

Easy Read

Consultation on the Inquiry Rules for the Truth Recovery Public Inquiry

Truth Recovery Programme
The Executive Office

Wednesday 23 September 2026

The closing date for responses is Tuesday 17 November 2026

Email: trpconsultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

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PART A – WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

Introduction

On **30 June 2026**, the Assembly voted to approve a new law.

The new law will:

- Create a **Public Inquiry**.
- Create a **Redress Scheme** to provide support and payments to eligible people.

Before the law can start, it must go through a final step called **Royal Assent**. This is expected to happen in **Autumn 2026**.

The **Public Inquiry** cannot open until the law is in place.

More detailed rules must also be written before the Public Inquiry can begin.

We want your views to help shape the Inquiry Rules.

What will the Public Inquiry do?

The Inquiry will:

- listen to people's experiences
- look at documents, records and other **evidence**
- hold **hearings** where **evidence** may be given
- treat **sensitive** information carefully
- make findings about what happened
- make **recommendations**, if needed

The Rules

The full draft '**Rules**' can be found [here](#).

They are closely based on [The Inquiry Rules 2006](#) which are used for most public inquiries.

How to respond to the consultation

You can send your response to the **consultation** in any way that works for you.

We have also listed the **main ways you can respond** to the consultation.

Online questionnaire

- The online questionnaire can be found here
<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/teo/consultation-on-public-inquiry-rules-for-truth-rec/>
- An Easy Read version is available here
<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/teo/easy-read-consultation-on-public-inquiry-rules/>

Email

You can request an editable pdf version of the questionnaire shown on the [Department's website](#) by contacting us at trpconsultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk.

We will send you a form that you can complete on your computer, tablet or smartphone. Once completed, save the form and return it to us as an email attachment at trpconsultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk.

Hard Copy

Alternatively, should you wish to complete a paper copy of the questionnaire, please contact us at trpconsultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk or phone **028 9052 0063** for a hard copy, then post it to: -

Room E4.05,
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SL

Events

The consultation exercise will also be supported by a number of online information sessions: -

- Monday 5 October 2026, 4.00pm to 5.30pm
- Thursday 8 October 2026, 2.00pm to 3.30pm
- Tuesday 20 October 2026, 6.00pm to 7.30pm
- Thursday 22 October 2026, 10.00am to 11.30am

If you wish to register, please contact us by email trpconsultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk . Additional sessions can be offered to individuals and groups; please contact us at the email above to arrange.

Why take part?

Your views matter.

By responding to the consultation, you can tell us what you think. Your feedback will help us understand different views and experiences.

We want to hear from everyone who is interested or affected and what you tell us may help improve the rules before they are finalised.

Taking part gives you a chance to help shape how the Inquiry works.

We encourage you to share your views and help us make the Inquiry as fair and effective as possible.

Words we are using

There may be some words in the Easy Read version that you may feel are not the right ones to use. We have tried our best to use words that most victims and survivors prefer, but we understand that not everyone agrees on these.

Sometimes we may have to use words that are part of old laws. This does not mean we agree with the words, and we have tried to limit such usage as much as we can. We want to be as sensitive as possible, and it is not our intention to distress anyone.

Further Support Services

Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) offers support and assistance in the following areas:

- Health and wellbeing, including pain management, disability aids, complementary therapies and psychological supports
- Welfare advice and assistance
- Help engaging with other agencies

You can contact **VSS** by email, telephone or in writing:

Email: enquiries@vssni.org

Telephone: 028 9027 1678

Office Hours: Monday-Friday: 9am-5pm

Address: Victims & Survivors Service, 1st Floor Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN

Tips for completing the questionnaire

- You do not have to answer any question that upsets you.
- You can stop at any time.
- You do not have to tell us about **personal information** or personal experiences unless you want to.
- You can ask someone you trust to help you.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your views. They are important to us!

PART B - KEY WORDS

Some words in the Easy Read will be in **BOLD**; these are words which may be a little more difficult to understand and we will explain what these mean in the **KEY WORDS** below.

We have explained their meaning to help you read this document;

- **Act** – A law passed that sets out rules about things that can and will happen.
- **Applicant** – a person asking for help with costs.
- **Appeal or review** – asking for a decision to be looked at again.
- **Award** – money that may be paid. In this document it means for **Inquiry** costs.
- **Bill** – a claim for money to be paid.
- **Chairperson** – the person who leads the **Inquiry**.
- **Confidential** – information that must be kept private.
- **Consultation** – asking people what they think.
- **Core participant** – a person or organisation with a special role in the **Inquiry**.
- **Criticism** - means the **Inquiry** says that someone made mistakes or did not do what they should have done.
- **Document management system** – a way to store, organise, find, and share documents electronically on a system.
- **Evidence** – information the **Inquiry** needs.
- **Hearing** – a meeting in which **evidence** may be given.
- **Inquiry** – an investigation to find out what happened or to learn the facts about something.

