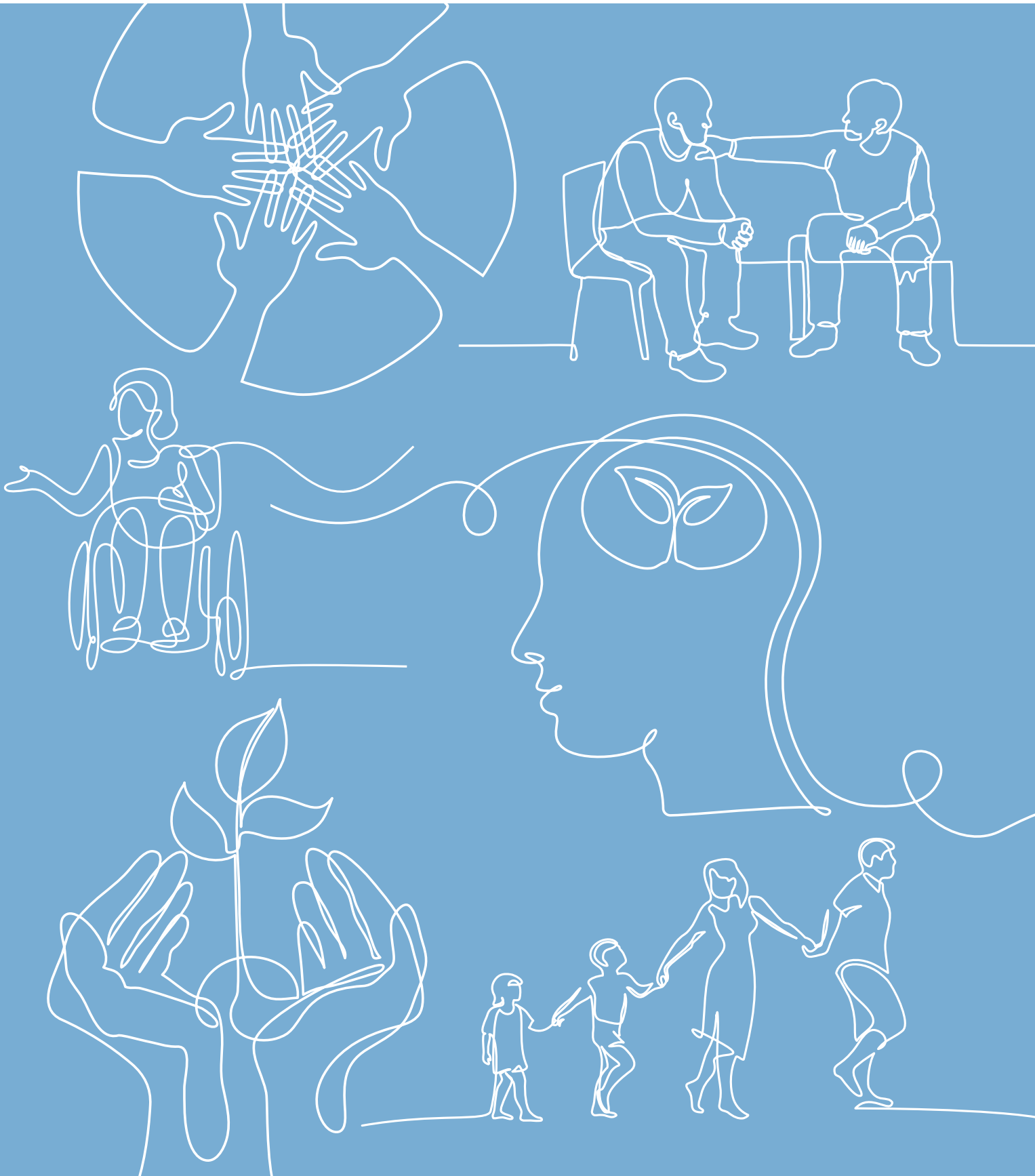




The
Executive Office

www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

Strategy for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/Conflict



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Glossary

Advocacy Support Network: a network of support workers who can assist individuals to engage with legacy processes.

Central Good Relations Fund: The Central Good Relations Fund (CGRF) supports constituted voluntary and community sector groups to deliver good relations projects where there is evidence of identified good relations need. Successful projects must contribute towards the delivery of one of the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) Strategy key priorities.

Collaborative (co)-Design Process: the process of involving multiple stakeholders in the design and development of products, services, or systems with the goal of creating solutions that are more relevant, effective, and satisfying to the people who will use them.

Communities In Transition: The Communities in Transition (CIT) Project aims to support eight geographic areas where there has been a history of paramilitary activity and coercive control to transition into communities where paramilitary activity no longer plays a role. This project is designed to support ambitious initiatives that will build the capacity of individuals and groups to affect positive change for themselves and their communities.

Comprehensive Needs Analysis: examined the needs of victims and survivors and assessed whether the provisions and services that have been put in place since 1998 met those needs. It also identified areas of emerging and growing needs in relation to changing social and economic environments. It formed the foundations for the planning and delivery of services.

Lived Experience: refers to personal knowledge gained from direct experience that would not ordinarily be apparent through observation or via representations constructed by a third party who has not 'lived' it through the eyes of those who were in the situation.

