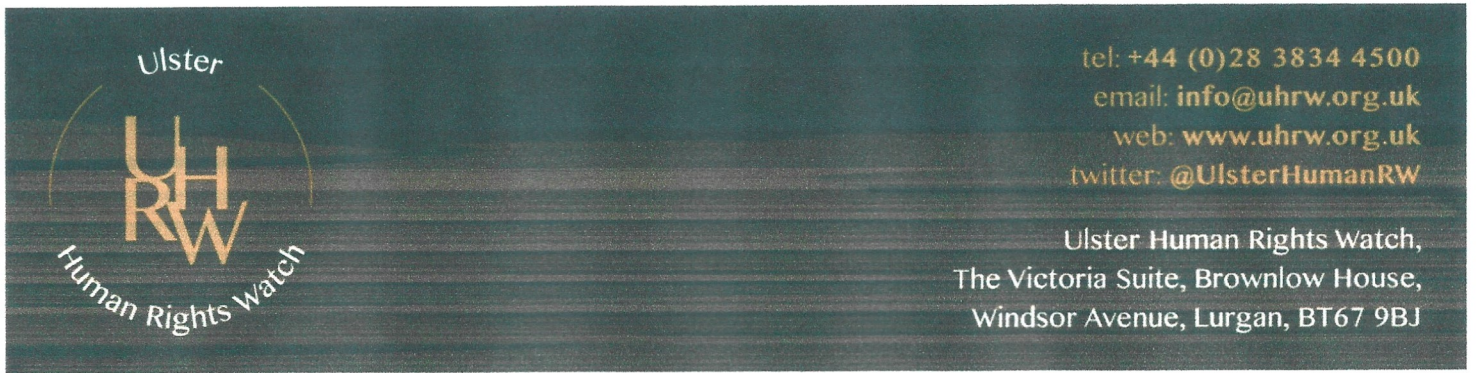


**Charity Number: 101384**



## **Ulster Human Rights Watch**

### **Trustees' Report**

**for the year ended 30 June 2024**

**Trustee Committee and other Charity Information**

<b>Trustee Committee</b>	Mr Robert Hamilton Campbell BA Mr Philip Alexander Black BSc BPhil Mr Robert Ingram Breadon BSc Ms Lindsey Louise Liggett LIB LI Dip Ms Marion Isabel Jamison Dip Crp Mr Raymond Chestnutt Mr William Gordon Liggett Mr Ivan Marshall Walker
<b>Charity Number</b>	101384
<b>Governing Document</b>	Memorandum and Articles of Association
<b>Legal Status</b>	Private Limited Company by guarantee without share capital use of 'Limited' exemption
<b>Registered Address</b>	23 Upper Toberhewney Lane Lurgan Craigavon County Armagh BT66 7EF
<b>Banker</b>	Ulster Bank 18 Bow Street Lisburn County Antrim BT28 1BN
<b>Independent Examiner</b>	Keith Lutton FCA, FIATl 91 Ballygroobany Road Richhill County Armagh BT61 9NA

## **Trustees' Annual Report**

The Management Committee (Trustees) present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024. The Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 1. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) effective from 1 January 2015.

### **Objectives:**

The Charity's objects ("the Objects") are to promote human rights and the Judeo-Christian interpretation of such rights in Northern Ireland, the whole of the United Kingdom and other countries on the basis of their constitution and international conventions, particularly the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

### **Activities:**

#### **I. Advocacy Service**

This is the final report for the year 2023-2024 on the work achieved by the Ulster Human Rights Watch Advocacy Service.

The outline of the report is as follows:

- (1) Development of the Advocacy Service;
- (2) Development of the UHRW Corporate Governance Manual;
- (3) Evaluation and monitoring systems for the Advocacy Service;
- (4) Meetings with the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS), the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and other stakeholders;
- (5) Work effected by the Advocacy Service Sub-Committee (ASSC);
- (6) Cases considered by the Advocacy Service;
- (7) Narratives and audio-visual recordings for the Legacy of the Past Record (LPR);
- (9) Promotional programme;
- (10) Outputs of the work carried out by the Advocacy Service;
- (11) Conclusion.

#### **1. Development of the Advocacy Service**

The UHRW Advocacy Service has one Advocacy Support Manager, two full-time Advocacy Support Workers and one part-time Finance and Administration Officer.