- **Inquiry panel** – the people who help the **Chairperson**.
- **Inquiry procedures** are the process the **Inquiry** follows to gather **evidence**, hear from **witnesses**, and reach its findings.
- **Inquiry record** – a record of information, documents, and **evidence** collected during an **Inquiry** which must be kept.
- **Inquiry team** – the people who help to run the **Inquiry**.
- **Legal representative** – a person, usually a lawyer, solicitor or other legal person who speaks or acts for someone in legal matters.
- **Oral evidence** – spoken **evidence**.
- **Personal information** – information about you.
- **Privacy Notice** - a document that tells people what information will be collected about them, why it is needed, and how it will be protected and used.
- **Recognised legal representative** – a **legal representative** who has been accepted by the **Chairperson** to **act** for someone.
- **Report (Inquiry)** – a document that outlines what the **Inquiry** has found in its investigation and what it recommends should happen next.
- **Review (a decision)** - look again to check whether it was correct, fair, or should be changed.

Rules (Inquiry) – explain how an **Inquiry** will be carried out, including how **evidence** is gathered, how people can take part, and how decisions are made.

- **Secretary to the Inquiry** – the person who supports the **Inquiry Chairperson** and helps with the day-to-day running of the **Inquiry**. Responsible for organising and managing the **Inquiry** to ensure it runs smoothly.

- **Solicitor to the Inquiry** – the **Inquiry's** legal person, who provides advice and helps the **Inquiry** run properly and fairly.
- **TEO** – The Executive Office.
- **Warning letter** – a letter telling someone that they may be mentioned or criticised in the **Inquiry's report**. It gives them a chance to answer before the **report** is finalised.
- **Written Statement** – a written record of what a **witness** knows or wants to tell the **Inquiry**.
- **Witness** – a person who shares what they know with the **Inquiry** by giving **evidence** or answering questions.

PART C – QUESTIONNAIRE - ABOUT YOU

The following 10 questions help us understand, who is responding to the consultation.

Please note, we are particularly interested in the views of those affected or with experience of the institutions and their pathways and practices.

Question 1 is the only question which is required. In **Question 2 to Question 10** below we ask about you as an individual.

However, you **do not** have to answer them. If you do not want to answer a question, then leave it blank and move on to one that you do wish to answer.

We ask these questions to:

- find out if people from different backgrounds are taking part;
- help to make sure everyone has a fair chance to be heard;
- check if there are any barriers that make it harder for some people to take part

This helps us consider our equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and identify any groups who may face barriers to participation.

The information is used for monitoring purposes only and helps us assess whether our policies and services promote equality of opportunity for everyone.

TEO is committed to protecting your privacy. For more information about what we do with your **personal information** please see our [privacy notice](#).

TEO will not attribute any information provided to an individual respondent.

Q1. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation? [required question]

An individual (please go to question 2) ☐

On behalf of an organisation ☐

If responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us your organisation's name.

(please go to question 11)

Q2. Have you been affected by any of the following (please select all that apply)?

Mother and Baby Institution ☐

Magdalene Laundry ☐

Workhouse ☐

Other institution ☐

None of the above ☐

If you have selected 'Other institution', please specify:

Q3. Which of the following describes you (please select all that apply):

Someone who was admitted to an institution ☐

Someone born to a mother who was in an institution ☐

Family member of either category above ☐

Other ☐

If you have selected 'Other', please specify:

Q4. Are you currently a resident in Northern Ireland?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If No, please indicate where you currently live

Republic of Ireland ☐

Great Britain ☐

Rest of Europe ☐

America ☐

Canada ☐

Australia ☐

Other ☐

If you have selected 'Other', please specify:

Q5. What is your age?

Under 16 ☐

16-24 ☐

25-34 ☐

35-44 ☐

45-54 ☐

55-64 ☐

65-74 ☐

75-84 ☐

85+ ☐

Q6. What is your religion?

No religion ☐

Catholic ☐

Presbyterian ☐

Church of Ireland ☐

Methodist ☐

Baptist ☐

Free Presbyterian ☐

Brethren ☐

Protestant – not specified ☐

Christian – not specified ☐

Buddhist ☐

Hindu ☐

Jewish ☐

Muslim ☐

Sikh ☐

Other ☐

If you have selected 'Other', please specify:

Q7. What is your sex?

