

Lived Experience Panels Consulting to Inquiries: Maximising Benefits and Minimising Harms

| Research Report & Recommendations



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Recommendations

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Content note

This report mentions child sexual abuse in the context of discussing the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, which some people might find upsetting.

Attribution

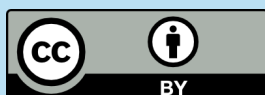
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Executive Summary

Lived Experience Panels Consulting to Inquiries: Maximising Benefits and Minimising Harms presents the findings of a research project examining the experiences of the Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel (VSCP) at the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in the UK.

Background and Context

IICSA is one of the largest and longest-running inquiries into child sexual abuse internationally. Over a period of eight years (2015-2022), it investigated how institutions in England and Wales had failed to protect children from sexual abuse. IICSA is notable for being the first inquiry into institutional child abuse globally to integrate experts with lived experience into the formal structure of a public inquiry. As such, there is much to learn from the experiences of VSCP members, both in terms of what worked well and what could be improved in future inquiries adopting this approach. To facilitate this learning, a series of recommendations are at the heart of this report.

Research Aims and Approach

The research on which this report draws was a co-designed participatory project conducted in 2023. The overall aim of the project was to document the work of the VSCP and identify learnings for future lived experience panels. The project brought together members of the VSCP and university researchers as collaborators and co-authors. Data was generated through a two-day workshop and individual interviews with VSCP members; and interviews were also conducted with former IICSA staff. Two data analysis workshops were held in which VSCP members and researchers identified emerging themes.

Findings and Recommendations

Eight key themes emerged from the two-day participatory workshop and the subsequent collaborative data analysis. These themes form the basis of this report and its recommendations. The findings and recommendations are designed to provide practical and policy-relevant guidance to future inquiries and other formal bodies engaging lived experience consultants. They are also designed to support lived experience panellists in advocating for what they need from public inquiries seeking to engage with them.

1. Culture

As with all organisations, public inquiries have their own culture. In the UK, inquiries reflect a civil service culture that is hierarchical, legalistic and emphasises neutrality. This may be at odds with the issues driven advocacy backgrounds of lived experience panel members. Inquiries need to find ways to bridge this divide. To enhance collegiality and safety for lived experience panel members, inquiries should clarify organisational norms and promote a culture of inclusion. Cultural integration of lived experience panels can help foster wellbeing and ensure their contributions are recognised. ***This report makes 7 recommendations for ways in which inquiries and other formal bodies can foster a culture of inclusivity.***

2. Trauma-Informed

Public inquiries commonly examine distressing and traumatic issues. As such, they present a risk of re-traumatisation for people directly affected, and a risk of secondary or vicarious trauma for inquiry staff and wider communities. Lived experience panels bring unique and valuable insights for inquiries, both in relation to the issues under investigation and the experiential nature of trauma. To create a safe and secure environment and to minimise burnout and vicarious trauma, it is essential that inquiries implement genuine trauma-informed practices across every aspect of the inquiry work. ***This report makes 7 recommendations for ways in which inquiries and other formal bodies can help ensure an adapted trauma-informed lens extends across all aspects of the organisation.***

3. Symbolism

Public inquiries need to instil confidence in the community and reflect competence, credibility, transparency, accountability, and independence to ensure that people are willing to engage with their work. Lived experience panels can help instil public trust in an inquiry by helping to shape the inquiry's work, including the ways in which it engages with victim-survivors. The symbolic representation of lived experience panels is important and this must genuinely reflect the contribution of lived experience panel members to the work of the inquiry. ***This report makes 3 recommendations for inquiries and other formal bodies to ensure recognition of lived experience panel members is safe and meaningful.***

4. Role Clarity

Clear delineation of roles and expectations is vital for lived experience panels consulting to public inquiries. A lack of role clarity can lead to stress, anxiety and deskilling, whereas role clarity can reduce uncertainty and help people feel a greater level of confidence in their work.

Role clarity can also help prevent conflicts that may arise from misunderstandings or overlapping responsibilities. This is particularly important for lived experience panel members given their unique role and contributions. ***This report makes 13 recommendations for inquiries and other formal bodies to enhance role clarity for lived experience consultants.***

5. Skill Recognition

Lived experience panel members bring to a public inquiry a wide range of professional backgrounds, diverse skills and varied experiences of advocacy. It is important that recruitment for these roles assesses the complete skillsets of applicants and that once people commence lived experience panel work, their full range of skills and experience is utilised. This can help ensure that people feel properly valued and are not solely seen and treated as victim-survivors. ***This report makes 5 recommendations for inquiries and other formal bodies to properly recognise and utilise the skillsets of lived experience consultants.***

6. Trust

Building and maintaining trust is foundational to the success of lived experience panels. Understanding that people with lived experiences of abuse in childhood and other traumas will have histories of trust violation, finding ways to foster trust within an inquiry will help enrich people's contributions, reduce ruptures and the risk of emotional harms. Public inquiries can enhance trust by cultivating across the inquiry, and within legal limits, an atmosphere of transparency, respect, and open communication. This can ensure that panel members feel heard and respected throughout the inquiry process. ***This report makes 6 recommendations for how inquiries and other formal bodies can foster trust for lived experience consultants.***

7. Training and Support

Training and ongoing support are essential to ensure that lived experience consultants can participate in meaningful ways and make valuable contributions to public inquiries. Training

that assists people to understand an inquiry's operational and decision-making processes, how feedback is provided, how conflicts are managed and how difficulties are resolved, is vital. Lived experience consultants may also be well-placed to provide training to staff, for example, on how to minimise re-traumatisation and communicate effectively with other survivors. Skill development training can also assist consultants in their transitions to future employment. ***This report makes 5 recommendations for how inquiries and other formal bodies can ensure adequate training and support for lived experience consultants.***

8. Endings and Legacy

As inquiries have a limited lifespan, consideration should be given to how the work of a lived experience panel will conclude, how its contributions will be publicly acknowledged, and how consultants may contribute in ongoing ways to policy change processes and the implementation of inquiry recommendations. As lived experience panel members are often experienced advocates, there is a rich opportunity to harness the knowledge, skills and commitment for change in the period following an inquiry. ***This report makes 5 recommendations for how inquiries and other formal bodies can ensure the contributions of lived experience consultants are properly recognised.***

Conclusion

This report makes **51 recommendations**, all of which have been developed by VSCP members and researchers to provide guidance for future inquiries and other formal bodies engaging consultants with lived experience expertise. These recommendations are designed to help ensure future public inquiries can harness the full potential of lived experience panels, promoting an inclusive, respectful, and impactful approach to understanding and addressing difficult social issues that require complex social policy responses. This report underscores the importance of balancing the enormous benefits of lived experience expertise with a commitment to minimising potential harms, ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for victim-survivors and a more just and equitable society.