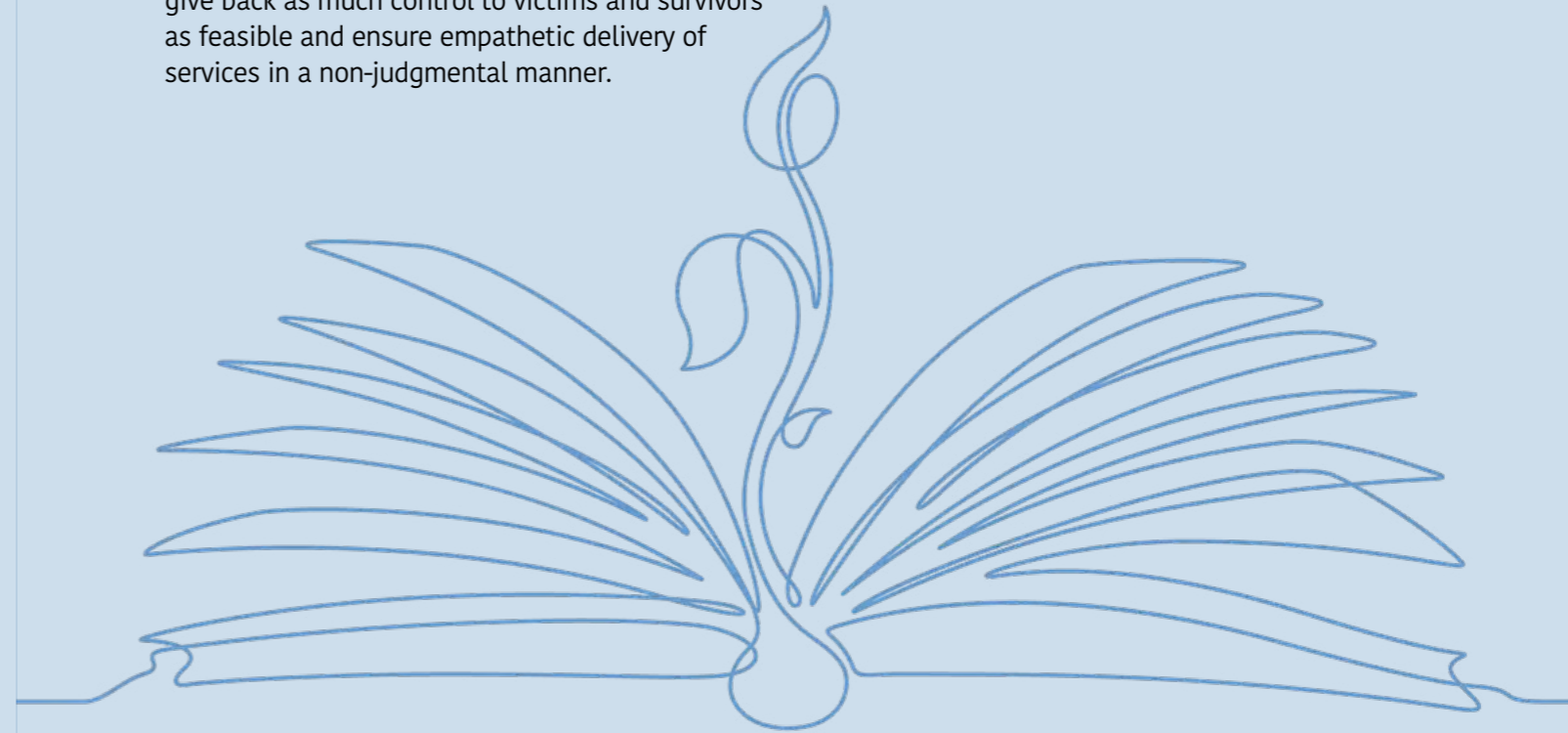
PEACE IV / Peace Plus: PEACEPLUS is the new cross-border funding Programme created to strengthen peace and prosperity within and between the border counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland. PEACEPLUS (2021-27) is the successor programme to PEACE IV.

Transgenerational Trauma / Intergenerational Trauma: Intergenerational trauma—sometimes called transgenerational trauma is a term that is used to describe the impact of a traumatic experience, not only on one generation, but on subsequent generations after the event.

Trauma informed or trauma aware: refers to adoption of practices, where practitioners, volunteers etc. focus on understanding or assessing a person's needs with reference to a loss or trauma the person might have had to better support them or refer them for other services.

Victims and Survivors NI Order: this piece of legislation founded the Commission for Victims and Survivors. It outlines the powers and functions of the office and the circumstances in which an individual could be considered a victim and survivor as a result of the Troubles/conflict.

Victim Centred Approach: is a way of engaging with victims and survivors that prioritises listening, avoids re-traumatisation, and systematically focuses on their safety, rights, well-being, expressed needs and choices. The purpose is to give back as much control to victims and survivors as feasible and ensure empathetic delivery of services in a non-judgmental manner.



Foreword

Place holder for Foreword – to be added once finalised.

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Executive Summary

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1. Introduction and Background

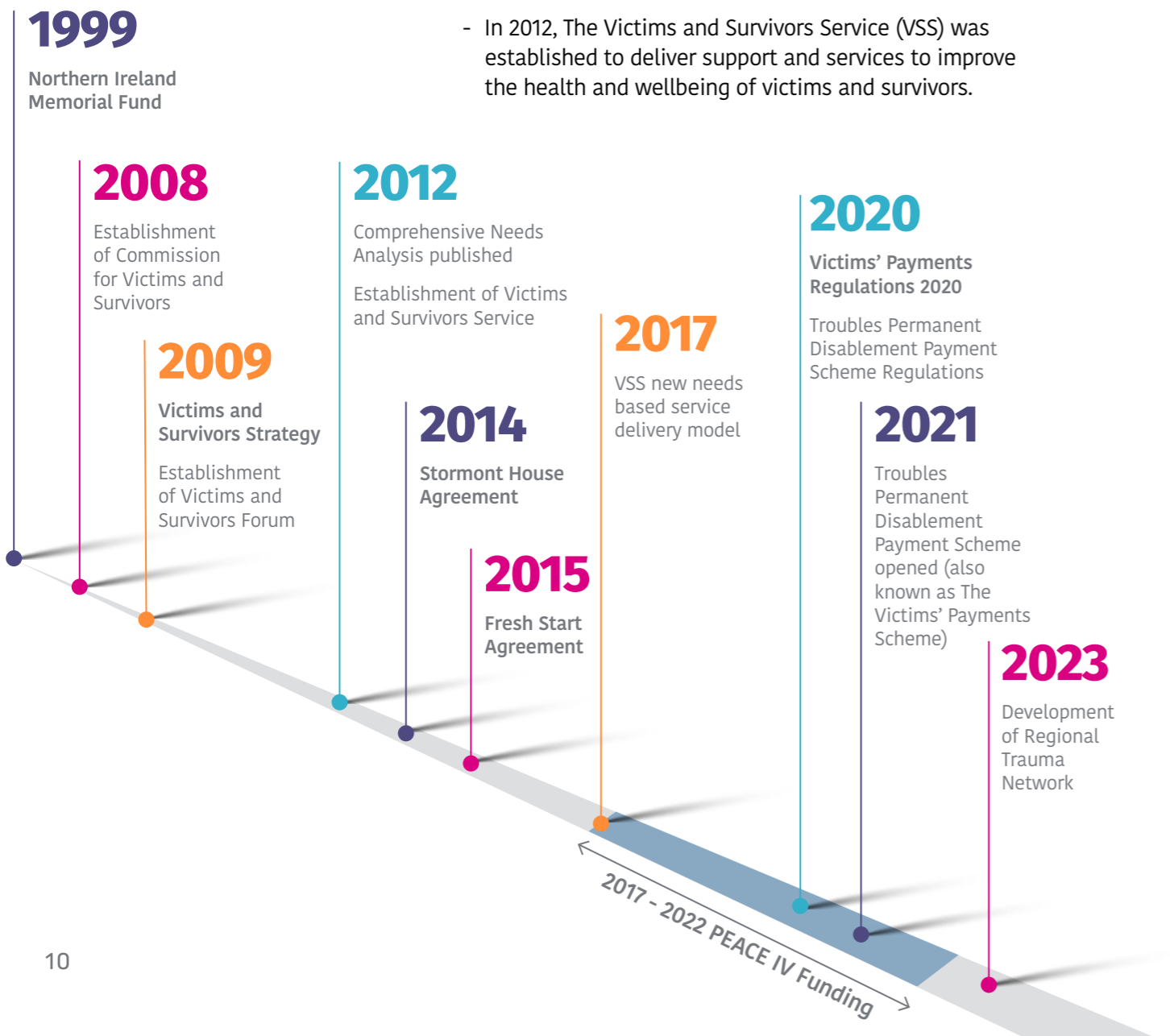
<p>This Strategy sets out the outcomes we aim to achieve for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict. The Strategy aims to build on the progress we have made to date to ensure the needs of victims and survivors continue to be understood and met as well as putting in place the appropriate arrangements to ensure trauma informed and victim centred services are available to empower and support victims and survivors and contribute to building a shared and peaceful future.</p>	<p>The Strategy also sets out specific issues affecting victims and survivors which have been identified as requiring particular focus if the outcomes are to be achieved.</p> <p>The Strategy recognises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the importance of adapting to the changing needs of victims and survivors. - that victims and survivors should be empowered to play their part in building a more peaceful future at their own pace. - that the impact of the Troubles/conflict crosses generations and the importance of involving children and young people and breaking the chain of trauma. - that victims and survivors have the same needs and aspirations as the wider population. - that truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence are important to victims and survivors. - the need to ensure the rights of victims and survivors are respected and protected. - the importance of ensuring victims and survivors needs influence wider government policies and initiatives. - that the Troubles/conflict often affected men and women in different ways. - that many victims and survivors live outside of the jurisdiction. - that there is a need to work collaboratively across and between government departments to achieve the desired outcomes. - the invaluable work which has been carried out by community and voluntary organisations over the years and continues to be provided. - that appropriate funding needs to be in place to support the ongoing work of community and voluntary organisations. - the importance of trauma informed practice.
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Story so Far

