



Trust for Injured Workers' Medical Care including Rana Plaza workers ("TIWMC")

About the Trust

The Trust for Injured Workers' Medical Care including Rana Plaza workers (the "TIWMC") was established in September 2016, on the initiative of the national signatories of the Rana Plaza Arrangement as a way of providing long term medical and allied care to workers injured by the collapse of the Rana Plaza building and the fire at Tazreen Fashions.

The TIWMC is governed by a board of Trustees, chaired by Mr Md. Shahjahan Miah, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, and including further representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangladesh Employers Organisations (BEF and BGMEA) and Bangladesh labour organisations (BILS and BTUC). The Clean Clothes Campaign is also a member of the board.

The work of TIWMC is funded by payments from the Rana Plaza Trust Fund and the Tazreen Trust Fund, which were established to provide both loss of income payments and medical care to workers killed and injured in these two disasters. As such the main objective of TIWMC is to provide physical and psychological treatment to 761 workers injured at Rana Plaza and 172 workers injured at Tazreen. It is also open for any other Rana Plaza or Tazreen workers who later develop health complications as a result of their involvement in the disasters. From 2020 the Trust will take over the care of the 110 workers who were most severely injured at Rana Plaza and are currently being treated via a project run by the NGO BRAC.



The current activities of the TIWMC

- **Provision of medical treatment and referrals**

TIWMC began operations in February 2017, when it established an office and appointed a coordinator and a doctor, who is able to either treat patients directly or refer them to specialists if required. This service is available for beneficiaries two days a week. TIWMC has also established relationships with other health care organizations including hospitals, pharmacies, opticians and local health centres, who are all now providing medical services free at the point of use for Trust beneficiaries. This means that Rana Plaza and Tazreen survivors now have access to a wide range of specialist doctors including medical specialists, Ear Nose and Throat doctors, orthodontics, neurosurgery, cardiologists, gastroenterologists, psychiatrists, physiotherapists, surgeons and skin specialists. They can also receive support to get medications, and glasses and have access to diagnostic tests for any new conditions or symptoms.

By April 2018, 399 individual injured workers had used the TIWMC services, attending a total of 2,174 appointments with medical and allied services in the 14 months since TIWMC opened.

- **Medical camps**

Alongside these individual services TIWMC has organised five medical camps, where workers can attend and be seen by a wide range of different medical specialists, and be assessed for any further medical support they might require. This allows the Trust to maintain ongoing contact with survivors and ensure that they are receiving adequate and appropriate treatment. It also helps inform the TIWMC in decision on what further services may need to be provided. In total 216 Rana Plaza survivors and 83 Tazreen survivors have attended a camp and further camps are planned over the course of 2018.



- **Critical case management**

Alongside this work the TIWMC also manages some critical cases, where the ex-worker is suffering from a life threatening condition and requires urgent care. In such case the Trust has agreed it will provide whatever support it can to any of its beneficiaries to enable them to access any medical care they require.

Case study: Mr D came to the Trust complaining of symptoms that indicated a cardiac problem. Mr D attended an appointment with a well respected cardiologist who diagnosed an extremely rare heart condition that would require urgent and specialist treatment. A second opinion was sought from another cardiologist and ultimately Mr D was referred to the National Heart Foundation for in-patient treatment. The cost of referrals and treatment meant that Mr D would not have been able to access these services if the Trust had not been available to provide support. As such it was agreed that TIWMC would support Mr D to apply to local foundations for funding, and that the Trust would cover any remaining shortfall.

- **Identification of “0%” and unregistered workers**

It is likely that the number of workers eligible to access the services provided by TIWMC will expand over the coming years, after the Trustees agreed to widen the categories of workers to include the “0%” group and to workers who were unable to register with the initial scheme as a result of inadequate documentation or identification of a relative.

The original list of beneficiaries for the Trust came from the Rana Plaza and Tazreen Administration Committees, and were based on the medical assessments done for the purposes of calculating loss of income payments. As part of that process workers were given a percentage of 0 – 100 to denote the extent to which their injuries would impact on their immediate ability to work and/or their expected future ability to work. In both cases a large number of survivors were found to have 0% for the purposes of loss of income, but this did not necessarily mean that they no longer needed medical treatment for things such as chronic payment, psychological injury or breathing and sight problems. For this reason the Trust agreed that it would also accept workers, not on the original list, but who were registered as survivors of either Rana Plaza or Tazreen.

Since the closure of the Arrangements, reports persist of individuals who were not able to register for loss of income payments in the time period that the Rana Plaza and Tazreen Arrangements were in place. TIWMC has agreed to accept applications from individuals who claim to be survivors but were not able to access the original schemes. Details of each individual will be cross-checked with lists of workers provided with wage payments by the BGMEA in the immediate aftermath of the two disasters.

The expansion of categories of survivors able to access Trust services means that workers have a permanent place in which to access health care and support, even if they were unable to do so in the years immediately after the disaster. It is unclear how many workers are in each category, and identifying and verifying these individuals remains challenging. To date 85 workers from these two categories have asked to register as eligible trust beneficiaries .

Anyone interested in learning more about the the ongoing work of the TIWMC should contact Krishno Sen, Coordinator at tiwmc.coordinator@gmail.com