Introduction

Commissions of inquiry examining the abuse of children in institutional settings have proliferated in many parts of the world since the 1990s.¹ Such inquiries have now been held in over twenty nations, including Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and in many countries in Northern and Western Europe.²

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) was established as a statutory inquiry early in 2015, covering England and Wales. As set out in the Terms of Reference, its purpose was:

*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 non-State institutions to take in order to protect children from such abuse in future; and to publish a report with recommendations.*³

IICSA is one of the largest and one of the longest-running inquiries into child sexual abuse internationally.⁴ Over a period of eight years, it investigated how institutions in England and Wales had failed to protect children from sexual abuse. Its final report was handed down in October 2022.⁵

IICSA was pioneering in bringing experts by lived experience into the formal structure of a public inquiry investigating child sexual abuse. The Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel (VSCP) provided valuable advice to the Chair, the Inquiry Panel and IICSA staff teams. From 2015 to 2022, the expertise of the VSCP helped shape critical dimensions of IICSA's work.

This report provides an overview of the findings and recommendations that emerged from a participatory research project conducted in 2023. The research brought together VSCP members and researchers from the University of Essex and La Trobe University. The aim of the project was to document the experiences of the VSCP and recommend how to maximise the benefits and minimise the harms of appointing consultants who are experts by lived experience to commissions of inquiry.

Background and Context

The Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel (VSCP) was appointed to IICSA in 2015 to provide advice to the Chair and Panel “on the Inquiry’s engagement activities, communications, research and recommendations”.⁶ IICSA was the first major child abuse public inquiry internationally to include a lived experience panel.

Many of the VSCP members had actively campaigned for policy reform and increased recognition and support for child and adult victim-survivors. In addition, several members of the VSCP had lobbied for a statutory public inquiry for many years prior to IICSA’s establishment.

The VSCP was instrumental in developing operational and policy work at the inquiry, leading to successful engagement with other victims-survivors.⁷ Over IICSA’s eight years of operation, the VSCP made major contributions to the inquiry’s work, including but not limited to:

1. Raising public awareness of child sexual abuse and IICSA’s work.
2. Planning and designing the Truth Project and support for participants, leading to trauma informed engagement for victims and survivors.
3. Guidance on how to engage with victims and survivors.
4. Encouraging victims and survivors to share their experiences with IICSA.
5. Facilitating discussions at Victims and Survivors Forum events.
6. Advice and feedback on research and engagement reports.
7. Liaising with other agencies, including law enforcement and support services.
8. Engaging with the media, survivor communities, and the wider public.

The Secretary to IICSA, John O’Brien, articulated the unique contribution made by the VSCP to the Inquiry. Critically, he acknowledges their role in centring victims and survivors, ensuring that “the voices of victims and survivors were instrumental to [IICSA’s] work”. He further noted that the VSCP’s “knowledge of the complex issues related to child sexual abuse and experiences of trauma” were important to the Inquiry’s understanding of child sexual abuse.⁸

The benefit of lived experience expertise is increasingly being recognised in policy development processes internationally.⁹ As reflected in IICSA and other commissions of inquiry, this recognition is also extending to the domain of public inquiries. The unique

insights and knowledge that lived experience expertise bring is highly valuable to inquiry processes and outcomes, from how to engage survivors to how to support staff to work effectively and safely with traumatised groups.¹⁰ This is particularly the case for inquiries examining difficult issues and engaging with marginalised, traumatised and/or vulnerable populations.

IICSA's final report acknowledged the vital role of the VSCP:

*This advice ensured that the needs and perspectives of victims and survivors were reflected in the Inquiry's work. All members of the Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel had spent many years supporting adult survivors of child sexual abuse. Their experience, knowledge and advice provided valuable insights and expertise to the Inquiry.*¹¹

Yet, the appointment of a lived experience panel also brings a unique set of challenges. Of primary concern is how to **minimise re-traumatisation** for those appointed to such panels, and to establish how they can **work effectively with external survivors who are not appointed but remain key stakeholders**. There is also the question of how to incorporate this form of expertise within the formal and legalistic structure of a public inquiry. As this report outlines, it is vital that consideration be given to **ensuring the safety and care of experts by lived experience appointed to public inquiries**. This also applies to other areas of government and non-government work, including policy development and advice to other formal bodies and organisations.

The VSCP provided advice over a period of almost eight years. While there were some changes to the membership of the VSCP over the life of the Inquiry, four of the original members continued from inception to conclusion. This provided important stability for the VSCP's work across the life of the Inquiry. The constancy, along with the injection of fresh perspectives that came with new personnel, proved to be valuable and benefited the VSCP's working relationships with one another and IICSA staff, which evolved over time.

At the conclusion of the Inquiry, the VSCP Panel members were May Baxter-Thornton, Sheila Coates MBE, Lucy Duckworth, Emma Lewis MBE, Fay Maxted OBE, Kit Shellam and Chris Tuck, all of whom are participant researchers for this project and co-authors of this report.¹²

The VSCP strongly believe that lived experience panels in future public inquiries are not just preferable but are essential to their ethical operation. Lived experience panels can help

inquiries achieve maximum impact while ensuring the needs of people affected by the issues under investigation are central to inquiry decision making.

The group continue to lobby and campaign for the meaningful implementation of IICSA's recommendations.

Aims and Methodology

The overarching objective of this research was to document the unique experiences of the VSCP in consulting to one of the UK's largest public inquiries over a period of almost eight years. In so doing, a core aim of the project was to create a record of their pioneering work as an important legacy of IICSA.

In addition, the research sought to contribute new policy-focused knowledge on the contribution of lived experience expertise to inquiries. More specifically, we wanted to identify how to maximise the benefits of lived experience panels consulting to inquiries and other formal bodies, while minimising the risks of harm.

The project employed a participatory action research (PAR) framework. PAR is an approach that "brings together community members, activists and scholars to co-create knowledge and social change in tandem".¹³ This approach prioritises collaboration and aims to generate new knowledge not for its own sake, but rather in ways that improve experiences for specific communities and contribute to more just and equal social arrangements.