This Strategy marks the latest milestone in improving support for victims and survivors and aims to build on the progress and arrangements currently in place

- In 2006, the Victims and Survivors NI Order established in law the creation of a Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) including the creation of a Victims and Survivors Forum to represent the voice of victims and survivors.
- In 2008, the first victims commissioner(s) were appointed to promote the interests of victims and survivors.
- In 2009, the first strategy for victims and survivors was launched to provide the outline of a coherent and comprehensive approach for taking forward work on a range of issues relating to victims and survivors.
- In 2012, The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was established to deliver support and services to improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.



Further progress includes:

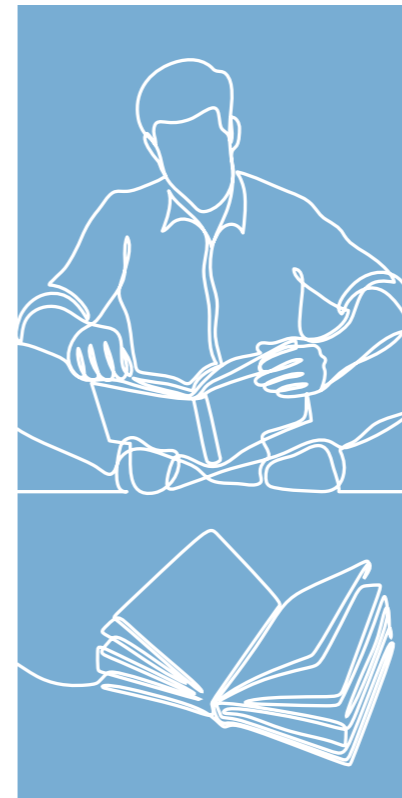
- Significant improvements to the quality of services provided and to the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors through the establishment of an outcomes based and needs driven delivery model.
- Significant investment through the PEACE IV Programme of £15 million to improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.
- Establishment of the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.

What we've been told:

An independent evaluation of the Strategy for Victims and Survivors 2009 – 2019, highlighted key success, identified future challenges, and provided recommendations which has informed the development of our new strategy.

The evaluation told us:

- There were significant improvements in service provision over the strategy period to help improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.
- A wide range of evaluation and research activity carried out over the strategy period, has helped to develop a robust evidence base to inform the development and delivery of services.
- The collaborative (co)-design (partnership working) process has contributed to the development of better working relationships within the sector and has helped deliver significant improvements in service provision.
- The challenges of dealing with our past impact on building for our future, further research is needed to inform the development of support that meets the ongoing and changing needs of victims and survivors.



The role of Community and Voluntary Organisations

- The Belfast / Good Friday Agreement 1998 includes the following: "The provision of services that are supportive and sensitive to the needs of victims will also be a critical element and that support will need to be channelled through both statutory and community-based voluntary organisations facilitating locally based self help and support networks. This will require the allocation of sufficient resources, including statutory funding as necessary, to meet the needs of victims and to provide for community-based support programmes".
- This strategy recognises the growing role Community and Voluntary Organisations have in delivering services and in engaging with government to ensure victims and survivors holistic needs are met.
- It also recognises the importance of ensuring new and innovative ways of working adopted through the Covid pandemic which enabled the continuation of support and services for victims and survivors are encouraged.

