

TERMS OF REFERENCE
VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS' CONSULTATIVE PANEL

The role of the Inquiry is:

“To consider the extent to which State and non-State institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation; to consider the extent to which those failings have since been addressed; to identify further action needed to address any failings identified; to consider the steps which it is necessary for State and nonState institutions to take in order to protect children from such abuse in future; and to publish a report with recommendations.”

The role of the Victims and Survivors' Consultative Panel is to provide consultative advice on the above matters to the Inquiry throughout its duration.

The seven members of the VSCP have been selected for their ability to bring a representative cross-section of experience and opinion to the Inquiry's work.

The VSCP members are expected to be available for Inquiry business for a total of four days per month, to include a half day monthly meeting with the Inquiry Panel or an individual Panel member.

The members of the VSCP are invited to select a Chair and alternate from among their number if they wish. Alternatively, they may wish to nominate a spokesperson and alternate. The responsibilities of the VSCP include the provision of consultative advice and expertise in the following areas of the Inquiry's work:

The way in which the Inquiry engages with victims and survivors

In particular, ensuring that appropriate support is in place and consideration is given to the needs of victims and survivors at every stage of the Inquiry. By way of example, in the following areas:

Communications – the style and content of Inquiry website material; the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Helpline operated for the Inquiry; providing advice and feedback on public statements, interim reports and updates issued by the Inquiry; the responsible dissemination of communications out to the wider victim and survivor community, in accordance with the protocols agreed with the Inquiry.

Engagement – advising on the Inquiry's engagement with victims and survivors throughout the duration of the Inquiry, for example, advising on the setting up of the Truth Project, and the conduct of the hearing sessions for that project; reaching out through VSCP member's particular networks to victims and survivors in the wider community; and providing advice and/or information on critical issues and situations of which the Inquiry should be aware and/or through knowledge of which its work would benefit.

Research and evidence on child sexual abuse

The VSCP will work to support the research strand of the Inquiry, which will help develop our understanding of child sexual abuse and help ensure the Inquiry makes meaningful recommendations for the future. In this regard the VSCP might advise on or indicate relevant lines of enquiry and/or sources of possible information relevant to the Inquiry's work.

Advise on direction of workstreams

The VSCP will work directly with the Chair and Panel members to share their expertise and knowledge in developing the work in each workstream. For example, by advising on or indicating relevant lines of investigation or enquiry and/or sources of possible information.

Advise on recommendations

The VSCP will contribute to the formulation of recommendations. To assist it in this, the Panel will provide the VSCP with its findings on which State and non-State institutions have failed in their duty to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation and the extent to which these have been addressed. The VSCP will be consulted so that it may help the Panel in its formulation of recommendations on further action needed to address the failings identified and any steps that it is necessary for State and nonState institutions to take to protect children from such abuse and exploitation in future.

The VSCP will:

Have a direct link to the Chair and Panel via the nominated Single Point of Contact for the VSCP to discuss issues as they arise as well as formal joint Panel and VSCP meetings.

Be provided with legal, administrative and media communications support. Act collectively and take collective responsibility to reach decisions and in the making of any statements.

Operate under conditions of confidentiality and not disclose information that has been shared in confidence without the agreement of the Chair.

Have access to and be able to seek advice from the Counsel to the Inquiry.

Have a dedicated member of the counsel team to provide them with independent advice as required.

Be supported as required in their work by the Inquiry Secretariat.

Be funded out of the Inquiry's overall budget and those appointed will receive an honorarium of £300 a day for their contribution to the work of the Inquiry and will be entitled to receive reimbursement of travel and other expenses.

The VSCP are appointed by the Chair for the duration of the Inquiry.