To ensure the optimal efficiency of the Advocacy Service, the workload has been divided between the different members of staff. A shared time-table for all members of staff set up on Outlook has been updated regularly. The number of representations made before public bodies and agencies for all the cases dealt with by the Advocacy Service have been recorded. The number of directly

supported and indirectly impacted individuals has been recorded according to the Guidance issued by the Advocacy Service in line with SEUPB recommendations and approved by VSS in February 2021. In several cases, further assistance has been provided by way of referral to a partner organisation providing health and wellbeing services and welfare advice (in compliance with Memoranda of Understanding agreed between UHRW Advocacy Service and these organisations<sup>1</sup>).

A promotional programme has been designed with the assistance of Angle Comms during the past year. As a result, news releases have been issued and articles have been published in the newspapers in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

The UHRW Advocacy Service has continued to take an active part in the implementation of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 that was approved by the Parliament in Westminster. The Advocacy Service met with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), UK Government Ministers and the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) to discuss the Act compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights. UHRW made representations with the Secretary of State with a view to opposing the Republic of Ireland challenge against the United Kingdom before the European Court of Human Rights in relation to the 2023 Act. Also, on 29 March 2023, UHRW responded to The Executive Office (TEO) consultation on the New Strategy for Victims and Survivors to be implemented in Northern Ireland.

The Advocacy Service took an active part in assisting victims of terrorism to apply for the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS) i.e. the Victims' Payments Scheme. The partnership agreement between the Advocacy Service and Ely Centre has been successful in dealing with applications to the Victims' Payments Board. This Agreement has allowed cross referrals for cases that are jointly dealt with by both organisations, with the Advocacy Service dealing with Troubles-Related Incidents and Impact Statements while Ely Centre manages all application forms to be submitted to the Victims' Payments Board. Since the Scheme has been opened for applications to be submitted on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021, the Advocacy Service has made 62 referrals for the TPDPS to Ely Centre. Assistance has also been provided before the Victims' Payments Board Appeal Panel in a number of cases, on the point of eligibility for victims who had been denied access to the Scheme, mainly widows and children, because they were said not to be present at the Troubles-related incident.

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) contacted the Advocacy Service about the review of the operation of the Victims' Payments Scheme, As a result the UHRW Advocacy Service prepared a submission that was forwarded to the Secretary of State on 20 March 2023.

All four members of the Advocacy Service have attended appraisal meetings that were carried out in May 2024. The Advocacy Service staff made a presentation of the work carried out during year 2023-2024 at the UHRW Annual General meeting on 11 December 2024.

Registration with the Information Commissioner (ICO) was renewed for the year 2023-2024.

## **2. Development of the UHRW Corporate Governance Manual**

The UHRW remained committed to improving its Corporate Governance Manual and has continued to do so during the year 2023-2024, diligently.

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<sup>1</sup> Ely Centre, Decorum NI, Family Moving On, Beyond the Battlefield.

All required submissions from UHRW to the Company House and the Charity Commission have been made.

The review of UHRW Policies at the request of the VSS has been undertaken in September 2023 in order to meet the required standards.

The Corporate Governance documents were reviewed on 6 October 2023 by VSS Programme Officer. As a result, three new policies were approved by the AGM on 13 December 2023, and were added to the Corporate Governance document: the Protect Life Policy, the Record Keeping Policy and the Serious Adverse Incident Policy.

### **3. Evaluation and monitoring systems for the Advocacy Service**

Two evaluation and monitoring systems operate concurrently for the Advocacy Service: (a) the Ulster Human Rights Watch internal evaluation and monitoring system and (b) the Victims and Survivors Service monitoring system.

#### **a. Ulster Human Rights Watch internal evaluation and monitoring system**

The Advocacy Service implements an evaluation and monitoring system with some of the clients, using a Questionnaire. The Questionnaire Form is made up of three sets of questions related to the Advocacy Service Evaluation Scale (9 questions), the Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS) (5 questions) and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) (7 questions).

Two other documents are being used to assess the answers provided in the Questionnaire for client individually. The first is the Advocacy Service Evaluation Comprehensive Table which collates the answers provided by each client each year and the second is the Advocacy Service Overall Evaluation Comprehensive Table which provides an overview of the impact of the work carried out by the Advocacy Service.

