

COMMISSIONER FOR SURVIVORS OF INSTITUTIONAL CHILDHOOD ABUSE

ADVISORY PANEL

Expression of Interest Form

Deadline for submitting an Expression of Interest is 12.00 pm
on Friday, 1 November 2024

Promoting the interests of victims and
survivors of historical institutional
childhood abuse



Background

The establishment of the Advisory Panel by the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse is founded in law under Section 23(1) Historical Institutional Abuse (NI) Act 2019 (the Act).

The purpose of the Advisory Panel is to “provide a forum for consultation and discussion” between the Commissioner and victims and survivors.

Who can be on the Panel?

It is a requirement of the Act that all members of the Panel are victims and survivors of historical institutional childhood abuse as defined in the legislation. This means that members must have been subject to abuse as children (under 18 years) while in a residential institution in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995 (both inclusive). The residential institution must fall within the remit of the legislation which includes, for example, state, religious and charity run children’s homes, borstals and training schools.

What is the purpose of the Panel?

The purpose of the Advisory Panel is set out in Article 23 of the Historical Institutional Abuse (NI) Act 2019 to “provide a forum for consultation and discussion” between the Commissioner and victims and survivors.

Members are volunteers who give their time for consultation and discussion with the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse. Members are individuals with lived experience of historical institutional childhood abuse. They are interested in quality of life issues impacting victims and survivors including the future of services.

Could this be for you?

Advisory Panel membership provides an opportunity for you to:

- have a key role in engaging in consultation and discussion with the Commissioner, particularly in relation to the current and future supports and services needs of victims and survivors.
- participate in discussions, consider the findings of wider engagement and consultation with victims and survivors, review documents and papers, support the development of approaches to providing advice to government and other agencies and identify opportunities to influence for positive change for victims and survivors.

What is the process?

All prospective members will be required to take part in a selection process. We want this to be as straightforward and accessible as possible, while ensuring that you have sufficient time to reflect on the requirements of the role. The selection process will have two stages, an expression of interest followed by an interview:

To ensure anonymity, the external HR company AAB People will be undertaking the recruitment process.

The Expression of Interest form can be found on the next page and will ask you to outline why you would like to join the Panel, what you would bring to the role, and what you hope to achieve through membership.

If you would like to submit an Expression of Interest in an alternative format, please contact Zara Mirza at zara.mirza@aabpeople.com or on 028 9601 6146.

A shortlisting panel will review all applications and assess them against agreed criteria.

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Those who are shortlisted will be invited for interview. This will give an opportunity to share any thoughts, ask questions and provide an opportunity for the Commissioner to have a conversation with you in an individual setting.

What's involved in the role?

The Panel will schedule quarterly meetings during the working day. Meetings will generally take place in Belfast. In addition, members may be asked to take part in other activities during the year. These may include meetings with politicians, public servants, academics and international experts. Occasional travel may be required.

The panel discussions will help to inform the Commissioner's work in relation to advocating for future services for victims and survivors, leading on from the outcome of the current public consultation on services.

Key attributes and requirements of the role are:

- being a victim and survivor of historical institutional childhood abuse (as defined by legislation);
- the ability to empathise and understand others' experiences;
- good communication skills;
- deeply interested in the quality of life issues impacting victims and survivors including services to victims and survivors.

Training and support including an induction programme will be provided to members of the Panel to help them develop in the role. By its nature, the Panel will bring together individuals with a range of backgrounds and viewpoints. Members need to be able to share their views and listen to those of others. They also need to be open and honest about any experiences they have had that could impact on their ability to develop relationships built on trust and understanding.

Members will be appointed for up to a one-year period, with possible extension.

The role of panel member is voluntary and is not a paid position, travel and expenses will be paid as per the NICS travel and subsistence policy.

But I don't consider myself a victim...

That's ok. We never ask anyone to wear 'labels' they are not comfortable with. The terms 'victim and survivor' are defined in law for anyone impacted by historical institutional childhood abuse.

Under the Historical Institutional Abuse (NI) Act 2019, a victim or survivor is a person who suffered abuse while a child and while resident in an institution at some time between 1922 and 1995 (both inclusive).

We know that many of you will have a lot to offer through your lived experiences and we know how valuable your contribution to the Advisory Panel will be, particularly in relation to supporting the Commissioner on looking at services to victims and survivors now and in the future.

Expression of Interest to the Advisory Panel

Personal Information

Title: _____

First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Contact details

Email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Institution(s) attended with dates

Name of Institution:	Dates:

The Advisory Panel will have a “hope” and “future” focus; it will look at ways that the Office of the Commissioner can make a positive contribution to victims and survivors lives now and in the future.

Please outline why you would like to join the Panel, what you would bring to the role and what you hope to achieve through membership.

(Your answer should be no more than 1000 words in total).

I confirm that the information that I have provided is accurate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Return Details:

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9 James Street
BT2 8DN

By email - Zara.mirza@aabpeople.com