

Meeting with the Victims' Commissioner and CICA

12.06.2025

Introduction

The Victims' Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority met on 12 June 2025 to discuss the operation of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme and the ongoing review of CICA's communications.

General Updates

In line with the 2024-25 agency framework, CICA have now appointed a non-executive as board Chair for the CICA Audit and Risk Assurance Committee- Julian Blazeby. Julian Blazeby comes in with an existing understanding of CICA and brings in another level of oversight. [New Chair for Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority Board - GOV.UK](#)

It was agreed that a meeting will be arranged with the Commissioner and the Chair of the board to discuss victims' experiences further.

CICA are currently in the process of finalising their annual report and are looking to lay this before summer recess (mid-July). This will be shared with Victims' Commissioner for her review.

CICA has been successful in their recruitment campaign and confirmed that the new starters are joining soon. It is estimated that the new starters would have completed the necessary training and will be productive from September- October.

CICA's caseload is continuing to increase. However, with the new recruits they are looking to keep the case load from growing.

Parliamentary updates

There were conversations around the spending review and CICA were asked whether the outcome of review will impact on service. We agreed that we will discuss this issue again at a future meeting where the implications of the review become clearer.

They are aware of the Private Members Bill that is to be read for a second time calling for a review of the scheme [Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority \(Review\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#). CICA's policy team are leading on these conversations.

The Victims' Commissioner advised CICA that she received a letter from Ministers stating they are reviewing the scheme in terms of the overall support package offered to victims.

CICA believes there is a recognition that they need a coordinated and strategic approach to victims. They are working on this with government.

Victims of terror

Services that support/represent victims of terror contacted the Victims' Commissioner to highlight the ongoing issues victims of terror face with the scheme.

Some of the issues raised are the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and relate to the regulations of the scheme. The Victims' Commissioner will meet with the Lord Chancellor to discuss these. However, the service also raised operational issues with CICA around how they communicate to/with victim-survivors.

The Victims' Commissioner stated that we believed that victims of terror were entitled to a caseworker, but we have been informed victims are not being provided with this.

CICA explained they have dedicated teams to handle cases involving terror offences, but victims do not have a dedicated caseworker. However, if there was a bereavement, the bereaved victim would be given a caseworker.

CICA holds a stakeholder meeting to seek feedback. The Victims' Commissioner requested that [Survivors Against Terror](#) join the Stakeholder Engagement and Equality forum. CICA also agreed to meet with this group ahead of the forum.

CICA has also previously worked with the Manchester arena bombings victims, and they provided feedback on the scheme to inform the support they provide to victims of terror.

Contact

CICA has recently changed their telephone opening hours and has been undergoing a review of their communications. This included a strategic vision of an end-to-end-process. Part of this vision includes digitising applications.

To improve communications, they are reviewing the reasons claimants, or their representatives may contact CICA and how the scheme can be more transparent.

The review also includes:

- Looking at the contact claimants have with customer service teams.
- Considering complaints, and stakeholder feedback.
- Reviewing letter templates and online guidance.
- Directing people to the online contact form and aiming to provide a response with 10 working days.
- Developing in service guidance including within the online contact form.
- Producing a step-by-step guide to the process that sets out what claimants can expect.
- Trialling a new type of contact, including sending updates on timelines.

- Looking at automating contact to acknowledge receipt of evidence, including medical evidence.

The phone lines remain accessible for victims who need it.

The Victims' Commissioner raised that CICA is dealing with vulnerable victims and communication that is accessible to all is vital.

CICA agreed to share the new letter templates being sent to victims with the Commissioner for feedback. Since the meeting the Commissioner has received this and provided her feedback.

CICA recognise that claimants may be vulnerable and have created a triage system so they can identify vulnerable victims and provide a prompt response.

They are also hopeful the in-service guidance will be helpful for victims and improve transparency from the offset.

The Victims' Commissioner's powers

CICA queried what the Commissioner's new powers under the Victims and Courts Bill mean.

Baroness Newlove explained the Bill means the Victims' Commissioner can now produce an annual report on code compliance. The Commissioner can also use individual correspondence to make policy related queries. This will be discussed further with CICA at a later date.

Agreed that the next meeting between CICA and the Commissioner will take place in August, and will provide an opportunity for CICA to meet the new Victims' Commissioner.