



Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

The Hon. Mr. Justice McAlinden
President
Victims' Payments Board

By email only

21 December 2023

From the Chair
Rt Hon. Sir Robert Buckland KBE KC MP

Dear Justice McAlinden,

Victims' Payments Board

I would like to thank you and your colleagues at the Victims' Payments Board for giving evidence to the Committee on the progress and challenges of the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.

As I mentioned I would like to follow-up on a few points that we were unable to explore in full due to the late hour.

During the session the Committee questioned both panels on the effectiveness of the current communication strategy for the Scheme and, in particular, the transparency of the information flow on the Board's operations. It was noted that with over 6,000 applications submitted to date there is now sufficient data to provide more insight to the victims on the time scales of the process. The Victims Commissioner, Ian Jeffers, noted that the Board has always been keen to share information with him, and ahead of the session the Board shared its latest statistics with the Committee. While this information was helpful to us, I note that it is not publicly available on the Board's website.

Another issue that I would like to raise is that of the Scheme's deadline, being 31 August 2026. In the session you stressed that it is the Board's intention

*to get all those who are entitled to a payment to recognition, to get them
to make their applications within the statutory timeframe...and for the*



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Board to ensure that those applications are properly dealt with, that no one has left with harm unrecognised.

As you are aware, however, in June this year victims' campaign groups called for the scheme's deadline to be extended.

I would therefore be grateful for a response to the following questions:

1. Will you commit to regularly publish operational statistics related to the application process, such as those provided to the Committee?
2. Do you support the call to extend the current scheme deadline for applications to go beyond 2026?

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these issues. My Committee would be grateful for a reply by 18 January.

Yours ever,

Robert Buckland

Rt Hon. Sir Robert Buckland KBE KC MP
Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee