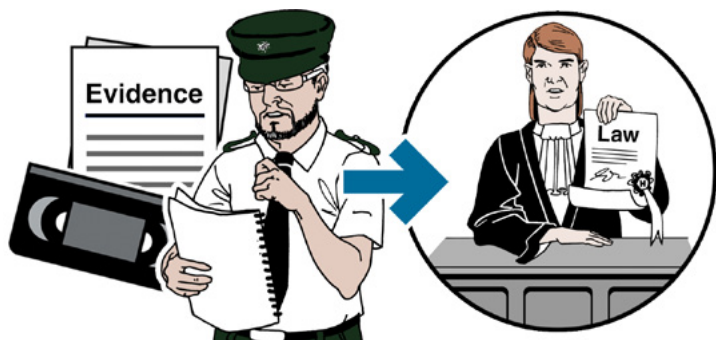
Staff members would help families who wanted to find information, and keep them up to date on their progress.



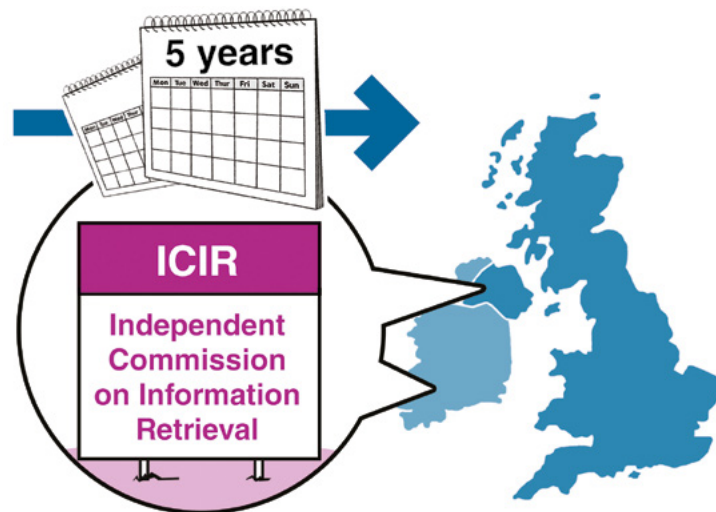
Families would receive a report when the ICIR completed its work.



The ICIR would not have policing powers and could not pass on any information that it received.



Any person who provided information could still be prosecuted if evidence was found in other ways.



The ICIR would run for 5 years and would have offices in the UK and Ireland.



The ICIR would not release information that could risk causing harm. For example, if it put someone in danger.

Oral History Archive (OHA)



The Oral History Archive (OHA) will help victims feel listened to. They will do this by giving them a platform where people from all backgrounds can share their stories and experiences related to the Troubles.



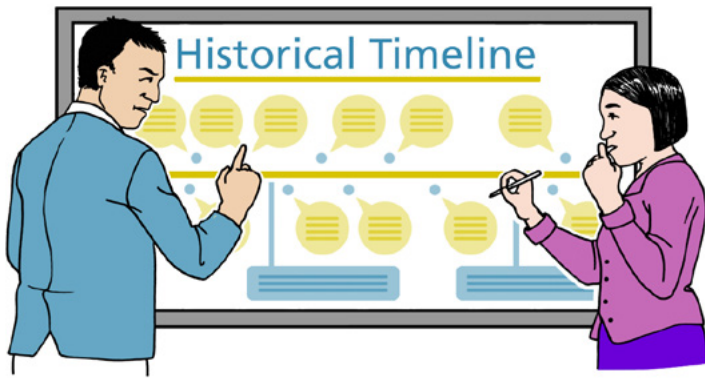
The OHA would collect recorded memories and stories about the Troubles in one place.



People from all backgrounds in Northern Ireland and elsewhere could share their stories.



The OHA would also gather information from existing oral history projects.



They would make a historical timeline of the Troubles.



The OHA could be used by more people than any of the new legacy institutions. Anyone who has been impacted by the Troubles could tell their stories for the archive.