This project aimed to document the experiences of the VSCP in order to:

- i) Gain a better understanding of the role of lived experience panels in public inquiries;
- ii) Identify the benefits of foregrounding lived experience expertise;
- iii) Develop a set of recommendations that will improve the experience of victim-survivors consulting to public inquiries; and
- iv) Maximise the benefits of lived experience panels for inquiries while ensuring the safety of people who undertake this very specialised form of consultative work.

The project was funded by Research England via the University of Essex and the research was approved by the University of Essex Human Research Ethics Committee.¹⁴ The project unfolded over several stages.

A two-day workshop was held that brought together the VSCP members with university researchers. The workshop provided an opportunity for the VSCP members to discuss their experiences of consulting to IICSA. The workshop was audio recorded and transcribed and the transcripts were circulated to the whole group, who were engaged as co-researchers.

Individual interviews were subsequently held with the seven VSCP members and one former VSCP member, as well as with several IICSA staff members. To ensure confidentiality, only the three academic members of the research team (Danny Taggart, Katie Wright and Hannah Griffin) had access to the individual interview transcripts with the VSCP members. Lucy Duckworth from the VSCP was employed as a research assistant and along with Stephanie Ford assisted in some of the interviews with IICSA staff. The VSCP individual interviews were conducted by Katie Wright and Hannah Griffin.

Analysis was undertaken in several phases. First, two follow up data analysis workshops were held, with VSCP members and researchers attending, to identify and discuss emerging themes. Through this, key themes were documented, which form the basis of this report and the recommendations presented herein. Led by Katie Wright, drafts were circulated to the entire group and through a process of input, discussion and negotiation, this final report and its recommendations took shape. While this document captures the more policy-oriented and practical aims of the project, a parallel analytic process, led by Danny Taggart, was undertaken focusing on the development of an academic journal article (forthcoming).

Findings

Eight key themes emerged from the two-day participatory workshop and subsequent data analysis workshops:

1. Culture
2. A Trauma-Informed Approach
3. Symbolism
4. Role Clarity

5. Skill Recognition
6. Trust
7. Training and Support
8. Endings and Legacy

The findings pertaining to each of these themes are first summarised, with recommendations related to each theme subsequently presented. The full list of recommendations is also appended to the end of this report.

1. Culture

Organisational culture refers to the set of shared values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that define an organisation, its practices and its working environment. This includes how members of that organisation interact, share information and make decisions. The norms and values of an organisation are often the unwritten 'rules' by which an organisation operates. These 'rules' dictate how employees and others within organisations are expected to behave and interact. For those socialised within that setting or a similar organisation, there is typically an implicit understanding of the organisational culture, and a corresponding understanding of its mode of operation.

IICSA was, ostensibly, a new organisation. However, its establishment as a government-initiated independent public inquiry meant that from the outset, it was shaped by a powerful legalistic, hierarchical, and siloed civil service culture. An ethos of neutrality and emotional detachment are hallmarks of civil service culture in the UK.¹⁵ Many staff recruited to the Inquiry were seconded from or had previous experience in the civil service. Therefore, while the very difficult nature of the Inquiry's work in terms of its focus on child sexual abuse was challenging and traumatic for many, most IICSA staff had an inherent sense of familiarity with the culture of the workplace they were entering.

By contrast, the professional backgrounds of many VSCP members were at odds with the formal, legalistic, hierarchical and impartial culture of neutrality that defines public inquiries. Many VSCP members had backgrounds in the third sector, and many were engaged specifically on the basis of their advocacy, lobbying and standing within victim-survivor communities. What emerged was something of a 'culture clash' between the campaigning,

outspoken and oppositional survivor-advocate ethos, and a civil service spirit that prioritises principles of neutrality, detachment, balance and efficiency.

This presented challenges both for the VSCP and IICSA. For the VSCP, there was an expectation that they conform to a culture that bore little resemblance to their advocacy roles. For IICSA, it meant that the VSCP did not easily assimilate into the culture of the Inquiry in the same way that staff did. Importantly, this resulted not only from the background, knowledge and interests that the VSCP brought to the Inquiry, but because of their structural position within it as consultants, not staff members.

The lack of recognition by the Inquiry of the need to make clear to the VSCP the norms of civil service culture and the day-to-day operation of the Inquiry resulted in something of a disconnect in expectations for both the VSCP and the Inquiry. This issue also emerged in relation to the legal constraints imposed on IICSA by the Inquiries Act 2005 under which it operated, with the boundaries and limits of what information and involvement a lived experience panel can have without giving rise to complaints of bias from individuals and organisations being investigated. The threat of judicial review hung over IICSA in ways that subtly undermined transparency and collegiate relations between the VSCP members, IICSA staff, and the Chair and Inquiry Panel.

This lack of clarity led, at times, for some VSCP members to feel isolated and marginalised from the Inquiry. To prevent these negative experiences, it is important that inquiries and other formal bodies engaging lived experience consultants identify ways in which inclusion can be fostered. This includes giving consideration to how the organisation can create a culture of inclusion through leadership, policies, role clarity and other interventions.

At IICSA, there was effective collaboration between VSCP members and some other teams via project work. The research team, in particular, worked well with the VSCP. Given the distinctive contribution to inquiry work-streams, cross-team fertilisation has the capacity to not only lead to more effective outcomes, but also build relationships and foster inclusion.

In addition to existing diversity policies, particular attention should be given to the intersecting identities of victim-survivors, which intensify the challenges of working on a public inquiry examining sensitive and traumatic issues.

Recommendations

- 1.1 A culture of inclusivity must be a priority across all aspects of the inquiry. Fostering inclusion is essential to avoid feelings of isolation and marginalisation for lived experience panel members. This is especially important given the intersecting identities and roles that are inherent to this work, as well as the challenging nature of the subject matter.
- 1.2 Inquiries should foster a culture of safety, respect and genuine valuing of difference, and recognition and respect for the diversity of intersecting identities, ethnicities, neurodiversity, disability and/or chronic illness must be foundational.
- 1.3 Inquiries should ensure that lived experience panel members are not marginalised due to their role in the inquiry or treated differently to inquiry staff, other than in recognition of their unique contribution and roles.
- 1.4 Organisational systems and structures, and the legal constraints imposed by inquiry legislation, must be made clear to lived experience panel members.
- 1.5 Given the emotional complexity of the work undertaken by lived experience panels, the organisational culture of an inquiry must be responsive to the needs of the panel and flexible in relation to how the panel operates.
- 1.6 It is important to establish clear processes for lived experience panels to raise concerns about directions or decisions taken by the inquiry.
- 1.7 Consideration should be given to fostering inclusion via cross-team fertilisation and collaboration, whereby individual lived experience panel members can participate in project work with other teams, while still retaining independence.