#### **b. Victims and Survivors Service monitoring system**

The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) monitoring spreadsheets have been duly completed (with references for all directly supported and indirectly impacted clients) and returned to VSS by the Finance and Administration Officer every month from May 2023 to April 2024.

The VSS Quarterly Feedback Reports were sent to the VSS Programmes Officer at the end of every quarter between July 2023 and April 2024.

The Advocacy Service has been dealing with 156 cases and 202 directly supported individuals and 212 indirectly impacted individuals, which brings the total number of registered victims of terrorism being supported to 414.

### **4. Meetings with the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS), the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and other stakeholders**

#### **a. Meetings with the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS)**

UHRW has cooperated effectively with the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS). The VSS Finance/Verification Officers carried out verifications of the expenditures claim forms and supporting documentation with a very positive outcome thanks to the meticulous work carried out by the Finance and Administration Officer.

Quarterly meetings with the Victim and Survivor Service (VSS) Programmes Officer took place. Members of staff attended the Advocacy Support Working Group (ASWG) meetings during the year.

Staff members took part in training sessions when required.

b. Meetings with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR)

The Advocacy Service has engaged with the NIO and UK Government Ministers and met with Minister Stephen Baker, in Brownlow House on 6 June 2023 to discuss the Legacy Act. Following this, a written submission on the proposed Legacy and Reconciliation Act with suggested amendments to make it acceptable to victims of terrorism was forwarded to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

The Advocacy Service also met with Sir Declan Morgan, Chief Commissioner for the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) on 29 June 2023.

c. Meeting with the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI) and the Legacy Investigation Branch (LIB)

Representations were made with the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI) and the Legacy Investigation Branch (LIB) in order to discuss and follow-up the investigations of several cases, some of them related to serious incidents.

d. Meeting with partner organisations

Meetings were arranged with Ely Centre with a view to following-up applications for applying for the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme. Other meetings took place with Decorum, Families Moving On and Beyond the Battlefield to inform about the Legacy of the Past Record (LPR).

## **5. Work effected by the Advocacy Service Sub-Committee (ASSC)**

The Advocacy Service Sub-Committee (ASSC), consisting of UHRW Chairman and UHRW Secretary, has been meeting on a regular basis. Regular meetings of the UHRW Committee took place to oversee the work carried out by the ASSC. The Finance and Administration Officer has taken part in these meetings to take the minutes and support the Committee in the preparation of financial documents and reports.

On a monthly basis the Advocacy Support Manager, with the assistance of the Advocacy Support Workers and the Finance and Administration Officer, has reported to the Sub-Committee on the work carried out by the Advocacy Service.

The Sub-Committee has overseen the activities of the Advocacy Service as follows:

- Overview of the Advocacy Service;
- Report on progress of the Advocacy Service;
- Strategic direction of the Advocacy Service;

- Review of the caseload;
- Finance;
- Marketing;
- Promotional programme and meetings;
- Meetings with other organisations: VSS, NIO, ROI, Ely Centre, Decorum, Family Moving On, Beyond the Battlefield, etc.;
- Report to the Charity Commission;
- Appraisal of members of staff.

## **6. Cases considered by the Advocacy Service**

In order to progress legacy cases entrusted to the Advocacy Service, representations were made by the Advocacy Service with the Legacy Investigation Branch (LIB), the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), the Attorney General for Northern Ireland (AGNI), the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), 38 Brigade, the National Archives of Great Britain, the Coroners Service, Operation Kenova, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Victims' Payments Board, the High Court in Northern Ireland (through solicitors and barristers) and other public bodies in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Garda Síochána (GS), National Archives of Ireland, Courts, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)).

UHRW analysed the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 and complementary documents prepared by the ICIR. Following the publication of the draft report on a proposed bereavement payment scheme by the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors (CVS), UHRW made a submission on 30 November 2023, supported by three other partner organisations, that was forwarded to CVS and later sent to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

On 21 March 2024 Ulster Human Rights Watch organised a conference 'Spotlight on Truth' in Brownlow House. It was an honour to welcome Sir Declan Morgan, Chief Commissioner for the ICIR as well as Lorraine Bourke from PRONI and Paul Bullick from the Victims' Payments Board. The issues addressed were up to date and interesting. The emphasis was put on those issues that need to be addressed in the future: counter-radicalisation, education and reconciliation. It was attended by 53 people and 17 evaluation forms were completed and returned with positive comments.