Male ☐

Female ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

Q8. What is your ethnic group? (Choose one option which best describes your ethnic group or background)

White ☐

Irish Traveller ☐

White and Black Caribbean ☐

White and Black African ☐

White and Asian ☐

Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, *please describe below* ☐

Indian ☐

Pakistani ☐

Bangladeshi ☐

Chinese ☐

Any other Asian background, *please describe below* ☐

African ☐

Caribbean ☐

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, *please describe below* ☐

Arab ☐

Any other ethnic group, *please describe below* ☐

If you have selected 'Any other', please specify:

Q9. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

Yes (please proceed to Q10) ☐

No (please proceed to Q11) ☐

Q10. Does your condition(s) or illness(s) reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

Yes, a lot ☐

Yes, a little ☐

Not at all ☐

PART D – WHAT WE WOULD LIKE YOUR VIEWS ON

Definitions (Rule 2)

What is this section about?

- **Rule 2** explains important words which may be used in the **Inquiry**.

What this means for you

- **Rule 2** helps people to understand what key words mean, like:
 - **core participant**
 - **legal representative**
- **Rule 2** means that everyone understands the words in the **Rules** in the same way.

Q11. Are you content with Rule 2?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Inquiry Communications (Rules 3 and 4)

What this section is about

- **Rules 3 and 4** explain how documents and information can be sent and received.
- **Rule 3** explains how the **Inquiry** can send documents to people.
- **Rule 4** sets out how people can send documents to the **Inquiry**.
- Documents may be sent:
 - by post
 - in person
 - by email, if this has been agreed
 - through the **Inquiry's** online **document management system**, if this has been agreed
- This helps make sure everyone knows when and how documents have been sent.

What this means for you

- You will know how to send information to the **Inquiry**.
- You will know how the **Inquiry** may contact you.
- If you agree to use email, important documents may be sent to you by email.
- If you agree to use the online **document management system**, you may be told by email when documents are added to it so you can see them.
- You should tell the **Inquiry** if your contact details change such as your address, telephone number or email address. This helps make sure you do not miss important information.

Q12. Are you content with Rule 3 and Rule 4 on sending and receiving documents?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 3	☐	☐	☐
Rule 4	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Participants and Legal Representation (Rules 5 to 8)

What this section is about

- **Rule 5** explains who may take part in the **Inquiry** as a **core participant**.
- A **core participant** is a person, group, organisation or institution that has a special role in the **Inquiry**.
- The **Chairperson** decides who can be a **core participant**.
- The **Chairperson** will look at things like:
 - whether the person or organisation played an important role in the matters being looked at
 - whether they have an important interest in the **Inquiry**
 - whether they may be criticised during the **Inquiry** or in a **report**
- **Rule 6** explains when a lawyer may be recognised as a **legal representative**.
- **Rule 7** explains when people with similar interests may be asked to have one **legal representative** or one legal team.
- **Rule 8** explains that **additional legal representation** may be appointed if required.

What this means for you

- You can ask to be a **core participant** if the **Inquiry** directly affects you.
- You must agree before you are made a **core participant**.
- Being a **core participant** may allow you to take a more active part in the **Inquiry**.
- If you have a lawyer, the **Chairperson** may decide whether that lawyer is your **recognised legal representative**.
- Some people may be asked to share a **legal representative** or legal team if their interests are similar.
- The **Chairperson** can change or end a decision about **legal representation** if needed.
- The **Chairperson** will decide if **legal representation** for those who are not **core participants** will be paid for.

Q13. Are you content with Rules 5 to 8 on appointing core participants and legal representatives?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 5	☐	☐	☐
Rule 6-7	☐	☐	☐
Rule 8	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Evidence and Hearings - Procedures (Rules 9 to 12)

What this section is about

- **Rule 9 and Rule 10** explain how the **Inquiry** can ask people for **evidence**.
- **Evidence** can include:
 - a **written statement**
 - documents
 - other things that may help the **Inquiry**
 - speaking at a **hearing**
- The **Inquiry** can ask for more **evidence** if it needs to.
- Some people may be able to give **evidence** by video link or another similar way.
- **Rule 11** explains how questions may be asked at **hearings**.
- **Rule 12** explains who can make opening and closing statements at the **Inquiry**

What this means for you

- You may be asked to give a **written statement**.
- You may be asked to provide documents or other information.
- If you are asked to give **evidence**, the **Inquiry** should explain what they want you to cover.
- If you give **evidence** at a **hearing**, only certain people can ask you questions.
- Some questions may need the **Chairperson's** permission.
- If you may be **criticised**, you should be told first and given a chance to respond.
- Some information may be restricted or kept **confidential**.
- The **Inquiry** must treat **evidence** carefully and fairly.