2. A Trauma-Informed Approach

Understandings of trauma have expanded rapidly in recent years, and it is now accepted that trauma is a common human experience.¹⁶ Alongside this, there is increasing acceptance that organisations which serve trauma-affected populations, or deal with sensitive or difficult issues, have a responsibility to operate in a trauma-informed way.¹⁷ Being 'trauma-informed' refers to an approach that aims to create an environment that is sensitive, supportive, and

responsive to the needs of those who have experienced trauma. Adopting a trauma-informed approach is increasingly common in healthcare and in social service organisations, but its application is being extended further, including to public inquiries.

A common feature of many public inquiries is the traumatic nature of the issues they are investigating. While inquiries are often demanded and welcomed, for victim-survivors and affected communities, participation in them can also be confronting and re-traumatising. Staff of public inquiries may have a history of trauma, and thus also be at risk of re-traumatisation. This may be especially difficult if they are working on an inquiry in a professional capacity but are personally affected by the issue under investigation. For the wider staff group, there is the risk of vicarious trauma, which is provoked by exposure to trauma experienced by others. For victim-survivors consulting to public inquiries, there is a real possibility that their own histories of trauma may at times have an impact on their work and that the work might detrimentally affect their health.

IICSA did develop an adapted trauma-informed approach, and members of the VSCP were active in promoting the need for this to be prioritised. An example of this was VSCP members recommending specific training to raise awareness of burnout and vicarious trauma and the role of self-awareness in mitigating risk, something that led to positive outcomes for many IICSA staff.¹⁸ Most VSCP members recognised the risks of re-traumatisation inherent in the work, but strongly believe that this can be successfully managed by adopting a genuine trauma-informed lens across all aspects of an inquiry. This should not be limited to engagement with victim-survivor populations but must be embedded in all aspects of an inquiry's work and built into the inquiry structure. This includes education for all inquiry staff to ensure understandings of the nature of trauma, how it may manifest in the workplace, and the collective role of all staff in the organisation to cultivate safe environments.

One feature of a trauma informed approach that IICSA did not implement is transparency. Transparency is particularly important to survivors of child sexual abuse because they have often been let down by institutions of the state, and often had their abuse concealed by people in positions of power. As a public inquiry that relied on victim-survivor participation, IICSA published information about most aspects of their work. However, they also withheld some information due to commercial sensitivity or for data protection purposes. One senior staff member acknowledged that management processes mirrored that of government departments, whereby decision-making processes are confidential but outcomes are

communicated openly. While this may have been necessary for the inquiry, it is important to recognise that this had an impact on the VSCP. Some described feeling left out of decisions and unclear on why certain courses of action were taken. As much transparency as possible is needed for future lived experience panels, with explanation given when this is not possible in order to mitigate the potential for survivors to feel there is a re-enactment of the betrayal trauma that occurred during their childhood.

VSCP members emphasised the importance of inquiries understanding how parallel processes between victim-survivors and inquiries can recreate some of the abusive dynamics that were inherent in their earlier experiences. Therefore, while inquiries have the capacity to heal past harms, they can also unconsciously mirror or compound them. An important element of avoiding this is ensuring that all members of a lived experience panel feel valued, respected and safe, while also recognising that the inherent nature of the inquiry may provoke strong feelings at times. Experiences of marginalisation and group division may arise if one or more person in the group is chosen for a task without the group understanding why that person may be seen as receiving preferential or special treatment. This is also the case for external survivors who are not selected for the lived experience panel yet have an important contribution to make. It is important to recognise that people with expertise based on lived experience will often have histories of trauma and experience ongoing trauma responses that can result, for some, in relational difficulties and mental health issues. By building into the fabric of the organisation a genuine trauma-informed lens that extends across the entire organisation, inquiries and other formal bodies can create safe and secure environment that ensures traumatic responses can be recognised and addressed in meaningful and respectful ways.

Recommendations

- 2.1 Re-traumatisation must be acknowledged as a real risk but it must not be seen as a reason to avoid the appointment of lived experience panels, or to evade interpersonal difficulties when they arise.
- 2.2 A genuine, adapted trauma informed lens must be implemented across the whole inquiry to understand the emotional milieu in which lived experience panel members, and staff with similar experiences, work.

- 2.3 It should be recognised that it is often not possible to make a clear distinction between people serving on lived experience panels and inquiry staff who have similar experiences but have not disclosed.
- 2.4 Regular revisiting of the inquiry's trauma informed approach is essential. It must be updated and revised periodically in collaboration with survivors to ensure it is in line with best practice.
- 2.5 It is vital that a conscious effort is made within the inquiry to avoid the unintentional mirroring of abusive institutional practices, such as silencing, marginalisation, and shaming.
- 2.6 People with lived experience may have trust and self-esteem issues and this needs to be recognised and addressed in a respectful and meaningful way so that lived experience panel members feel highly valued.
- 2.7 Inquiry specific trauma informed approaches must be genuine and not tokenistic. This includes transparency about decision making processes and reasons given when transparency is not possible.

3. Symbolism

How an organisation represents itself has an important bearing on its reputation, the trust it generates amongst people with whom it engages, and the views of the wider public in relation to the integrity of that organisation. This includes forms of symbolic representation, such as an organisation's website, its outreach material and the images and descriptions it uses to present itself. Symbols can convey the values of an organisation. This includes the people who are the 'face' of the organisation. Symbolic representations play an important role in inspiring staff, stakeholders and the wider public.

Symbolism is also important to a public inquiry. Inquiries need to demonstrate competence, credibility, transparency and accountability, as well as impartiality and independence. To be successful, inquiries need to effectively communicate with affected individuals, their communities, and the wider public. They also require public participation. Since the 1990s, inquiries have prioritised the participation of victims and survivors.¹⁹ This is necessary to communicate credibility and authenticity. For inquiries to be effective today, they must gain

the trust of the communities affected by the issues they are investigating, that is, victim-survivors must feel safe and confident in the process if they are prepared to engage.