All the cases have been reviewed and all action points for each of them have been recorded.

## **7. Narratives and audio-visual recordings for the Legacy of the Past Record (LPR)**

With the approval of clients, the Advocacy Service has undertaken to write narratives of Troubles-related stories they have experienced. With the financial support of VSS and Glasgow University the Advocacy Service has been able to carry out audio-visual recordings of victims of terrorism, professionally done with the assistance of Angle Comms, that are also translated in French.

These narratives and audio-visual recordings are now included in the Legacy of the Past Record (LPR) created by the Advocacy Service in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) in 2020. The purpose of the LPR is to make available to the public at large reliable information about the experience victims of terrorism have gone through during the Troubles. The LPR could prove to be useful to educate younger generations as to the consequences of terrorism and to prevent terrorism and radicalisation in the future.

The Legacy of the Past Record has received nineteen written narratives and three audio-visual recordings since 2021 and other narratives and audio-visual recordings are in preparation to be added to the archive.

A new introductory page for the Legacy of the Past Record (LPR) has been added on the PRONI website in the section 'Conflict related records' which makes it easier to access. The reference for the Legacy of the Past Record in PRONI is: D4791.

## **8. Promotional programme**

New agreements between UHRW Advocacy Service and Angle Comms were drawn up during the year 2023-2024. Regular meetings were arranged to develop the approach to the various issues of concern and the writing of articles.

Several news releases were issued and articles published in the Newsletter, the Irish News, the Belfast Telegraph website.

A Twitter account was created for UHRW on 27 February 2020 and on 31 March 2024 UHRW had 529 followers.

A Facebook account was created in July and had over 500 followers by the end of March 2024.

Members of the advocacy Service took part in the commemorations of the Teebane bombing on 14 January 2023 and of the La Mon House bombing in Lisburn Council on 17 February 2024.

The Advocacy Service took part in the organisation of the European Remembrance Day for Victims and Survivors in Stormont on 11 March 2024.

## **9. Outputs for the work carried out by the Advocacy Service**

Outputs in relation to the number of clients and family members impacted were in line with the review of targets approved with VSS for the year 2023-2024. The Advocacy Service worked alongside the VSS to develop a new approach to recording outputs and results under the new funding scheme provided by PEACEPLUS through SEUPB that will be implemented from June 2024.

The number of representations made with the public authorities on behalf of clients was significant and demonstrated the level of commitment and the seriousness of the work done for clients. Multiple meetings, letters, emails and phone calls have been undertaken with various public bodies (LIB, PONI, PSNI, PRONI, 38 Brigade, the Attorney General for NI, Garda Síochána and the Courts in the Republic of Ireland).

The number of meetings with clients by members of staff as well as the number of letters, emails and phone calls exchanged with clients has been satisfactory.

## **10. Conclusion**

One hundred and fifty six cases have been considered and dealt with by way of various investigations and multiple representations with the relevant public bodies, with 202 directly supported individuals

and 212 indirectly impacted individuals, a total of 414 victims of terrorism supported by the Advocacy Service. The quality of the work done by the Advocacy Service has been acknowledged.

## **2. Other Activities undertaken by the Ulster Human Rights Watch**

### **1. Education**

Input to the Education Sector has been limited during this year. However, UHRW has been in contact with the Northern Ireland's Department of Education with a view to developing an educational programme for young people to counter-terrorism and prevent radicalisation that could be included in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. This proposed programme is at present is at its initial stages with stakeholders beginning to realise, at last, the importance of this need to be addressed

### **2. Religious Freedom**

This vital aspect of moral and lawful balance has been increasingly under attack during the past year and the UHRW is continuing to respond on an advisory capacity to personal and organisational queries with respect to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion protected by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

### **3. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly**

In 2019 the UHRW made significant proposals to the NIO with respect to the various key issues arising in the area of Freedom of Peaceful Assembly. These are contained in Project IMPACT and UHRW is still awaiting consideration by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the relevant NIO Minister in order to make progress in this area of work. There appears, at last, during the past few months to be positive signs that the N. I. Assembly may be taking steps to address this vital topic.

## **Financial Review**

Total receipts were £215,955 and payments were £176,223 giving a surplus of 39,732 for the year under review.

This report was approved by the Trustees and signed below on their behalf by:



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Robert Campbell  
(Chairman)

12 March 2024