

Victims and Survivors Forum Consultation

Introduction

The Victims and Survivors Forum was set up to be a self nominating network for victims and survivors to discuss the work of the Inquiry, and contribute to its work. The Forum aims to provide an opportunity for members to ask questions, make suggestions and meet other members.

In recent months, membership of the Forum has increased significantly, and there are now over three hundred members. We anticipate numbers will continue to grow. We want to ensure that the Forum is as effective as possible. To help us do this, we ran a consultation to ask Forum members their views on the frequency, format and management of meetings and engagement with the Inquiry. The consultation sought the views of members on possible subjects for discussion and overall comments on the Forum.

At the time the consultation was issued there were 278 Forum members. Of those members, 128 completed the consultation. These results have informed how we will run the Forum.

Background

To date we have held four large scale Forum meetings which have each been attended by up to 30 members. The meetings lasted half a day and took place in the following locations on the following dates:

- 5 August 2016 (London)
- 24 November 2016 (Cardiff)
- 15 March 2017 (London)
- 23 March 2017 (Manchester)

Following feedback from these meetings, we designed smaller Consultation Group meetings with Forum members. These meetings involved up to 8 participants each and ran for 2-3 hours. We offered a morning and afternoon meeting at each of the following:

- 17 August 2017 (Liverpool)
- 24 August 2017 (Birmingham)
- 7 September 2017 (Cardiff)
- 14 September 2017 (London)
- 4 October 2017 (Exeter)
- 11 October 2017 (Darlington)

These meetings discussed the impacts of child sexual abuse and the accessing of support services.



Overview of Your Responses and Our Actions

Format of Meetings

You said:

70% of respondents said they didn't consider there to be a better format than face to face meetings.

Around 20% of respondents in each case said they would feel comfortable with either 8 or less participants, between 8 and 15, or with 16 to 30 participants. A slightly lower number of respondents said they would feel more comfortable with meetings of 30 or more participants, including some respondents who said meeting should include all Forum members. As Forum members had mixed views on this, we will look at holding meetings that vary in size.

53% of respondents expressed a preference for meetings of up to half a day.

We will:

Continue to have face to face meetings of varying size and meetings will last for a duration of up to half a day.

We will continue to cover reasonable travel expenses for Forum members incurred in attending events.

We will also consider the use of webinars to allow remote access engagement and to facilitate engagement with a greater number of participants.

Introductory Events

You said:

85% of respondents who had never attended any Forum event said they would like to attend an introductory event.

We will:

Host Introductory Forum events for those who have not yet had an opportunity to meet with the Inquiry. These will cover the the remit of the Inquiry and how it works. The meetings will also set out the purpose of the Forum and how it will work within the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry.

Members Management of the Forum

You said:

53% of respondents said they wanted to take more responsibility for managing the Forum

We will:

- Work with Forum members to shape the agendas for future meetings;
- Co-chair and facilitate Forum events with a member(s) of the Forum who wish to assist in this role;
- The Forum team will continue to manage the booking of venues and all administrative duties surrounding Forum events;
- The Forum team will remain as the main point of contact for Forum members for issues relating to Forum events.

Forum meetings will be designed around relevant and ongoing work of the Inquiry in addition to some of the subjects raised by Forum members in this consultation.

If you would like to register your interest, in co-chairing, facilitating sessions, shaping agendas or supporting others to attend an event, we will shortly be sending out further information from which you will be able to register your interest.

Timeline of events for 2018

Our first Introductory Forum event will take place in **Summer 2018** and our first Forum events will take place in **October 2018**. The Forum team will be providing all Forum members further details on these events in due course at which time members will be able to register interest in attending.

Introductory Forum events

Introductory Forum events will be held on a demand basis until all interested Forum members have attended. There will be up to 30 Forum members invited to each event and last for a duration of up to half a day. Meetings will take place at locations across England and Wales.

Forum events

Forum meetings will be held every 6 months; there will be a number of sessions which will host up to 8 participants. Meetings will take place in both morning and afternoon in locations across England and Wales. Subjects will be linked to the work the Inquiry is undertaking.