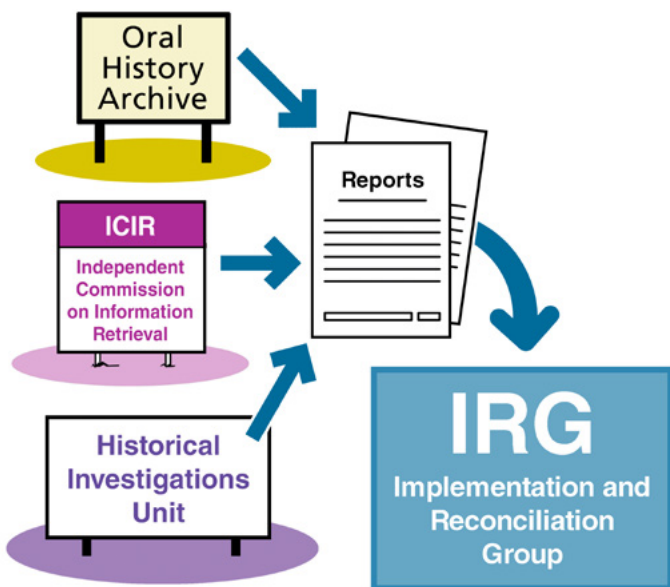
The OHA would be set up by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

Implementation and Reconciliation Group

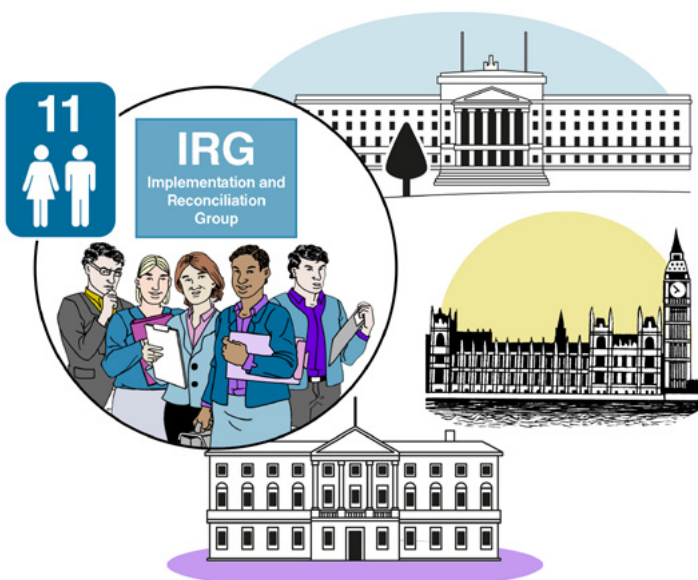


The Implementation and Reconciliation Group (IRG) would be set up to promote reconciliation and anti-sectarianism. This means trying to rebuild relationships between communities and stop discrimination.

It would also receive reports on the work of the other legacy institutions.



The group would be made up of 11 members representing the UK and Irish Governments, and the 5 main political parties.





After 5 years a report would be made for the IRG. The report would be independent.



This report would be based on information from the legacy institutions and look into issues that have come up in their work.

Other legacy actions in the Stormont House Agreement

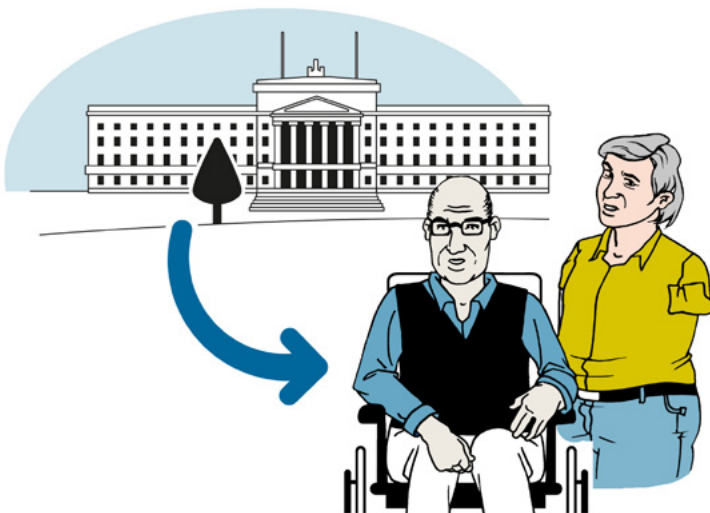
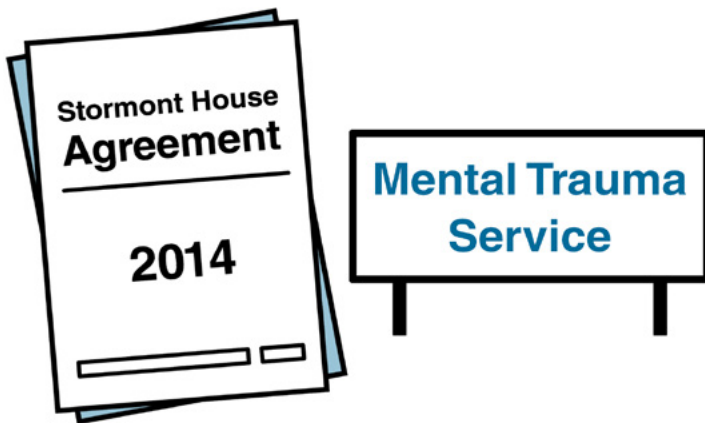
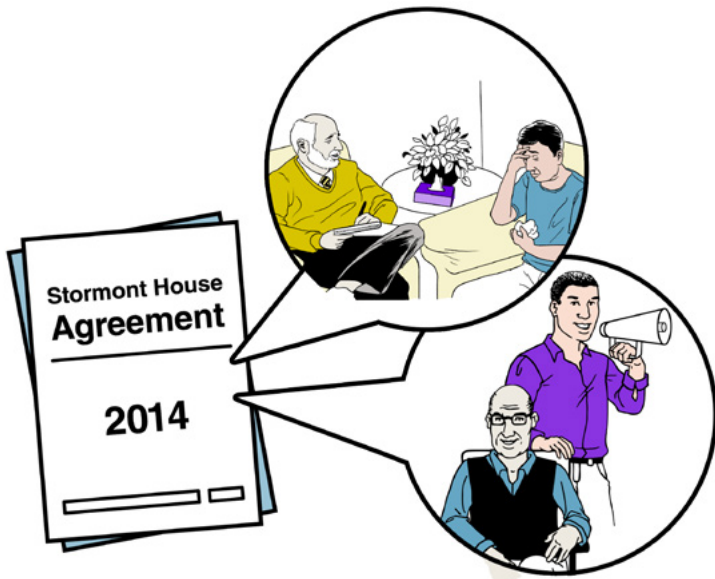