Q14. Are you content with Rules 9 to 12 on Evidence and Hearings – Procedures?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 9	☐	☐	☐
Rule 10	☐	☐	☐
Rule 11	☐	☐	☐
Rule 12	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Evidence and Hearings- Potentially Restricted Evidence (Rule 13)

What this section is about

- **Rule 13** is about information that may need to be kept private.
- Sometimes someone may ask the **Inquiry** not to share certain **evidence**.
- While a decision is being made, the **evidence** will be treated as private.
- The **Chairperson** can sometimes allow a person to see the **evidence** if this is needed to make a decision.
- Anyone who sees this **evidence** must keep it **confidential**.

What this means for you

- Information you give to the **Inquiry** may be kept private while a decision is made.
- The **Inquiry** may need to share some information with certain people to help make a fair decision on whether it should stay private.
- People who are allowed to see private information must not share it with others.

Q15. Are you content with Rule 13 on Potentially Restricted Evidence?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Reports and Records – Warning Letters (Rules 14 to 17)

What this section is about

- This section explains what happens if the **Inquiry** may criticise a person.
- **Rule 14** explains that the **Chairperson** can send a **warning letter** to tell the person about this.
- The person must be given a chance to respond before any significant **criticism** is included in the **Inquiry's report**.
- **Rule 15** explains that **warning letters** are **confidential** and should not be shared, except in limited circumstances like with your recognised **legal representative**
- **Rule 16** explains that the **warning letter** should explain the **criticism** and the **evidence** or facts that support it.
- **Rule 17** explains that the **Inquiry** must consider all evidence fairly, whether or not a warning letter was sent.

What this means for you

- If the **Inquiry** is going to criticise you, you should be told about this in a **warning letter**.
- You will have an opportunity to reply before the **Inquiry's report** is finalised.
- Any **warning letter** you receive should be kept **confidential**.
- Receiving a **warning letter** does not mean that **criticism** will definitely appear in the final **report**.

Q16. Are you content with Rules 14 to 17 on Warning Letters?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 14	☐	☐	☐
Rule 15	☐	☐	☐
Rule 16	☐	☐	☐
Rule 17	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Reports and Records – Inquiry Report (Rule 18)

What this section is about

- **Rule 18** explains what happens when the **Inquiry report** is ready.
- Before the **report** is published, a copy must be given to **core participants** and their **legal representatives**.
- Anyone who receives a copy of the **report** before publication must keep it **confidential**.
- The **report** cannot be shared publicly before it is officially published.

What this means for you

- **Rule 18** - some people may see the **report** before it is published.
- Anyone who receives an advance copy must keep it private.
- The **report** will be made public once it is officially published by the **Inquiry**.

Q17. Are you content with Rule 18 on Reports?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Reports and Records – Records Management (Rule 19)

What this section is about

- **Rule 19** explains how the **Inquiry's records** will be managed.
- The **Chairperson** must make sure the **Inquiry** keeps a full and organised record of its work.
- When the **Inquiry** ends, its records must be transferred to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

What this means for you

- **Rule 19** outlines that information gathered by the **Inquiry** should be properly organised and preserved.
- A permanent record of the **Inquiry** will be kept after the **Inquiry** has finished.

Q18. Are you content with Rule 19 on Records?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Awards for Costs – Applications (Rules 20 and 21)

What this section is about

- **Rule 20** explains how a person can apply for financial support for costs from the **Inquiry**.
- Applications must be made in writing and include information to support the request.
- The **Chairperson** will decide whether an **award** should be made.
- **Rule 21** explains that when making a decision around expenses or legal representation, the **Chairperson** will consider the person's circumstances and whether the **award** is in the public interest.
- The **Chairperson** may ask for more information before making a decision

What this means for you

- You may be able to apply for help with certain costs related to the **Inquiry**.
- You will need to provide information to support your application.
- The **Inquiry** will consider each application before deciding whether support should be given.
- Legal costs are covered for most **core participants** (apart from institutions)
- If an **award** is made, it may have conditions.

Q19. Are you content with Rules 20 and 21 on Applications for Costs?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 20	☐	☐	☐
Rule 21	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Awards for Costs – Applications - Condition for Awards (Rules 22 to 24)

What this section is about

- **Rules 22 to 24** explain the conditions that apply when an **award** is approved.
- **Rule 22** covers **awards** for **legal representatives** including the maximum hourly rates.
- **Rule 23** covers **awards** for loss of time, including limits on amounts, how **bills** must be submitted and what **evidence** must be provided.
- **Rule 24** covers **awards** for any other costs and the conditions that apply.

