

**Northern Ireland Statistics
and Research Agency (NISRA)**

**Annual Report and Accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2019**

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this overview section is to outline the performance of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) during the 2018-19 financial year and to highlight the key issues and risks identified by management.

History and Statutory Background

NISRA, an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance (DoF), hereafter referred to as 'the Department', was established on 1 April 1996 under the Government's Next Steps Initiative. The Agency incorporates the General Register Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland.

The Business

The Agency's Mission is:

- to produce and disseminate high quality, trusted and meaningful statistics and research to inform decisions and improve understanding; and
- to provide a high quality and cost effective civil registration service to meet users' needs.

NISRA is the principal source of official information on Northern Ireland's (NI) population and socio-economic conditions. Its statistics and research services are afforded to a wide range of government departments and agencies to assist them in the delivery of their objectives and actions. The statistics produced by the Agency not only inform the policy process within government, but also inform academic research and contribute to debate in the wider community. Statistics are produced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics (revised by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) in February 2018). NISRA ensures that its statistical outputs are fit for purpose such that users have a high degree of confidence in them.

The Agency provides a civil registration service and produces summary statistics relating to life events.

Vision

NISRA's vision is -

Trusted statistics and research for a better society.

In striving to deliver our vision we will build on our history and our reputation for quality and customer service, and on advancements in information communication technologies.

Key Aims, Principal Functions and Targets

Aims

The corporate aims of NISRA are -

- (i) to provide a statistical and research service to support decision making by NI ministers and departments;
- (ii) to inform elected representatives and the public through the dissemination of reliable official statistics; and
- (iii) to administer the marriage laws and provide a system for the civil registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions and deaths in NI.

Principal Functions

The principal functions of the Agency are -

- to provide and co-ordinate professional statistics and research services, and to be the principal advisory body on statistics and social research for NI departments, agencies and non-departmental bodies;
- to carry out the Census of Population and provide high quality demographic information to enable the number and the condition of the population to be monitored and changes over time to be identified;
- to collect, analyse and make available official statistics which describe NI's society, economy and public services;
- to ensure that statistical and research standards are adhered to and that the best and most appropriate methodological practice is employed in official statistics, social research and policy evaluation;
- to provide NI statistics required for the United Kingdom (UK), European Union (EU) and international statistical series; and
- to administer the marriage laws and provide an efficient and effective system for the registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions and deaths in NI.

Risks and Uncertainties

Risk management has been incorporated into the business planning and decision-making processes of the Agency. The Agency maintains a Risk Register which defines the framework and describes the process for identifying and managing risks.

NISRA has an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), the purpose of which is to support the Accounting Officer in monitoring NISRA risk, control and governance systems. Additionally, the ARC will give advice to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of coverage of audit arrangements (internal and external) to provide required assurances.

The Committee includes three Non-Executive independent Members, currently John Smyth, Elizabeth Ensor and Tom Taylor. The Committee is chaired by an independent Non-Executive Member of the Departmental board (Tom Taylor) and during this reporting period operated under the best practice guidance in accordance with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) 2018.

The Committee met on 4 occasions during the course of 2018-19. The Corporate Risk Register was provided to all meetings and the Committee reviewed in detail risks in relation to:

The 2021 Census;

Customers;

Official Statistics;

GRO;

Finance/Resources;

Information Assurance;

Human Resources (General);

Human Resources (Staff Absence);

Economic Statistics;

Modernisation of Statistical Data Collection Infrastructure;

Impact of leaving the EU; and

New Technologies.

Chief Executive Overview

Like many other public sector bodies NISRA has witnessed an increased demand for services against a backdrop of constrained resourcing and changes to the context in which it operates. Despite this NISRA continues to provide a high quality service to its customers, supporting policy colleagues, delivering its Official Statistics Work Programme (Impact 1 (vi)) and engaging effectively with users (Trust 1 (ii)). NISRA has also continued to provide a high quality and cost-effective civil registration service against the backdrop of a much increased demand for certificates.

The Agency has achieved both headline Departmental targets; supporting the development of a new Programme for Government (PfG) and preparing for the 2021 Census (see page 6). NISRA has achieved seven out of its eight Outcomes. The remaining Outcome was substantially achieved, due to the fact that 84.2% of End of Year Reviews (EYR) and 86.4% of Personal Performance Agreements (PPA) were agreed on time. GRO has reported three outcomes as 'Achieved' and four as 'Substantially Achieved' due to staff resourcing issues and the aforementioned increase in workload in 2018/19.