The VSCP provided an important engagement pathway for IICSA. In addition to offering advice and guidance, they formed part of the public face of the Inquiry, one that conveyed the message that IICSA was victim-survivor centred. The VSCP were featured on IICSA's website and were critical to the Inquiry's approach to public outreach. For some VSCP members, their media engagement activities represented an important part of their time at IICSA. Overall, members of the VSCP reported varied experiences and mixed views related to the ways in which they were publicly represented at official events. At times, it was clear to the VSCP that there was consideration of how they were publicly represented. At other times, however, there was disappointment for some at what appeared to be lack of public recognition of their role in the Inquiry, as expressed, for example, in how they were positioned at media events.

As public representatives of a wider community, lived experience panel members can find themselves caught in the interface between inquiry staff and external survivors. In the event that external survivors feel disappointed or angered by the work of the inquiry, some of this emotion can be directed at lived experience panels. This presents an emotional strain and potential moral injury to lived experience panellists who often feel closely aligned with the wider survivor movement.

Recommendations

- 3.1 The way in which the lived experience panel is publicly represented is critical. For example, consideration should be given to the physical placement of lived experience panel members at public events and how they are represented in the media.
- 3.2 How lived experience panel members are publicly represented must genuinely reflect how they are treated and valued within the inquiry.
- 3.3 Senior leaders of an inquiry should ensure adequate support and safeguarding for lived experience panel members when they are subjected to external criticism. This may include inquiry staff facilitating engagement with external survivors who may have legitimate concerns. It should not be left to lived experience panellists to do this work alone.

4. Role Clarity

Role clarity is important for all members of an organisation. Understanding what the role entails and how it fits within the broader structure and goals of the organisation is an important component of people successfully undertaking their duties. A clear understanding of what the role entails is also essential for accountability of the individual to the organisation and, in turn, for feedback to be provided to the individual and/or work group about their performance. Ambiguity in roles can lead to stress and anxiety, whereas role clarity can reduce uncertainty and help people feel a greater level of confidence in their work. Role clarity can also help prevent conflicts that may arise from misunderstandings or overlapping responsibilities.²⁰

From the outset, IICSA understood the importance of bringing lived experience perspectives into the heart of their work. The VSCP was appointed soon after IICSA's establishment as a statutory inquiry. However, in the early period of the Inquiry, there was considerable uncertainty about their role and responsibilities, and it was largely left to the group to determine the details of their work. As consultants, not staff, they occupied an independent, advisory role, setting them apart from the Inquiry staff. Yet, often, there was a lack of direction provided to them in relation to the detail of their work, and little clarity pertaining to issues such as how they interacted with and reported to the Inquiry Chair and Panel.

For some VSCP members, ambiguity about the VSCP's role in IICSA, particularly during the early years of the Inquiry, contributed to experiences of stress and uncertainty. This was compounded because legal requirements for IICSA placed restrictions on what the VSCP could see or comment on. This lack of clarity about the nature of the VSCP's work made it difficult not only for the VSCP but also for the Inquiry staff. One consequence of this, for some members of the VSCP, was a feeling of being viewed primarily as a 'survivor' rather than their professional competence being recognised and utilised by the Inquiry.

The lack of role clarity also created confusion within the group with regard to why some VSCP members were sought out by Inquiry staff to undertake specific tasks or duties. This led to tension that could have been avoided had a clear framework existed that delineated the overall responsibilities, duties and conduct of the VSCP as a whole, and how specific tasks would be allocated to members within the group.

In addition to clarity around their role, there was also some uncertainty in relation to benefits, such as leave, training opportunities and support services. The VSCP were appropriately remunerated and professional development and other opportunities were made available to them, which members of the VSCP greatly appreciated. To minimise uncertainty, inquiries and other formal bodies engaging lived experience panels would benefit from providing clarity at the outset in relation to entitlements, while also leaving open the possibility of negotiation if needed, for example, in relation to parental leave. This should also apply to reasonable adjustments for disability and/or chronic illness by making clear to lived experience consultants how they can access the supports needed to undertake their role.

Recommendations

- 4.1 There is a complex dynamic around independence and employment/consultancy status within an inquiry that needs to be recognised and clarified from the outset.
- 4.2 The nature of the role must be clear and transparent to all, including the lived experience panel, staff in the wider inquiry, the Chair, and the broader public.
- 4.3 There needs to be a clear understanding of the duties, expectations and responsibilities of lived experience panel members. This can be achieved with task planning by the inquiry that makes clear from the outset the responsibilities of the lived experience panel.
- 4.4 Consideration should be given to power differentials and dynamics of control between panel members and inquiry employees. Panel members should have appropriate titles and be referred to by their title, rather than by terms such as 'survivor', which may serve to minimise their contributions and marginalise their status within an inquiry.
- 4.5 To ensure certainty and trust, it is essential that there is clarity regarding remuneration, rights, benefits (including access to counselling and support), and duration of appointment, as there is for employment contracts.
- 4.6 Reasonable adjustments must be made available to lived experience panel members without in any way stigmatising or marginalising people who are neurodiverse, disabled and/or chronically ill. There should also be recognition of the highly valuable insights that people with these experiences offer the inquiry.

- 4.7 Lived experience panel members must be accountable to the inquiry. This should be done in a professional and respectful way that recognises the complexities of the role and people's experiences of trauma. This may be done, for example, through a focus on the completion of allocated tasks, rather than completing timesheets.
- 4.8 To avoid conflicts of interest, inquiries must clarify whether lived experience panel members who work for advocacy organisations (or any other organisation), are representing these organisations or if they are working independently as private citizens.
- 4.9 There should be a structured induction process for members of lived experience panels, as there would be for inquiry staff.
- 4.10 The parameters for collaboration amongst panel members and between the panel and the wider inquiry needs to be clearly defined and regularly revised if needed.
- 4.11 The inquiry should put in place mechanisms to foster collegiality and constructive collaboration amongst lived experience panel members in order to avoid difficulties with group dynamics and/or interpersonal conflict.
- 4.12 There needs to be an understanding of the complex and layered dynamics and relational aspects between the lived experience panel members and the wider inquiry, including inquiry staff and the Chair and Panel.
- 4.13 While it is important for there to be clarity around the role of lived experience panels, there also needs to be flexibility so that both the inquiry and the lived experience panel can respond to requirements of the inquiry as they arise.

