

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 chair to the CICA Board - Julian Blazeby. [New Chair for Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority Board - GOV.UK](#)

It was agreed a meeting will be arranged with the Victims' Commissioner and Mr Blazeby as part of his induction to the role and to discuss victims' experiences further.

CICA are in the process of finalising their 2024-25 Annual Report and Accounts and plan to lay this before summer recess (mid-July). This will be shared with the Victims' Commissioner once laid.

CICA has been successful in recent recruitment campaigns and confirmed that the new starters are joining soon. It is expected that the new starters will have completed the necessary training and working cases from the Autumn.

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

Parliamentary updates

There were conversations around the spending review and CICA were asked whether the outcome of this 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](#). MoJ's policy team are leading on these conversations.

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

Victims of terror

Services that support/represent victims of terror contacted the Victims' Commissioner to highlight the ongoing issues 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 regularly meets with and writes to Ministers and discusses the regulations relating to the Scheme.

However, the support service also raised operational issues with CICA around how they communicate to/with victim-survivors.

The Victims' Commissioner asked whether victims of terror were entitled to a named caseworker. The Commissioner believes this is the best means of communicating with all victims. The Deputy CEO responded that there was a dedicated team dealing with this group of victims, but they were unable to allocate named caseworkers to all victims. She added that if there was a bereavement, the bereaved victim would be given a named caseworker.

The Victims' Commissioner requested that [Survivors Against Terror](#) join the Stakeholder Engagement forum as this would give them the opportunity to raise concerns directly with CICA. She also requested that CICA meet with this group ahead of the forum.

CICA agreed and confirmed they previously met with members of [Survivors Against Terror](#) including victims of the Manchester Arena bombing who provided feedback about their experiences of applying for compensation.

Contact

CICA changed their telephone opening hours in June 2024 and in response to feedback have instigated a review of their communications with applicants. This includes a strategic vision of an end-to-end-process ,including looking at digital solutions.

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

The review also includes:

- Looking at the contact applicants 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 within 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 applicants 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 Victims' Commissioner for feedback. Since the meeting the Victims' Commissioner has received this and provided her feedback.

CICA recognise that claimants may be vulnerable and have created a triage system for emails and online contact form enquiries so they can identify vulnerable victims more easily and provide a prompt response.

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

The Victims' Commissioner's powers

CICA asked about the Commissioner's new powers under the Victims and Courts Bill and whether there was anything CICA could do to assist the Victims' Commissioner in the exercise of her new functions.

Baroness Newlove explained the Bill provisions would mean future Victims' Commissioners would be able to produce an annual report on code compliance. The Victims' Commissioner would also be able to use individual correspondence to make policy related queries.

Agreed that the next meeting between CICA and the Victims' Commissioner will take place in August.