Further detail on NISRA's performance against all of the targets is included in the NISRA Balanced Scorecard Section at pages 11 to 19.

Highlights of the Year

This year saw a continued interest in understanding trade flows between UK/NI and the EU but especially trade flows with and through Ireland. NISRA continued to prioritise this work to provide support to Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and Whitehall colleagues to inform their

decision making. NISRA continued to keep updated EU Exit related analysis on our website to inform public debate. <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/economy/eu-exit-analysis> as well as updating “*NI: in Profile*”, which was published last year and brings together the key trends in society and the economy in an easily accessible resource pack.

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/ni-summary-statistics/ni-profile>

NISRA continued to support the new outcome-based accountability draft PfG under the new Outcomes Delivery Report format. [Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018/19 - Mid-Year Report | The Executive Office](#). This approach is highly data dependent and NISRA statisticians all across the NICS worked together with each other and their departmental colleagues to produce both population indicators and performance level report cards.

In May 2018 the Digital Economy Act was passed by UK Parliament and came into effect in October 2018. This legislation is important for NISRA as it contains provisions for accessing administrative data for the purpose of producing statistics and research. Public administration is increasingly delivered digitally changing the way data is generated. Administrative data could enhance or potentially replace data currently collected purely for the purposes of statistics thus delivering efficiencies and cost savings. A move to use of more administrative data requires new methods, techniques and skills in both analysing and managing this data.

NISRA secured a new investment this year from the ESRC as part of the Administrative Data Research Partnership. This builds on the work already achieved via the earlier investment but with a more solid focus on meeting the analytical requirements of government. The presence of NISRA analysts right across NI departments, their Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Local Government Districts places us at the interface of the administrative data available, the potential for data linkage and close to the decision makers.

During the year NISRA progressed developing data science capability by enhancing the skills of our people, piloting access to new analytical tools and raising awareness of how we can improve processing and insight through the use of these new techniques.

Preparations for the 2021 Census advanced considerably this year, culminating in the production of a detailed set of proposals for the 2021 Census that were published at the end of the fiscal year. This document set out the main elements of the Census including plans for a predominantly on-line approach which will be tested in a large scale Census rehearsal in Autumn 2019. During the year work continued with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the systems and services for 2021. Being able to procure as part of a larger consortium delivers efficiencies of scale and increases value for money against what we could achieve on our own. Finally during the year a consultation was also held with users on how the planned outputs from the Census will be delivered.

General Register Office Operations

Between April 2018 and March 2019 the GRO processed 126,310 certificates, with 99% of priority certificate applications and 91% of standard certificate applications, fulfilled within target timescales (one and five working days respectively). This was despite the continuing high demand for birth certificate applications for Irish Passports following the EU exit vote and the reduction in staffing levels.

Additionally, GRO processed 3,069 Casework Cases including re-registrations, adoptions, name changes, corrections, approval of religious officiants and humanist celebrants. All were completed within the target timescale of 15 working days.

In NI the public has the option of either a religious or a civil marriage ceremony. Civil weddings can now be carried out by either Registrars or by Humanist Celebrants. Between April 2018 and March 2019, 10 Humanist Celebrants carried out 32 civil weddings, Registrars carried out 2,864 civil weddings and there were 4,929 religious weddings carried out in the same period.

Some 1,153 members of the public visited the Public Search room in Colby House. The terminals available in the Public Search Room have now been reduced to 13 following an exercise to monitor the daily demand over two years. The space freed up assists in managing the expanded accommodation needs of staff working on the Census. The demand for terminals installed in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) search room continues at the same level, with customers taking advantage of the city centre location and the availability of other Public Records onsite.

GRO registered 14,313 new accounts on the Family History website. There were 1,216,273 searches carried out – the most popular being the free index search which accounted for 1,064,726 searches.

As well as internal NICS seminars, GRO staff gave a presentation in the Waterfront Hall at the 'Find My Past' event in February 2019. This resulted in a number of invites to local societies, and numerous enquiries about the services offered both to those seeking to purchase life event certificates and specialist genealogists.

Non-Executive Directors' Report

NISRA ARC members are Liz Ensor, John Smyth and myself as Chair of the committee.

During the financial year we met on four occasions and reviewed a number of issues including:

- Reports detailing the financial position of NISRA on both Revenue and Capital budgets;
- Official Statistics upgrade;
- Preparation for the 2021 Census;
- Mid-year and annual Governance Statements;
- NISRA Corporate Risk Register issues;
- Internal Audit Reports including Direct Award Contracts;
- External Audit Reports including the Annual Report & Accounts; and
- Monitoring of NISRA progress in clearing Internal and External Audit Recommendations.