Our Approach

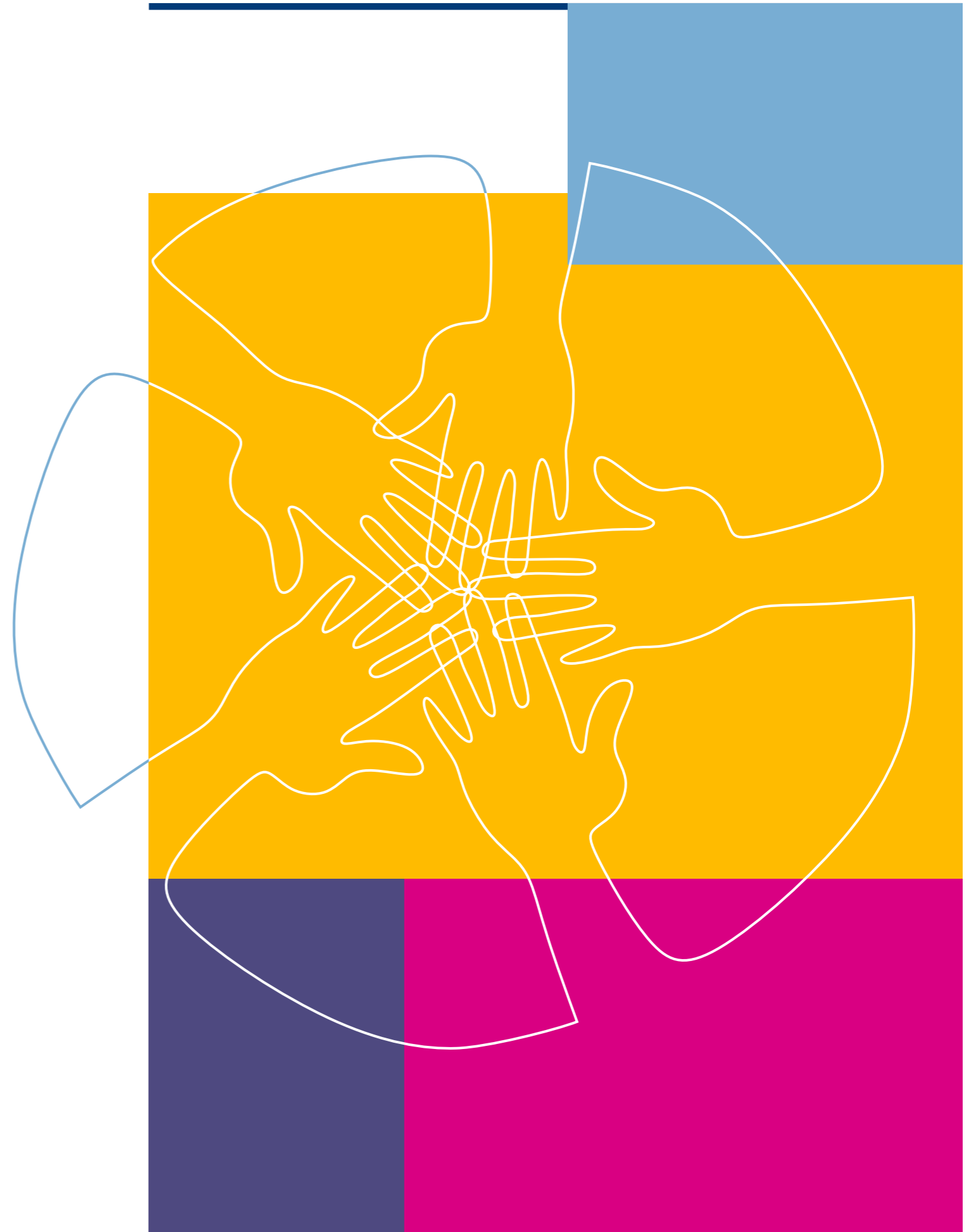
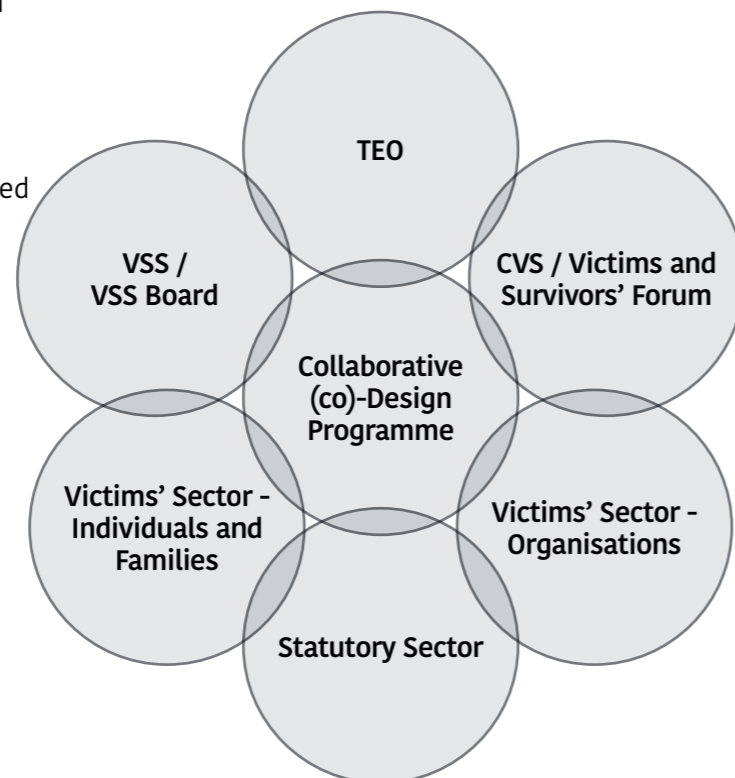
In developing this Strategy, we have engaged with victims and survivors, victims organisations and their representatives as well as taking on board relevant research and evidence based practice. This has helped develop a number of outcomes and actions which reflect the many complex, varied and changing needs of victims and survivors.

The approach to designing and developing this Victims and Survivors Strategy has been one of collaborative-design and partnership working. Together in partnership with the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) and Victims and Survivors Service (VSS), we have tried to put victims and survivors at the heart of its development to determine the needs and outcomes which should be included.

The Strategy was developed in three phases, managed by an overarching Collaborative (co)-Design planning group. TEO, VSS and CVS worked together as a Collaborative (co)-Design team, holding regular meetings to share information and cross reference findings.

We would like to thank all of the groups and individuals who worked with us in the development of this Strategy. Our particular thanks go to those who provided valuable input based on their lived experiences.

- **Phase 1** examined the Collaborative (co)-Design process, and the outcomes of relevant research and evaluations to the Strategy. Consideration was also given to emerging themes and patterns.
- **Phase 2** explored the emerging themes and patterns identified through the establishment of various working groups to develop the key areas for inclusion in the Strategy and support meaningful and productive engagement
- **Phase 3** involved the drafting of the Strategy and formal public consultation.



2. Our Vision

Initiatives and proposals within this Strategy will work towards an enduring vision articulated by a number of key principles and core values.

Vision

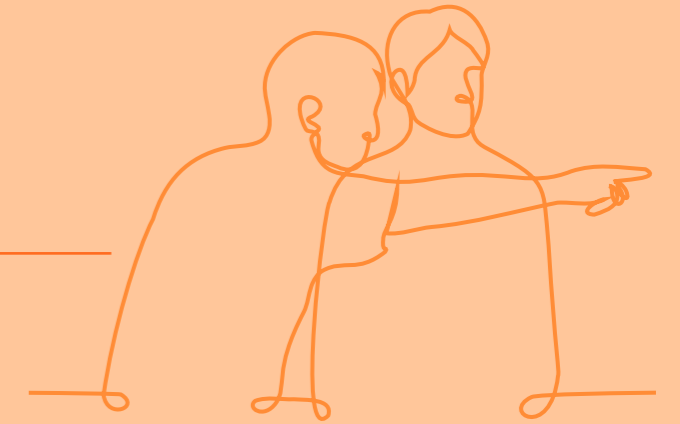
A trauma informed society that addresses the needs of victims and survivors.