Survey Results

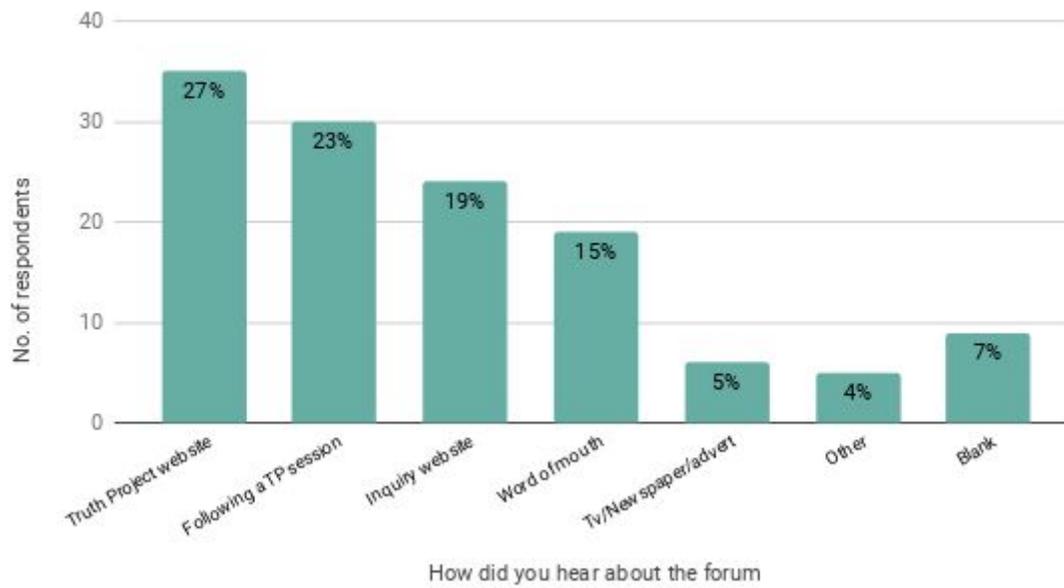
Hearing about the Forum and attending for the first time

More than a quarter of respondents (27%) had heard about the Forum from the Truth Project website, with just under a quarter learning about the Forum following attending a Truth Project session. A large number of those who took part in the survey also heard about the Forum through the IICSA website (19%), and through word of mouth (15%). Other routes included specific events and prior involvement with the inquiry.



INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

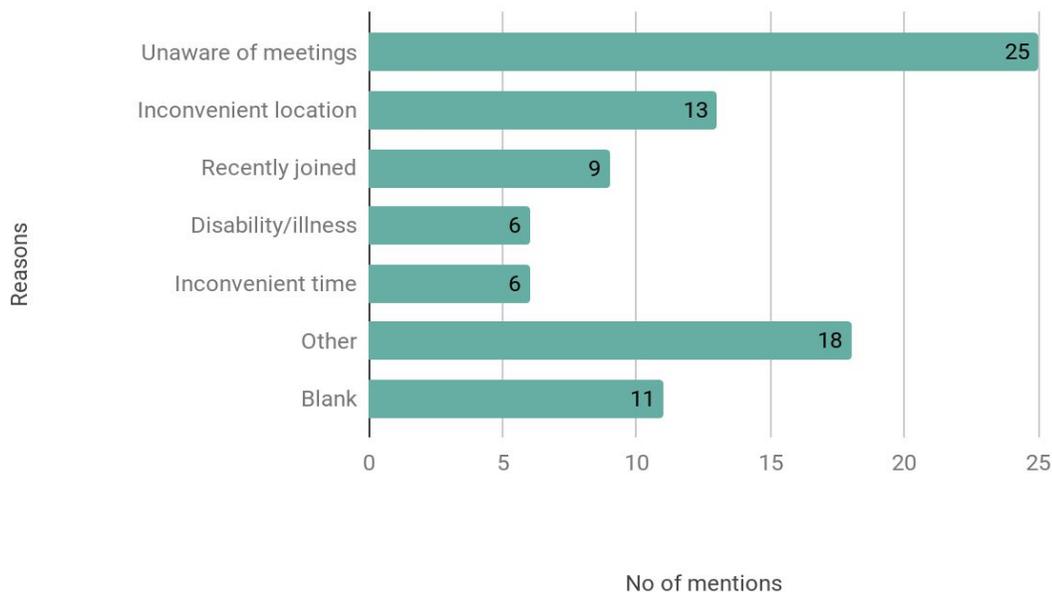
How did you hear about the forum?



Of those who responded to the survey, only 35% had ever attended a Forum meeting. Of those who had not previously attended a Forum meeting, 85% were interested in attending an event specifically for new members.

Barriers to attending

Reasons for non-attendance



Respondents cited a number of reasons for not attending a meeting, for some Forum members there were multiple barriers to their attendance. A considerable number of respondents who hadn't attended a meeting hadn't done so as they were unaware of the meetings. Other barriers to Forum members attending included the location of meetings, a disability or inconvenient time of the meeting. A number of people had also not attended due to only having recently become a member of the Forum.

Other reasons for having not attended a Forum meeting include the costs involved, concerns over anonymity, a lack of confidence, and frustrations with the efficacy of the Forum.

Format of sessions

Number of participants

There was a fairly even split of views on the number of participants Forum members would feel most comfortable with. Around 20% of respondents said they would feel comfortable with either 8 or less participants, between 8 and 15 or 16 to 30 participants. A slightly lower number of respondents said they would feel more comfortable with meetings of 30 or more participants, including some respondents who said meeting should include all Forum members.

Number of participants	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
8 or less	27	21%
Between 8 and 15 participants	25	20%
16 to 30	28	22%
More than 30	16	13%
No preference/blank	32	25%
Grand Total	128	100%

A number of those who said they had no preference over the number of participants at meetings also commented that the mix of participants was more important than the number.