5. Skill Recognition

Historically, public inquiries have privileged professional knowledge and skills. However, there is now growing recognition that lived experience expertise is vital to the work of many inquiries. This reflects a broader social shift, in areas ranging from social care to policy development, research and advocacy, towards recognition of lived experience as a distinct and highly valuable form of knowledge.²¹ This raises the question of how, in the context of a public inquiry, this form of expertise intersects with the other skills and experiences that

consultants bring to their role. When organisations recruit employees and consultants, the skillset of applicants forms the basis of assessments of suitability. This is complicated, to some extent, for roles that include but are not exclusively based on lived experience.

The VSCP were recruited to IICSA via advertisements and interviews and were paid appropriately for their time and contribution via a fixed and agreed upon daily consultancy rate. Each member of the VSCP brought a distinct set of skills, and they all had extensive professional experience and relevant employment histories. A number of those appointed also had high profile roles as leaders in third sector sexual violence organisations, were advocates for victim-survivors and had successfully campaigned for improvements to child safety.

During their time at IICSA, some members of the VSCP felt that their professional skills and experience were not always fully utilised. Together with the lack of role clarity, there was a view that opportunities to take advantage of the range of skills that they brought to the role were missed. Senior leaders at IICSA stated that it was experience of work in the child sexual abuse sector and an ability to engage in collective decision making that were two of the key factors that determined who was recruited to the VSCP.

Recruitment processes and allocation of work tasks based only on expertise gained as a result of trauma risks a narrow focus on identity. By contrast, a greater recognition of the full suite of professional skills and experience that people bring to their role in a public inquiry has the potential to enrich both the inquiry and the experiences of people who are brought into an inquiry as consultants based on their expertise by lived experience.

Recommendations

- 5.1 Lived experience panels must be properly remunerated.
- 5.2 Required skillsets should be identified in the recruitment process and people's skills (not only their identities) should be foregrounded and utilised in their work on the inquiry.
- 5.3 Recruitment needs to be based on an identified role required for the inquiry and appointment should be based on the skillset of the applicants.

- 5.4 It is vital that lived experience panel members are recognised and utilised not only for lived experience expertise, as important as this is, but also for the diversity of the professional skills that people in this role bring to an inquiry.
- 5.5 Consideration should be given to how to best manage both successful and unsuccessful applicants and the tension this may create for stakeholders and advocacy organisations.

6. Trust

Trust is an important component of organisational effectiveness as it forms part of the 'glue' that holds an organisation together. Trust is important in creating positive experiences and meaningful relationships within workplaces and other settings and building trust between colleagues and organisational leaders improves collaboration and information sharing.²² Trust is an essential component of effective communication, which itself is critical for organisational success. High levels of trust provide a strong basis for people to express opinions, share ideas and raise issues of concern. Trust is also necessary to effectively manage processes of conflict resolution.

Establishing trust within lived experience panels, and between panel members and the wider organisation, is critically important because many people will have previously experienced violations of trust. Inquiries and other formal bodies can assist with building and maintaining trust by ensuring transparency in organisational processes and open lines of communication. For some VSCP members, there were concerns that at times genuine engagement was lacking. While the VSCP was aware of the many pressures faced by IICSA, the very short turnaround times required for feedback to the Inquiry at times left the impression that there was a lack of genuine consultation and that the guidance provided by the VSCP was not highly valued. When trusting and trustworthy relationships were developed between the VSCP and wider teams in the Inquiry, this had a transformational effect on all involved and led to collaborative, creative working relationships.

Understanding the complexities around issues of trust for people with lived experience expertise can enhance their experience and enrich their contribution. Public inquiries and other organisations can address this by building into their structure – within legal limits – opportunities for feedback in both directions, i.e. from a lived experience panel to the

leadership of the inquiry, and vice-versa. Clarification of contributions would also likely have a positive impact on external stakeholders. It would arguably strengthen the trust that advocacy groups, and people in the wider community, have with an inquiry and the lived experience panel who are there to represent and advocate for their views. While historically the problem of trust has been constructed as a deficit in people with abuse histories, increasingly the trustworthiness of public bodies is seen as critical to developing good relationships with victim-survivors.²³

Recommendations

- 6.1 Consultation with and contributions from the lived experience panel must be authentic and meaningful. This should not be a 'tick box' exercise to sign off on decisions that have already been made, which can undermine trust.
- 6.2 It is essential that inquiries establish trust with panel members as people with lived experience are likely to have a history of trust violations. Efforts must be made to avoid this playing out within the context of the inquiry, and to build in the expectation of reparative, relational work when these ruptures inevitably occur.
- 6.3 Lived experience panel members must be involved in an authentic way when providing input so they are not put in a position of having to challenge already formulated ideas presented to them. This can be achieved through regular and authentic consultation from the outset, by drawing on their in-depth knowledge, extensive experience, and diverse skillsets.
- 6.4 Lived experience panel contributions to inquiry processes and outcomes must be transparent, properly acknowledged, and clearly communicated both within the inquiry and to the public.
- 6.5 Consideration of the forms of accountability to external stakeholders is needed to ensure that lived experience panels are not 'pitted against' advocacy groups and/or each other.
- 6.6 There must be opportunities for lived experience panels to collectively process and reflect upon their work and contribution throughout the inquiry so they can clearly recognise and appreciate the value of their input.

7. Training and Support

Opportunities to access professional development, training and support are now common in large workplaces and such processes are recognised as important to supporting people's careers and their personal development. People with lived experiences of trauma can face considerable educational, economic and vocational challenges. Through the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, people can experience enhanced confidence, earning potential and career satisfaction. For those who have experienced educational and economic disadvantage, these opportunities are particularly valuable. This applies not only to staff, but also to lived experience panels consulting to inquiries.

For lived experience panels, induction training to equip people with knowledge of how an inquiry operates would be enormously beneficial. Such training could cover how decisions are made, how advice should be provided to inquiry staff, how lived experience panels will be managed and how feedback will be given to them on their work. In addition, training on understanding the causes and effects of conflicts, and pathways for resolving difficulties, would help support lived experience panel members in their work.

The provision of appropriate emotional and psychological supports is crucial for public inquiries examining difficult matters. This applies equally to inquiry staff, victim-survivors engaging with inquiries, and to lived experience panels providing advice and guidance to inquiries. The provision of skills training and other career development opportunities to VSCP members was seen as a strength at IICSA and for some members it has had a transformational impact on their post-inquiry careers. Lived experience panel members are also likely to have the necessary expertise to provide training to both inquiry staff and the inquiry Chair and Panel on how to work with affected groups, and this educational role can be of value to both panel members and the wider organisation.