Principles and Values

- Victim centred
- Trauma informed
- Collaboration and partnership
- Responsive to changing needs
- Evidence based
- Trust and confidence
- Empowering



3. Pillars



Past

We will support victims and survivors and their families as they move forward from experiences of the past.

This is what we said last time:

That we would assist victims and survivors, where this is consistent with their wishes and wellbeing, to play a central role, as part of wider society in addressing the legacy of the past.

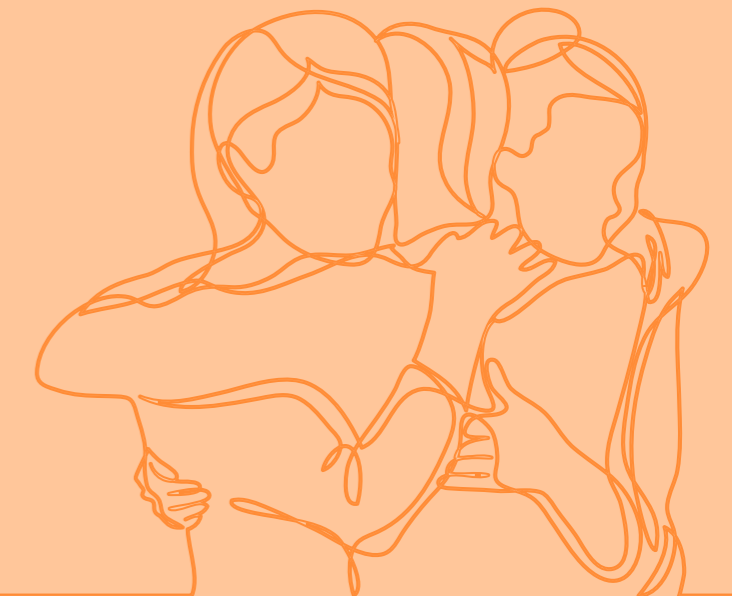
That we would ensure that victims and survivors play an active role in the development of ways to deal with the past and other transitional mechanisms affecting their journey towards recovery and wellbeing.

This is what has been implemented:

The PEACE IV Advocacy Support Network was established to assist individuals to engage with the legacy processes. Within the Victims and Survivors Service, 5 Advocacy Managers and 19 Advocacy workers were based in 9 community-based organisations over the period 2016 - 2022.

The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme opened for applications on 31st August 2021. The purpose of the Scheme is to acknowledge the harm suffered by those permanently disabled in the Troubles/conflict and to promote reconciliation.

” The past can still very much be the present for some people.



This is what worked:

The Advocacy Support Programme provided trained professionals who worked in partnership with individual victims and survivors to enable them to: voice their views; access information to make an informed choice; explore and understand their options; and secure and promote their rights. Over 4,200 victims and survivors have been supported through this programme over the term of the previous Strategy.

The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme represents an important achievement and significant acknowledgement for the considerable impact on the physical and psychological wellbeing of many victims and survivors permanently disabled as a result of a Troubles/conflict related incident.

CVS, informed by the Victims and Survivors Forum, has advised on legacy issues through several advice papers, ensuring the voices of victims and survivors were represented at government/policy level over the term of the previous Strategy.

This is what we learned:

Dealing with the past is difficult and often painful. There is a need for leadership and willingness across all sections of society in order to make progress.

One of the most important priorities for victims and survivors is truth and justice. The legislative landscape for victims and survivors is changing and this has an impact on seeking and accessing truth and justice.

The Stormont House Agreement (SHA), agreed in 2014, proposed setting up four new legacy institutions. In 2018, the UK Government launched a public consultation on ‘Addressing the Legacy of Northern Ireland’s Past’, which provided an opportunity to comment on the establishment of the new institutions. The overarching message from the vast majority of those who responded to the consultation was that the current system needed reformed and there was an obligation to seek to address the legacy of the past in a way that builds for the future. Of those who expressed a view on the proposals, the majority indicated broad support for the institutional framework. Many noted a number of areas of concern, but almost all respondents agreed that any approach to dealing with the past should be victim centred.

There is widespread opposition from all political parties to the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 which is having a negative impact on victims and survivors.

While recognising the importance of truth and justice to victims and survivors, it is critical to also recognise the desire of many to work towards addressing acknowledgement in its widest sense, to lead to greater societal recognition of the hurt, loss, and trauma of our past.

The future PEACE PLUS Advocacy Support Programme needs to be flexible to meet the changing needs of victims and survivors within the context of contested legacy mechanisms.

” Everybody deserves to know what happened. Our everyday life is affected by what happened.

This is what the research said:

That advocacy work should be valued and supported, and expertise shared; that future benchmarking and monitoring of funded advocacy services should incorporate flexibility and responsiveness.

That further provision should draw upon and learn from advocacy practice to date, and that there should be formal recognition and response to systemic delays and cross-jurisdictional issues.

In the 2021 CVS population survey, 24% of respondents defined themselves as victims or survivors, 88% felt it was important to address the legacy of the Troubles/conflict.

This is what we will do:

We will continue to work with victims and survivors to meet their needs and ensure that they are supported in dealing with the legacy of the past, and we will be flexible in the face of changing needs and prevailing circumstances.

Continue to support victims and survivors through the Advocacy Support Network within the VSS PEACE PLUS project currently funded through the VSS..

Work with victims and survivors, and wider society, to develop a designated public space of reflection where people can come together to remember our past.

Work with third and faith sectors to recognise and promote the Annual Day of Reflection on 21st June each year.

Further explore themes of Acknowledgement including shared acts of commemorative activity to collectively acknowledge the impact of the Troubles/conflict on the peoples of these islands and beyond.

Engage with the Irish and UK Governments to ensure they are aware of the needs of victims and survivors, and the potential impact on individuals and communities of failing to meet those needs.

Continue to deliver the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme in a victim centred and trauma informed way.



High Level Outcomes:

Past
Victims and Survivors feel supported in their journey

Potential Indicators:

XX% of victims and survivors who engage with the Institutions feel more confident in doing so

XX% of victims and survivors who engage in advocacy have an increased knowledge of the available options

XX% of victims and survivors who have a better knowledge of their rights

Needs

We will support and enable victims and survivors to improve their health and wellbeing, addressing the factors which impact on mental and physical health. We will ensure victims and survivors have an improved awareness of and access to high quality, trauma informed services.

This is what we said last time:

That the strategy would secure through the provision of an appropriate range of support services and other initiatives a measurable improvement in the wellbeing of victims and survivors.

That services for victims and survivors are provided in response to assessed need, adhere to published standards and are designed to have clear outcomes.

That the practical and other needs of victims and survivors are kept under review and that services are responsive to changing needs.