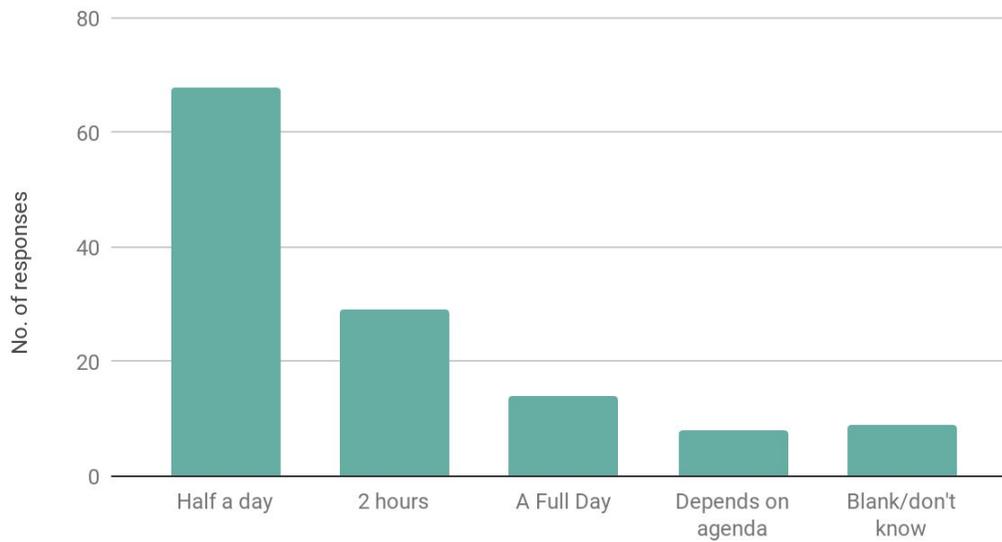
Length of session

The preferred length for meetings was half day with just over half (53%) of respondents suggesting this. Just over 20% suggested meetings should last 2 hours with around 11% suggesting a full day. Of those who suggested a full day, many stressed in their comments that this should allow for travel time and be perhaps around 5 hours.



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Preferred length of Forum meetings



Format of Forums

70% of respondents didn't consider there to be a better way of discussing inquiry work than face to face meetings.

29 respondents gave suggestions for alternative formats to meetings for the Forum. Suggestions for alternative formats included online facility, review of minutes/documents/questions for comment, teleconference, and email discussion. Some respondents suggested that these could be provided as well as face to face meetings. Other suggestions were for IICSA to attend existing victims and survivors groups and questionnaires.

Of those who made suggestions for an online facility, many stressed in their comments the need for this to be secure.

Subjects for discussion

Respondents raised a range of topics which could be discussed at future Forum meetings, which broadly fell into the following categories.

Subject area
Understanding CSA
Impacts of CSA <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resilience• Impacts of CSA on non victims and survivors



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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impacts on particular communities
How Forum members can support each other and other victims and survivors
Updates on the Inquiry and how the Inquiry works, including Forum involvement
Improving support services
Issues with CJS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police and Operation Hydrant• Victims rights

A number of Forum members put forward subjects relating to increasing the understanding of CSA, with examples including the narrative around CSA, wider societal issues surround CSA, and several people raised the subject of corruption in relation CSA as potential areas for discussion in Forum meetings.

Subjects which came up under the impacts of CSA included the impact on partners and family, the impact on male victims and issues around masculinity, as well as several people raising the issue of compensation and other reparations.

Another popular subject for discussion suggested by respondents to the survey was the ways in which they could support other victims and survivors and learn from their experiences. In particular, offering strategies for resilience and through educational campaigns.

How the Inquiry works covered subjects such as regular feedback on the Inquiry's work, the awareness campaign as well as how victims and survivors could be involved in the work of the Inquiry for instance in supporting outreach to diverse communities. A number of Forum members suggested ways they could feed into the work of the Inquiry.

Improving support services included how victims and survivors could work to identify issues and possible solutions to services and availability of these.

A number of respondents also raised issues with the Criminal Justice System (CJS) as subjects for discussion.

Involvement of victims and survivors in Forum management

53% of respondents to the survey said that they would like to take more responsibility for managing the Victims and Survivors Forum.

A number of respondents used this section to also suggest topics for discussion.

Some Forum members said they were happy to help in any way they can and others weren't sure of how they could help in the management of the Forum. Some suggested they could be involved in chairing or facilitating sessions as well as the planning of meetings. Some also offered to run local events with victims and survivors organisations. There were also comments on the need for sessions to be facilitated by trained facilitators to give all attendees a chance to talk.

A number of people offered to support others in participating in Forums, either as trained professionals or as survivors who wanted to assist others. A number of respondents mentioned they would like to be involved in shaping the agenda of sessions.