Recommendations

- 7.1 Training and professional development opportunities need to be clearly set out and made widely available for lived experience panel members throughout the inquiry.
- 7.2 Training should be provided for both inquiry staff and panel members to ensure clear understandings of the inquiry's processes for shared decision making, feedback from lived experience panel members, understanding the causes and effects of conflicts, and pathways for resolving difficulties.

- 7.3 Professional development can have significant positive impacts on the lives of lived experience panel members. As part of this, it must be very clear which opportunities are available to lived experience panel members vis-à-vis inquiry staff.
- 7.4 There needs to be recognition of the health impacts of childhood trauma, and in turn, the physical and emotional toll of a lived experience panel's work. Appropriate supports must be made available.
- 7.5 When the inquiry concludes, there should be access to career development and employment support services to assist with the transition from the inquiry to other employment/consultancy opportunities.

8. Endings and Legacy

Public inquiries have a limited duration. While the timeframe varies depending on their Terms of Reference and the complexity of their remit, they will always draw to a close. The end of an inquiry is typically signalled by the release of a final report, often with accompanying recommendations. For civil service, legal and other staff who work on public inquiries, there are usually opportunities to seek employment in similar areas. However, for lived experience expertise panel members, transitioning from their consultancy work to other employment may be challenging. In addition to the practical issue of transitioning to new roles and opportunities, there are questions of symbolically marking the end of an inquiry as well as considerations of its legacy.

Members of the VSCP were provided with opportunities to access career advice and assistance with employment transition. For those who took advantage of this, it was valuable and highly appreciated. More broadly, the ending of IICSA was significant in other ways. It reflected the culmination of the group's work over a period of almost eight years. Many VSCP members found the work challenging, but stayed in the role due to their strong commitment to justice for victims and survivors and to influence change for children in the future. For members of the VSCP in particular, there was a powerful personal connection to this work. A number of people reported having mixed feelings at the end of the Inquiry. There was a general level of satisfaction that they had persisted in making important contributions to the work completed by the Inquiry.

IICSA acknowledged the value of VSCP members with personalised letters thanking them for their work and this was appreciated. The contributions of the VSCP was also acknowledged on IICSA's website and in its final report. However, the appreciation of this, for some, sat alongside a degree of disappointment that some of their individual and collective contributions were not explicitly recognised in other ways. It is clear that both personal and public acknowledgement is important, particularly for lived experience panel members that have strong personal investments in the work they undertake. In some respects, this research project is an attempt to offer the VSCP members an opportunity to describe their experiences at the end of the Inquiry in a way that IICSA was unable to facilitate for them.

While their official roles as consultants to the Inquiry ended with IICSA's conclusion, the wider advocacy role of VSCP members continues. Following the handing down of the final report and the government's response, the VSCP has provided a powerful voice on the need for stronger government action. Their extensive experience positions them well to take leading roles in policy and social reform. As such, public inquiries may wish to consider how the collective knowledge, skills and expertise of lived experience panels can be usefully harnessed in helping to ensure the implementation of recommendations. The ongoing collegiate relationship between the VSCP members and senior IICSA staff, including the Chair and Chief Secretary, is highly valued by panel members, who feel a shared purpose in honouring the work of the Inquiry and ensuring its recommendations are enacted.

Recommendations

- 8.1 Opportunities need to be provided at the end of the inquiry for lived experience panels to reflect on their contributions. This should take a structured form, for example, a workshop, where achievements are clearly acknowledged and any difficulties experienced throughout the inquiry can be raised and processed.
- 8.2 The value of the lived experience panel must be accurately – and publicly – acknowledged at the conclusion of the inquiry, both in the final report and through the media.
- 8.3 There should be a structured process at the conclusion of the inquiry for those wishing to transition to employment opportunities, building on the skills, experience, and expertise of the inquiry work. This may take the form of access to a recruitment agency and/or career advice and assistance.

- 8.4 There should also be recognition that different acts of acknowledgement are important. Options may include, for example, a letter from the Chair and senior inquiry staff outlining the specific, individual, and collective contributions that the panel members made, to keep as a reminder of their work, as well as the opportunity to be personally thanked by the Chair.
- 8.5 Consideration should be given to how lived experience panel members can be involved in developing processes to monitor the implementation of recommendations.

Conclusion

As discussed at the beginning of this report, the VSCP was central to the establishment of IICSA, its development across time, and they led the design of the emotional and relational architecture that characterised the Inquiry's engagement with survivors. Their foundational and substantive contribution to the Truth Project resulted in large-scale participation of victim-survivors in a public inquiry and the establishment of an evidence-based model of engagement in testimony sharing justice processes. Their achievements cannot be overstated and it is likely that future inquiries will follow on from this model of survivor participation.

As this report outlines, the VSCP also faced considerable barriers to effective working practices and carried a significant emotional burden on behalf of the Inquiry's work. Despite these challenges, VSCP members want to emphasise how many of the early difficulties, though not all of them, improved across the lifespan of IICSA and reflected a developmental process that matured over time. It is also important to restate here, that having a lived experience panel was a vital form of victim-survivor participation, without which IICSA would have looked radically different. The VSCP and the research team want to acknowledge the contributions of IICSA staff in ensuring the VSCP was established and supported well enough to remain until the Inquiry concluded.

For many victim-survivors, public inquiries create significant emotional distress due to their imperfect functioning and always falling short of the forms of justice people who experienced abuse in childhood deserve. Yet, despite their limitations, public inquiries play a vital role in raising community awareness, moving toward justice for victim-survivors, and preventing abuse in the future.

In this respect, while lived experience panels may present challenges for both inquiries and the panellists themselves, these can be addressed with careful planning and management. After IICSA, it now seems unthinkable that public inquiries could ignore the enormous value that lived experience expertise can provide.

Recommendations for Inquiries with Lived Experience Panels

2023

The following 51 recommendations, organised into eight themes, emerged from research examining the work of the Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel (VSCP) of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), 2015-2022.