This is what has been implemented:

We established a Victims and Survivors Service responsible for providing support for individuals and groups and distributing funding in response to assessed and agreed need.

We asked The Victims and Survivors Forum to work as a group in supporting the Commission in developing a comprehensive assessment of needs of victims and survivors. The recommendations of the Commissioners in relation to the comprehensive needs assessment were key in identifying a basis for funding to be distributed through the Victims and Survivors Service.

A network of 26 Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers was established to identify and address the needs of victims and survivors living in NI, Border Region and Great Britain.

The Individual Needs Programme (INP) was established to deliver funding, funded services, specialist interventions and tailored programmes directly to individuals based on need.

The Victims Support Programme (VSP) was established, which delivers funding to organisations that provide Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services to victims and survivors.

A new Victims and Survivors Service Delivery Model was launched on April 2017 with the aim of providing better outcomes for victims and survivors while securing services for the future.

As part of the Stormont House Agreement the Northern Ireland Executive made a commitment to establish a comprehensive Mental Health Trauma Service. As a result, the Regional Trauma Network (RTN) was established in 2022. The network will support victims and survivors on their journey to recovery. The RTN connects specialist trauma care by drawing on existing resources and expertise from the statutory and community and voluntary sectors. The network will deliver a comprehensive regional trauma service across statutory and community services to enable those experiencing psychological trauma related difficulties to access support at the right place at the right time.

This is what worked:

A community led service delivery model now provides a range of Health and Wellbeing support and services across 48 community organisations.

Currently over 13,000 victims and survivors are supported each year. £57.5m funding has been awarded for the Individual Needs Programme and Victim Support Programme during the strategy period from 2017 – 2022.

Outcomes are measured and evaluated and demonstrate the effectiveness of the support provided. For example, 60% of victims and survivors engaged in Talking Therapies report an improvement in symptoms. For Complementary Therapies the improvement rate reported is 80%.

The provision of a dedicated budget for victims and survivors, coupled with effective use of organisational / programme reviews and collaborative working among stakeholders, has led to significant improvements in service provision over the strategy period.

The new and innovative ways of working adopted through the Covid pandemic which enabled the continuation of support and services for victims and survivors.

This is what we learned:

The work of the strategy bodies has contributed to a significantly improved understanding of the needs of victims and survivors. This has helped to develop a robust evidence base to inform the development and delivery of service.

The needs of victims and survivors change over time, and with events. The strategy needs to be flexible and responsive to be able to meet those needs.

Victims and survivors bereaved of loved ones have specific needs, which are not always fully addressed by the forms of support currently available.

There is a need for greater alignment with strategies and policies on issues affecting victims and survivors.

The Troubles/conflict often affected men and women in different ways, the vast majority of those killed in the conflict were men. The majority of surviving family members are women who were left as widows to raise families on their own.

This is what the research said:

Services should be tailored to meet the needs of ageing victims and survivors, carers and people who are bereaved and should be delivered within a “trauma aware” environment.

Victims and survivors in GB, ROI and the Border Region should be properly acknowledged in addressing their needs, with timely and effective access to support and services. Engagement and co-operation among relevant government departments across each jurisdiction is required.

The need for advocacy support is anticipated to grow, training and career pathways for practitioners will help maintain service delivery, standards, and morale.

Befriending has helped her overcome her loneliness and social isolation. She is in a much better frame of mind now than she was prior to the service commencing.



This is what we will do:

Deliver a strategy that can adapt to changes in needs, environment and learning to ensure the best possible outcomes for victims and survivors and encourage piloting of new ways to support victims and survivors.

Ensure access to victim-centred, trauma informed, needs based support and services that contribute to improved wellbeing and quality of life for victims and survivors.

Raise awareness of Troubles/conflict-related trauma and the needs of victims and survivors in other service providers and across government.

Maintain a Network of Health and Wellbeing Case Managers and Regional Health and Wellbeing Case Workers to identify and address the needs of victims and survivors.

Deliver the Regional Trauma Network and monitor progress to ensure learning and development for the future provision of services.

Deliver appropriate support for the bereaved.

Improve access to services for rural and socially isolated, including through the promotion of befriending.

Invest in capacity of the sector through training and development to meet national and regional standards, research, and improved regulation.

Improve awareness of services and support available including clear pathways and signposting.

Review the accessibility of the services we provide, including any potential barriers to access.

Identify innovative ways to utilise limited public resources while ensuring that the most appropriate, best value services are available to meet the needs of victims and survivors.

Work to better understand the different impact that the Troubles/conflict had on men and women, and how the different needs can be met today.

High Level Outcomes:

Services

Improved physical health and emotional wellbeing of victims and survivors

Potential Indicators:

XX% of victims and survivors who find services meet their needs

XX% of victims and survivors who have an increased awareness of available resources

XX% of victims and survivors who report an improvement in health and wellbeing



The Future

The legacy of the Troubles/conflict continues to affect the everyday lives of many who are impacted through the experience of their families and through growing up in households where other family members were directly affected.

Alongside our community partners we will ensure that individuals and families are supported, and that society works towards “breaking the chain” of transgenerational trauma.

By acknowledging and learning from the Past we will help victims and survivors to build a better future.

This is what we said last time:

That we would invite victims and survivors to play a part in building a more peaceful future, but that as people who have suffered most, they should feel safe, should be treated with dignity, and should move at their own pace.

That comprehensive arrangements should be put in place to ensure that the voices of victims and survivors are represented and acted upon at a governmental and policy level.

That we would build the trust and confidence of victims and survivors and assist them, where this is consistent with their wishes and wellbeing, to participate on a sustained basis in the building of a shared and better future.

This is what has been implemented:

Mechanisms such as the Collaborative (co)-Design programme and the Victims and Survivors Forum ensure victims and survivors are represented and their views are heard and acted upon at a governmental and policy level. The voices of victims and survivors have been significant in shaping the development and implementation of key services such as the new needs based VSS Service Delivery Model 2017, the implementation of the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme 2021 and the Regional Trauma Network 2022. Some aspects of support have included wider family engagement, primarily in the area of social support.

Individual support has extended to those impacted by transgenerational and intergenerational trauma.

Family therapy has been piloted with a view to informing future service provision.

A wide range of trauma focused training courses aimed at building the capacity of those who deliver support and services to victims and survivors has been delivered.

The Strategy has supported the delivery of research which will inform future support provision in this area. Further work relating to transgenerational trauma is a key area of focus within this new Strategy.

PEACE IV funded research projects, contributed to an enhanced evidence base informing trauma support service delivery and the transgenerational impact of the Troubles/conflict.

