

CICA meeting 27/02/2025

Introduction

The Victims' Commissioner and the Deputy CEO of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority met on 27 February 2025 to discuss the operation of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. The Commissioner and the Deputy CEO of CICA have regular meetings.

Consultation update

Neither the Commissioner nor the Deputy CEO were aware of the outcome of consultations on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme that took place under the previous government.

Since this meeting the government has published its response to the 2022 and 2023 consultations: [Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme Review: 2022 and 2023 consultations: Government Response - GOV.UK](#).

There are currently no plans for a response to be issued to the 2020 consultation.

Budget

The total average annual budget for compensation ranges from £150-170 million. CICA's compensation budget for 2025-26 is a slight increase from previous years. Early confirmation of the budget position has allowed CICA to plan for 2025-26, including recruitment plans to ensure they have the capacity to deliver in line with their budget. CICA fully expect to spend their compensation budget in 2024-25.

CICA do not delay compensation payments due to budget restraints. Senior managers track the compensation spend very closely to ensure payments are timely and they are operating within budget.

IICSA Recommendations

There is currently no ministerial decision on whether the [IICSA recommendation 18](#) will be implemented. The MoJ policy team have been reviewing IICSA's advice.

Since this meeting, the Government's response to the CICA's consultations indicates they will not be implementing IICSA recommendation 18.

Contact with CICA

CICA was informed an ISVA was not able to make contact with their service during an allocated appointment time with a client. CICA found this feedback helpful.

CICA has commissioned an end-to-end review of all communications with victims. They are keen to be transparent and they recognise the need to manage expectations from the outset.

Phone contact

Most applicants contact via the telephone contact centre is for update requests. CICA are looking into the possibility of introducing automated contact to provide more regular updates and reduce demands on the phone.

Given the nature of compensation claims, CICA are unable to make decisions regarding a claim over the telephone. They want to ensure that any communication with applicants offers value.

CICA are looking to recruit more staff into their contact centre team.

Confirmation of receipt of medical evidence

CICA does not currently send automated confirmation of receipt of medical evidence, but they are exploring the functionality to enable them to do this in the future. This will hopefully reduce the volume of calls to the contact centre as victims will be reassured the documents submitted have been safely received. The Victims' Commissioner agreed this would add value and offers reassurance.

Awards granted to under 18s

The Victims' Commissioner raised a case of a mother who was supporting a traumatised child who had been awarded compensation and where the settlement was being held by CICA until the child was 18. The mother had applied to CICA for access to the compensation to be used for the purpose of providing the child with therapy. The request was refused and yet it would seem that the therapy would have been in the child's best interests.

CICA explained that when the victim is a minor, the award is safeguarded by CICA until they are 18. A parent or guardian can request money for the child, and this can be arranged. Since the meeting, CICA has updated its guidance and corporate literature to make clearer that a claims officer can consider releasing funds for private therapy for the child where this cannot reasonably be accessed through the NHS. A copy of the updated leaflet which provides guidance to parents/guardians has been shared with the Victims' Commissioner.

Caseworker for vulnerable claimants

CICA recognises that people with autism may have particular vulnerabilities.

CICA currently provides trauma-informed training to their staff. They have also discussed with the cross-government autistic network how CICA can make their services more accessible to neurodiverse victims. Unfortunately, the autistic network does not currently have a product but are in the process of developing one. As part of ongoing training, CICA is highlighting to its staff the need to understand the differing vulnerabilities of callers.

They are looking more widely at identifying accessibility needs, for example, printing guidance and forms in larger font.

CICA recognise people have different ways of communicating and how trauma displays. They are training staff who are public facing to be sensitive to this. When

they are recruiting staff, they are specifically looking at candidates' communication skills specifically with this in mind.

Caseloads

The volume of criminal injuries compensation applications is continuing to increase. Although not yet confirmed, CICA believe this year will show a 4% increase in applications compared with last year. They are on track to meet their KPI of 40% of decisions made within 6 months. They are also on track for meeting their KPI of providing a review decision to claimants (70% within 6 months). They are unlikely to meet their KPI of issuing decisions within 12 months in 70% of cases. However, they are more confident this KPI will be met next year.

The number of applicants requesting a review of a decision is around 15%. Approximately 3% of cases will result in an appeal to the Tribunal. These figures remain relatively consistent.

CICA is not responsible for setting the timeframe for claimants to appeal their decision in the First-tier Tribunal. The timescale for an appeal to be made is set out in the Tribunal Rules 2008. The timeframe thereafter depends on judicial decisions and HMCTS scheduling of hearings. This varies between cases.

The Victims' Commissioner asked what percentage of applications were made through legal representatives. CICA undertook to provide this information to the Victims' Commissioner and subsequently confirmed that 25% of applicants were legally represented in the calendar year 2024.

CICA stated they are committed to making the process as accessible as possible so that applicants feel confident of applying to the Scheme directly as opposed to applying through a third party.

CICA shared that they are aware of rare cases where legal representatives have used CICA branding on their website which can cause confusion to victims. Where CICA become aware of this, they communicate directly with the legal representative to request changes to their website to make clear they are not CICA nor affiliated with CICA.