What this means for you

- If you receive an **award**, there may be limits on the amount that can be claimed.
- You may need to provide proof of your costs or losses.
- Any payments you are allowed must follow the conditions set.

Q20. Are you content with Rules 22 to 24 on the conditions that can be attached to awards?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 22	☐	☐	☐
Rule 23	☐	☐	☐
Rule 24	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Awards for Costs – Applications - Notification of Awards and Claims for Payment (Rules 25 and 26)

What this section is about

- **Rules 25 and 26** explain what happens after an **award** has been approved.
- **Rule 25** says the **legal representative** of the person and the person applying for an **award** will be informed in writing if an **award** is to be made.
- **Rule 26** indicates the **applicant** can then submit claims for payment in line with the conditions of the **award**.
- Claims will be passed to the **Solicitor to the Inquiry** for assessment.

What this means for you

- If your application is successful, you will be told about the decision.
- You can claim agreed costs by submitting the required information.
- Your claim will be checked by the **Solicitor to the Inquiry** before any payment is made.

Q21. Are you content with Rules 25 and 26 on notification of awards and claims for payment?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 25	☐	☐	☐
Rule 26	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Awards for Costs – Assessment (Rules 27 and 28)

What this section is about

- **Rule 27** and **Rule 28** explain how claims for payment will be checked by the **Solicitor to the Inquiry**.
- **Rule 27** states the Solicitor will assess the claim and decide what amount should be paid (within 21 days).
- It also says the **applicant** can tell the **Solicitor to the Inquiry** if they disagree with the assessment (but must do so within 21 days).
- **Rule 28** states that when deciding what should be paid, the **Solicitor to the Inquiry** will consider whether the costs or losses are fair.

What this means for you

- Any claim you make will be checked before payment is approved.
- You will be told how much the **Inquiry** thinks should be paid.
- If you disagree with the amount, you will have an opportunity to say so.
- Payments will only be made for costs and losses that meet the **Inquiry's rules**.

Q22. Are you content with Rules 27 and 28 on how claims for payment should be assessed?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 27	☐	☐	☐
Rule 28	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Awards for Costs – Appeals (Rules 29 to 32)

What this section is about

- **Rules 29 to 32** explain what happens if a person disagrees with how much the **Inquiry** decides to pay them.
- **Rule 29** covers where the Solicitor disagrees about the costs submitted for **legal representation**. The Solicitor must explain why they do not agree (within 21 days) and there is a further 21 days allowed for a reply. These deadlines can be extended by agreement. After considering the response the solicitor issues a final assessment within a reasonable time.
- **Rule 30** applies to disagreement about costs other than for legal representation, where the Solicitor must reconsider and then issue a final assessment within a reasonable time.
- **Rule 31** states that in some cases, the **Chairperson** can **review** the decision (within 21 days of the final assessment). The Chairperson's decision on a **review** is final.
- **Rule 32** states that once the amount has been agreed or decided, the **award** must be sent to **TEO** for approval and, if appropriate, payment (within 28 days of the final assessment).

What this means for you

- If you disagree with the amount offered, you can ask for it to be looked at again.
- You will have an opportunity to explain why you think the amount should be changed.
- A final decision will be made on the amount to be paid.
- Approved **awards** can then be processed for payment.

Q23. Are you content with Rules 29 to 32 on how disagreements about costs are handled?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Rule 29	☐	☐	☐
Rule 30	☐	☐	☐
Rule 31	☐	☐	☐
Rule 32	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Powers of the Chairperson (Rule 33)

What this section is about

- **Rule 33** explains the **Chairperson's** role in running the **Inquiry**.
- The **Chairperson** can decide how the **Inquiry** will operate, unless the **Rules** say otherwise.
- This includes deciding where **hearings** will take place and how **witnesses** will give **evidence**.

What this means for you

- The **Chairperson** is responsible for managing how the **Inquiry** works.
- The **Chairperson** can make decisions about **Inquiry procedures** when needed.
- These decisions should help the **Inquiry** run fairly and effectively.
- The **Chairperson** may decide where **hearings** happen.
- The **Chairperson** may decide how **hearings** are managed.
- The **Chairperson** may decide how **witnesses** will give their evidence.
- The **Inquiry** must still act within the **Rules** and the law.

Q24. Are you content with Rule 33 on the powers of the Chairperson?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

Please provide any further comments below:

Final Comments

Q25. Do you have any other comments to make regarding the draft Rules?