This is what worked:

The CVS's 'Towards A Better Future: The Transgenerational Impact of the Troubles/conflict on Mental Health' research and recommendation for a comprehensive Mental Trauma Service informed the launch of a dedicated Regional Trauma Network.

Effective partnership working through the Collaborative (co)-Design Process ensured that victims and survivors voices were heard throughout the development of this Strategy.

There was successful and significant engagement with the sector to shape the implementation of the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme, ensuring the process was as victims centred as possible.



This is what we learned:

Building victims and survivors' issues into the design of legislation, policy and service delivery is key to ensuring lasting, positive change. To achieve it, a concerted, multi-agency and partnership-approach is required. By educating service providers, both statutory and non-statutory, on the needs of victims and survivors and ensuring they are trauma informed, we will be able to ensure that victims and survivors have access to services that are already established but that will meet their needs. This has the potential to benefit victims and survivors, and society as a whole by contributing to reconciliation.

It is important to consider the transgenerational trauma often experienced by children and young people, and to involve them in discussions and decision making. Children and young people need to understand the past to play a constructive role in building the future.

It is important to ensure that people are supported in "breaking the chain" of transgenerational trauma, and that any interventions avoid perpetuating the cycle of trauma or lead to continued "pathologising" of victims and survivors.

It is essential to reach as many people as possible who have been impacted by the Troubles/conflict, including those that might not identify themselves as a victim or survivor. There is a need to include individual victims and survivors and people with lived experience in discussions and decisions around issues that affect them. It is important to also include those who do not currently access services or feel the need for services but could make a valuable contribution to policy making.

Education around the Troubles/conflict encompasses more than just what is taught in school, there is a need to educate society as a whole using trauma-informed practices.

As the needs of victims and survivors change the facilities requirements will also change.

This is what the research said:

Policy makers should adopt a strategic, two-generation approach to interventions addressing the Troubles/ conflict's trans-generational legacy on mental health and wellbeing. Governmental policies should be examined to determine their relevance to addressing mental health priorities.

Services should be delivered within a "trauma aware" environment that has multidisciplinary and multi-agency working with trained staff at its core.

Further research on treatments for mental disorders and service evaluations are central to inform the evidence base and ensure the effective use of resources.

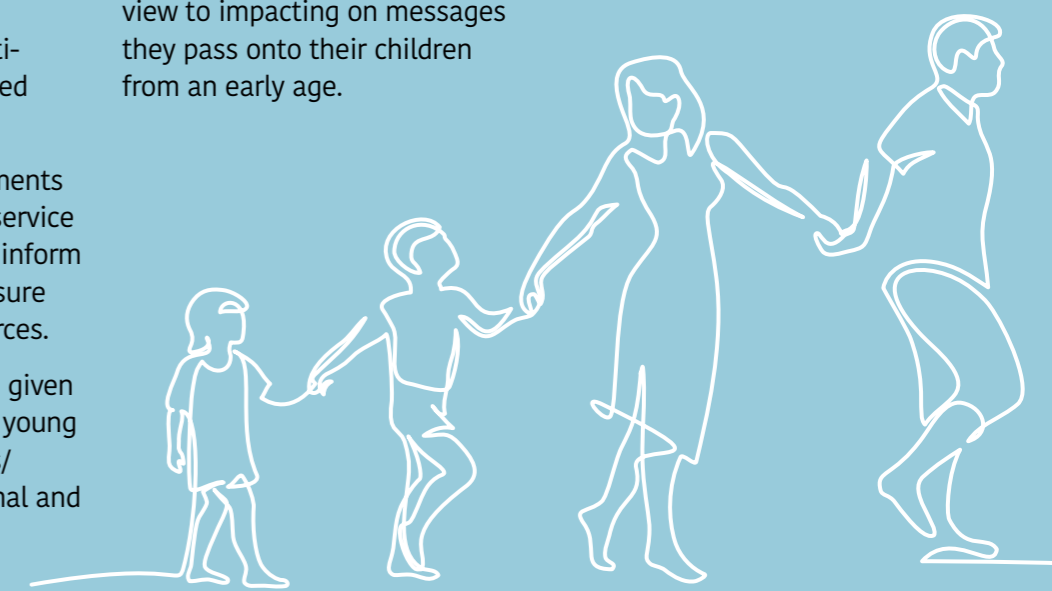
Consideration needs to be given to educating children and young people about the Troubles/ conflict through both formal and informal settings.

Education should play a role in developing children's understanding of their own and other cultures and identities, to enhance understanding, integration, respect, and tolerance.

Findings demonstrate the continued importance of the family in the transmission of attitudes of the 'other' community. Therefore, there is a need for increasing dialogue across the generations to encourage open and collective discussions on interpretations of identity and difference.

Issues of division and integration should be explored with parents / guardians with a view to impacting on messages they pass onto their children from an early age.

To ensure that mental health services are sensitive and responsive to legacy issues, screening tools should be enhanced and training in trauma informed practices a priority. Regional Trauma Network-led research and service delivery provides an opportunity to share learning and best practice across the health and victims' sectors.



“ I feel it's important to be aware of the past, of where you come from, so you are able to move forward knowing both sides.

This is what we will do:

Continue to include those with lived experience in discussions and decisions around issues that affect them.

Ensure victims and survivors issues are integrated into relevant and emerging strategies, policies and programmes including for example the Central Good Relations Fund and Communities In Transition, which can deliver outcomes for victims and survivors. We will actively seek opportunities for strategic alignment and collaborative working across government and the wider public sector, by creating connections with initiatives supporting reconciliation and the development of a shared and better future.

Carry out research to maintain and develop our understanding of the current needs of victims and survivors and conduct, as necessary, further research into the impact of transgenerational and intergenerational trauma to ensure adequate services and support are available and raise awareness of the transgenerational transmission of trauma.

Work with other sectors and Departments to build on existing and create new formal and informal education programmes to enhance knowledge and mutual understanding about the transgenerational impacts of the Troubles/conflict.

Work together with faith organisations to raise awareness of victims and survivors needs and help shape a peaceful society for all.

Consolidate expertise within the sector and work in partnership to protect front line services for victims and survivors, supporting victims' groups to partner and collaborate to deliver for victims and survivors on a regional basis.

Build upon our experience in dealing with trauma and work to support partners in the sector through organisational transition to support our aspiration of becoming a fully trauma informed society that can be an exemplar for others.

In light of the results of these actions, review how best victims and survivors can be supported in the future.

Review the facilities available to community and voluntary organisations who support victims and survivors, and consider the need for a capital building programme.

Build links between sectors, across the public sector and with GB and RoI to raise awareness and share learning on the needs of victims and survivors and service provision for those who have suffered trauma.

Expand upon and support the roll out of trauma education throughout society, raising awareness of trauma and developing trauma informed services.

