Protocol on Victim and Survivor Evidence

This protocol sets out the Inquiry's processes and procedures for the giving of evidence by victims and survivors.

1. No victim and survivor is compelled to give oral evidence. Victim and survivor evidence is of equal worth whether in written or oral form and all witnesses will have an opportunity to submit a written statement. For those who wish to give oral evidence, and have been asked to do so by the Inquiry, the following forms of evidence are available:

    a. **Live Link only** – this is a way of giving evidence at the hearing centre where only those who are in the Inquiry hearing room, Core Participants and accredited members of the press are able to watch the evidence. There will be no wider broadcasting of the witness's evidence.

    b. **Live Link only, with additional special measures** – this is the same as above but can be accompanied by other measures to protect the witness's identity. This can include:

        i. **Audio only**, where the witness gives evidence in a room outside the hearing room and cannot be seen by any persons other than the Chair and Panel and Counsel to the Inquiry.

        ii. **Pre-recorded**, where the witness gives evidence outside of the Inquiry's usual timetable at a venue to be agreed. A recording of the evidence is then played during the Inquiry's scheduled hearings.

        iii. **Distorted**, where the witness's voice and/or appearance is professionally masked to provide additional protection to their identity.

c. **Live link and Live Streamed** - whilst this method is not encouraged by the Inquiry, due to a loss of victim and survivor control of the broadcast, this is a way of giving evidence at the hearing centre in the most public form, where the evidence is available both to: (1) Core Participants and accredited members of the press and (2) the public more generally, via YouTube, on a short time delay.

2. All victims and survivors giving oral evidence will have a choice of which of the above are adopted. In line with the Protocol on Ciphering and Anonymity, whichever of the above approaches are adopted, no witness will be identified by name unless they have requested to be identified publicly.

3. The Inquiry will take a trauma informed approach to all victims and survivors. This will include meetings with Counsel to the Inquiry prior to, and after, the giving of oral evidence. The topics of examination will be discussed with all witnesses in advance. The Inquiry has also instructed an external and independent provider of trauma-informed and psychological support to engage with those victims and survivors who wish to be so supported.

4. No victim or survivor will be cross-examined or required to 'take the stand'. For those who are giving oral evidence, evidence will be elicited (in a discussion form) by Counsel to the Inquiry who have undertaken trauma informed training.