1. Culture

- 1.1 A culture of inclusivity must be a priority across all aspects of the inquiry. Fostering inclusion is essential to avoid feelings of isolation and marginalisation for lived experience panel members. This is especially important given the intersecting identities and roles that are inherent to this work, as well as the challenging nature of the subject matter.
- 1.2 Inquiries should foster a culture of safety, respect and genuine valuing of difference, and recognition and respect for the diversity of intersecting identities, ethnicities, neurodiversity, disability and/or chronic illness must be foundational.
- 1.3 Inquiries should ensure that lived experience panel members are not marginalised due to their role in the inquiry or treated differently to inquiry staff, other than in recognition of their unique contribution and roles.
- 1.4 Organisational systems and structures, and the legal constraints imposed by inquiry legislation, must be made clear to lived experience panel members.
- 1.5 Given the emotional complexity of the work undertaken by lived experience panels, the organisational culture of an inquiry must be responsive to the needs of the panel and flexible in relation to how the panel operates.
- 1.6 It is important to establish clear processes for lived experience panels to raise concerns about directions or decisions taken by the inquiry.

- 1.7 Consideration should be given to fostering inclusion via cross-team fertilisation and collaboration, whereby individual lived experience panel members can participate in project work with other teams, while still retaining independence.

2. A trauma informed approach

- 2.1 Re-traumatisation must be acknowledged as a real risk but it must not be seen as a reason to avoid the appointment of lived experience panels, or to evade interpersonal difficulties when they arise.
- 2.2 A genuine, adapted trauma informed lens must be implemented across the whole inquiry to understand the emotional milieu in which lived experience panel members, and staff with similar experiences, work.
- 2.3 It should be recognised that it is often not possible to make a clear distinction between people serving on lived experience panels and inquiry staff who have similar experiences but have not disclosed.
- 2.4 Regular revisiting of the inquiry's trauma informed approach is essential. It must be updated and revised periodically to ensure it is in line with best practice.
- 2.5 It is vital that a conscious effort is made within the inquiry to avoid the unintentional mirroring of abusive institutional practices, such as silencing, marginalisation, and shaming
- 2.6 People with lived experience may have trust and self-esteem issues and this needs to be recognised and addressed in a respectful and meaningful way so that lived experience panel members feel highly valued.
- 2.7 Inquiry specific trauma informed approaches must be genuine and not tokenistic. This includes transparency about decision making processes and reasons given when transparency is not possible.

3. Symbolism

- 3.1 The way in which the lived experience panel is publicly represented is critical. For example, consideration should be given to the physical placement of lived experience panel members at public events and how they are represented in the media.
- 3.2 How lived experience panel members are publicly represented must genuinely reflect how they are treated and valued within the inquiry.
- 3.3 Senior leaders of an inquiry should ensure adequate support and safeguarding for lived experience panel members when they are subjected to external criticism. This may include inquiry staff facilitating engagement with external survivors who may have legitimate concerns. It should not be left to lived experience panellists to do this work alone.

4. Role clarity

- 4.1 There is a complex dynamic around independence and employment/consultancy status within an inquiry that needs to be recognised and clarified from the outset.
- 4.2 The nature of the role must be clear and transparent to all, including the lived experience panel, staff in the wider inquiry, the Chair, and the broader public.
- 4.3 There needs to be a clear understanding of the duties, expectations and responsibilities of lived experience panel members. This can be achieved with task planning by the inquiry that makes clear from the outset the responsibilities of the lived experience panel.
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- 4.5 To ensure certainty and trust, it is essential that there is clarity regarding remuneration, rights, benefits (including access to counselling and support), and duration of appointment, as there is for employment contracts.

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- 4.12 There needs to be an understanding of the complex and layered dynamics and relational aspects between the lived experience panel members and the wider inquiry, including inquiry staff and the Chair and Panel.
- 4.13 While it is important for there to be clarity around the role of lived experience panels, there also needs to be flexibility so that both the inquiry and the lived experience panel can respond to requirements of the inquiry as they arise.

5. Skill recognition

- 5.1 Lived experience panels must be properly remunerated.

- 5.2 Required skillsets should be identified in the recruitment process and people's skills (not only their identities) should be foregrounded and utilised in their work on the inquiry.
- 5.3 Recruitment needs to be based on an identified role required for the inquiry and appointment should be based on the skillset of the applicants.
- 5.4 It is vital that lived experience panel members are recognised and utilised not only for lived experience expertise, as important as this is, but also for the diversity of the professional skills that people in this role bring to an inquiry.
- 5.5 Consideration should be given to how to best manage both successful and unsuccessful applicants and the tension this may create for stakeholders and advocacy organisations.

6. Trust

- 6.1 Consultation with and contributions from the lived experience panel must be authentic and meaningful. This should not be a 'tick box' exercise to sign off on decisions that have already been made, which can undermine trust.
- 6.2 It is essential that inquiries establish trust with panel members as people with lived experience are likely to have a history of trust violations. Efforts must be made to avoid this playing out within the context of the inquiry, and to build in the expectation of reparative, relational work when these ruptures inevitably occur.
- 6.3 Lived experience panel members must be involved in an authentic way when providing input so they are not put in a position of having to challenge already formulated ideas presented to them. This can be achieved through regular and authentic consultation from the outset, by drawing on their in-depth knowledge, extensive experience, and diverse skillsets.
- 6.4 Lived experience panel contributions to inquiry processes and outcomes must be transparent, properly acknowledged, and clearly communicated both within the inquiry and to the public.
- 6.5 Consideration of the forms of accountability to external stakeholders is needed to ensure that lived experience panels are not 'pitted against' advocacy groups and/or each other.

- 6.6 There must be opportunities for lived experience panels to collectively process and reflect upon their work and contribution throughout the inquiry so they can clearly recognise and appreciate the value of their input.

7. Training, professional development and support

- 7.1 Training and professional development opportunities need to be clearly set out and made widely available for lived experience panel members throughout the inquiry.
- 7.2 Training should be provided for both inquiry staff and panel members to ensure clear understandings of the inquiry's processes for shared decision making, feedback from lived experience panel members, understanding the causes and effects of conflicts, and pathways for resolving difficulties.
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- 7.4 There needs to be recognition of the health impacts of childhood trauma, and in turn, the physical and emotional toll of a lived experience panel's work. Appropriate supports must be made available.
- 7.5 When the inquiry concludes, there should be access to career development and employment support services to assist with the transition from the inquiry to other employment/consultancy opportunities.

8. Endings, legacy and the implementation of recommendations

- 8.1 Opportunities need to be provided at the end of the inquiry for lived experience panels to reflect on their contributions. This should take a structured form, for example, a workshop, where achievements are clearly acknowledged and any difficulties experienced throughout the inquiry can be raised and processed.

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- 8.5 Consideration should be given to how lived experience panel members can be involved in developing processes to monitor the implementation of recommendations.

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