High Level Outcomes:

Future
Improved quality of life for victims and survivors

Potential Indicators:

XX% of victims and survivors who have an increased awareness of available resources

XX% of victims and survivors who feel less isolated

XX% of victims and survivors who feel more hopeful about the future

Enablers

Past	Needs	The Future
We will support victims and survivors and their families on their journey of healing as they move forward from their experiences of the past.	Acknowledging that the needs of victims and survivors change throughout their lives we will provide high quality support and services which are flexible and adaptable to meet those needs.	We support families and society to work towards breaking the chain of intergenerational trauma. By acknowledging and learning from the past we will help victims and survivors to build a better future.
Building Relationships	We will work to improve collaboration across central and local government, statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector to ensure victims and survivors holistic needs are met.	
Commitments	We will work with those best placed within Executive Departments to ensure victims and survivors holistic needs are met.	
Learning	We will continue to improve our understanding of the needs of victims and survivors and how to meet them by adopting an evidence-based approach.	
Commitments	We will work with those best placed including service providers to ensure useful research is conducted.	

4. The Way Ahead Structures, Roles and Relationships

Establishing clear roles and relationships is important to move forward together on key areas of work identified in this Strategy

- Evaluation of the strategy found that the structures, roles, and relationships developed by the strategy has proven to be effective, allowing strategic delivery bodies to both support and challenge each other in progressing key areas of work. This formal structure was enhanced by the adoption of a Collaborative (co)-Design (partnership working) process, which was established in 2014/2015.
- The Collaborative (co)-Design process included the Executive Office, VSS, CVS and Victims and Survivors Community Partner Organisations. The Collaborative (co)-Design process contributed to the development of better working relationships within the sector and it helped deliver significant improvements in service provision.

The Executive Office (Department)

- Ministers set the policy for victims and survivors and provide the funding to the victims' sector through the VSS.

The Committee for the Executive Office

- The Committee for the Executive Office was established to advise and assist the First Minister and deputy First Minister, on matters within their responsibilities as Ministers. The committee undertakes a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Executive Office and plays a key role in the consideration and development of legislation.



The Commission for Victims and Survivors

- The Commission is responsible for developing advice for TEO on policy matters affecting victims and survivors. As part of its role the Commission also promotes the interests of victims and survivors, undertakes research and reviews the effectiveness of the services provided to victims and survivors.

The Victims and Survivors Forum

- The aim of the Forum is to be a place of consultation and discussion with victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict and it provides advice to the Commissioner.
- The Forum ensures that the voice, participation and lived experience of victims and survivors is at the heart of policy making process.

The Victims and Survivors Service

- The VSS is responsible for administering funding and support to victims and survivors.
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited provides support and funding to community partner organisations to provide services and support to victims and survivors on a regional basis.

Victims and Survivors Community Partner Organisations

- Organisations delivering support and services directly to victims and survivors.
- Providing valuable input into the design of services and support, through the Collaborative (co)-Design process.
- Ensuring the voice of victims and survivors are heard and represented.

Victims' Payments Board

- The Victims' Payments Board was established in February 2021. The purpose of the Board is to determine applications under the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (also referred to as the Victims Payments Scheme).
- The scheme has been designed to provide those who suffered severe permanent disablement (either physical or psychological) as a result of an injury caused through no fault of their own, in a Troubles-related incident. The payments are primarily an acknowledgement of the acute harm which they have suffered.
- It will also provide a measure of recognition of the implications of living with a permanent disablement caused by a Troubles-related injury and the associated impact of such disablement, and recognition that in many cases coping with disablement caused by the serious injury, had an adverse financial impact on individuals and their families.

Regional Trauma Network

- The Regional Trauma Network (RTN) is a managed care network that connects specialist trauma care by drawing on existing resources and expertise from the statutory and community and voluntary sector.
- This network delivers a comprehensive regional trauma service across HSC Trust Services, the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) and their funded community and voluntary organisations to enable those experiencing psychological trauma related difficulties to access support at the right place at the right time.

5. Review and Evaluation of the Strategy

How the Strategy will be taken forward

The Strategy sets out the high level outcomes that we want to achieve for victims and survivors and which we will work towards in relation to the policies, programmes and services we provide. The outcomes apply to all victims and survivors and we will continue to provide needs based services to help and support everyone; however the Strategy also focuses on specific issues which stakeholders have identified as requiring particular attention and are of greater risk of not achieving the outcomes.

Publication of this Strategy is only the beginning of the process. There are a number of steps to take forward as we begin to put it into operation.

Monitoring and Reporting Structures

All Departments are collectively responsible for this Strategy. The Executive Office will have a co-ordinating role but each Department has responsibility for their respective departmental and policy areas.

Contacts within each department will also be established to raise awareness and understanding of the Victims and Survivors strategy and issues relevant to their Department's policies and operational areas.

The structures will also be reflective of all key stakeholders including the community and voluntary sector. There will be ongoing engagement with victims and survivors to ensure that they have the opportunity to provide their views regarding policies, programmes or the delivery of services that affect them.

Review of the Strategy

A mid-way review of the Strategy will be taken forward. This will ensure that the Strategy takes account of new issues affecting victims and survivors that might emerge over its lifetime.

6. Annexes

2021

- RSM Evaluation of Victims and Survivors Strategy (2009 – 2019)
- “Better Together: Reviewing the Needs of Victims and Survivors” - Peace IV Research
- Effective Advocacy Services - Peace IV Research on the Provision of Advocacy Services
- Talking about our past and present - The impacts of Conflict Legacy
- “It didn’t end in ‘98” - Peace IV Research on Intergenerational Impacts of the Troubles/Conflict
- LucidTalk Population Survey Results

2017

- Victims and Survivors Mid-Term Review Project Final Summary Report March 2017

2016

- Children and Young People Engagement Project: Research Report April 2016
- Evaluation of Personalised Budget February 2016

2015

- Towards a Better Future: The Transgenerational Impact of the Troubles on Mental Health March 2015
- Impact of the Victim Support Programme February 2015
- Impact of the Individual Needs Programme February 2015

2014

- Pension for the Severely Injured Project Report April 2014
- WKM Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service February 2014
- CIPFA Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service February 2014

2012

- Young People’s Transgenerational Issues in Northern Ireland April 2012
- Historical Investigations and Information Recovery March 2012
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment Final Report February 2012

Supporting Evidence

2011

- Minimum Practice Framework for Services being provided within the Non-Statutory Sector October 2011
 - Troubled Consequences: A Report on the Mental Health Impact of the Civil Conflict in Northern Ireland
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October 2011

- Analysis of Current Service Provision June 2011
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2010

- Analysis of the CVS Module of the NI Omnibus Survey December 2010
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment: First Interim Report September 2010



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