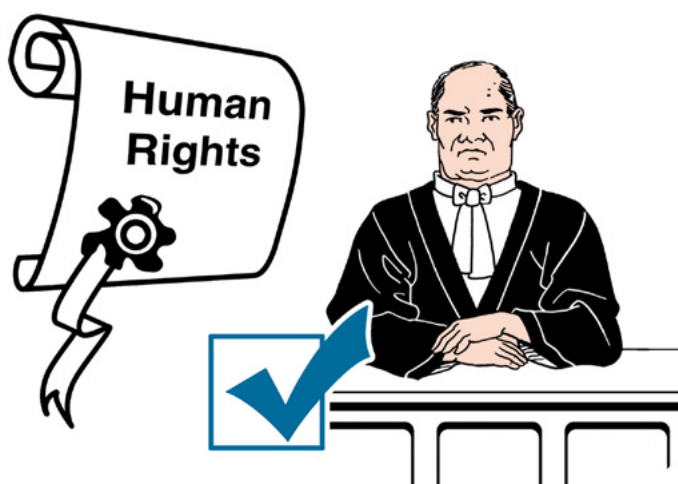
The Stormont House Agreement also included other ways to help meet the needs of victims of the Troubles.



These will be carried out by the Northern Ireland Executive and do not form part of this consultation. They include:

- Making sure victims and survivors can access high quality services;
- Making sure people can access advocate-counsellor assistance;
- Setting up a Mental Trauma Service;
- Finding a way to support severely physically injured victims in Northern Ireland through a pension;





- Making sure that inquests have better outcomes for victims and survivors and continue to meet human rights responsibilities.

Where to go if you would like help responding to this consultation



Northern
Ireland
Office



This consultation is being carried out by the Northern Ireland Office.

We want to know what you think.

Please tell us by:

Completing our survey
online at: www.gov.uk/nio





- Writing to us at:
Legacy Policy Team
Northern Ireland Office
Stormont House
Stormont Estate
Belfast, BT4 3SH



If you have any queries, you can email us at:

legacyconsultation@nio.gov.uk



The consultation document may be available in other formats upon request.



If you need assistance in responding to this consultation, a number of organisations may be able to assist you.



The Victims and Survivors Service provides support and services to victims and survivors in the areas of health and wellbeing, social support and advocacy support through a network of community providers.



You can contact one of the organisations supported by the Victims and Survivors Service using the link below:

www.victimsservice.org/find-support-in-your-area/



Or contact:

Victims and Survivors Service
1st Floor, Seatem House,
28-32 Alfred Street
Belfast, BT2 8EN

Telephone: 028 90 279 100

Email: enquiries@vssni.org





**The Commission for
Victims & Survivors**



**The Commission for
Victims & Survivors**



The Commissioner for Victims and Survivors has a statutory duty to give advice to Government on things that affect victims and survivors in Northern Ireland.

If you have questions about the policy covered by this consultation you can contact the Commission for Victims and Survivors at:

4th Floor, Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast, BT2 7DP

Telephone: 028 9031 1000

Email: commission@cvsni.org



This easy read document has been produced by CHANGE
www.changepeople.org