We are satisfied that any issues of concern were reported to the Departmental Audit & Risk Committee.

Tom Taylor
NISRA ARC Chair

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Targets

In the 2018-19 NISRA Balanced Scorecard, outcomes were grouped under four quadrants; Value, Trust, Quality and Governance, reflecting the standards set by the Code of Practice for Statistics. The individual quadrants and outcomes are inextricably linked with performance in one influencing achievement in others.

A separate Balanced Scorecard has been developed for GRO to reflect the more operationally focused nature of its work. This uses the more traditional quadrants of Customers, Processes, People and Governance. The outcomes within the GRO Balanced Scorecard have been cross-referenced to the Statistics and Research Balanced Scorecard.

The Department consults with the Agency on the development of key (or Ministerial) targets, which form part of the DoF Business Plan. These key targets are supplemented by a suite of Chief Executive Targets, all of which are detailed in NISRA's Annual Business Plan.

Performance against Targets

The Agency had two key departmental targets for the year 2018/19. Both targets were achieved. The results have been confirmed as accurate by DoF Internal Audit and are summarised in the Ministerial Targets section below.

Performance against the Chief Executive targets is summarised in the NISRA Balanced Scorecard Section at pages 11 to 19.

NISRA DoF Targets

Targets	Result
<p>Reporting and monitoring arrangements up and running for population-level indicators, once draft PfG is agreed.</p> <p>Provide data and advice to support draft PfG and support data development for PfG population and performance indicators.</p> <p>Implement DoF capital investment to enhance key Economic and Labour Market statistics and the associated data required for draft PfG.</p>	<p>Technical Assessment Panel (TAP) process up and running for all indicators.</p> <p>Outcomes viewer is live and indicators updated as soon as TAP has approved. Notification sent to all outcomes owners and their teams once viewer is updated.</p> <p>TAP advice provided to PfG team / Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) and lead statisticians on an ongoing basis. Data Development Agenda RAG status updated on an ongoing basis. TEO and departmental statisticians have supported all departments on performance measures and report card development.</p> <p>The Outcome Development Plan (ODP) mid-year report published 18th December 2018 – TEO statisticians provided advice throughout drafting process.</p> <p>Source survey samples enhanced to produce more precise key economic indicators using the capital investment.</p>
<p>Publish proposals for the delivery of the 2021 Census by December 2018.</p> <p>Publish and consult on a 2021 Census Output Strategy to ensure it meets user needs by December 2018.</p> <p>By March 2019 finalise a Census Rehearsal Strategy covering all key areas of design and services to ensure a full end to end Census rehearsal in Autumn 2019.</p> <p>Work with ONS to ensure that procured Census services meet Northern Ireland needs by March 2019.</p>	<p>A Northern Ireland 2021 Census Proposals document was finalised outlining the Registrar General's proposals for the 2021 Census. These have been shared with all NI Government Departments, the Census Advisory Group and key UK stakeholders. The document was published on Wednesday 3rd April 2019.</p> <p>The 2021 Census Outputs Strategy was published in October 2018 and a public consultation took place until January 2019. The consultation submissions and a final outputs strategy will be published in 2019-20.</p> <p>The Census Rehearsal Strategy was signed off by the Census Oversight Board during March 2019. It outlined the scope, scale and objectives of the 2019 Rehearsal. The rehearsal areas will be published after the publication of the release of the Census Proposals.</p> <p>NISRA Census Office has worked closely with ONS, on a variety of ONS-led contracts for the 2021 Census, to ensure that NISRA business needs were met.</p>

NISRA's (Statistics and Research) Balanced Scorecard 2018/19

Value			
Outcome	Action	Measure	Update
V1: NISRA meets customer needs	<p>V1.1: Document and prioritise user needs</p> <p>V1.2: Continue to prepare for 2021 Census</p> <p>V1.3: Provide data and advice to support policy development and cross-government initiatives, for example, the draft Programme for Government (PfG) and EU Exit.</p> <p>V1.4: Make preparations to maximise the provisions of the Digital Economy Act</p>	<p>V1a: All official statistics products have user needs documented</p> <p>V1b¹: Number of new products developed or existing products amended in response to user needs.</p> <p>V1c: NISRA data used for policy development and implementation, and to monitor and support the draft Programme for Government (PfG) population and performance indicators.</p> <p>V1d: 2021 Census Output strategy developed by December 2018.</p>	<p>Achieved: There is substantial evidence of new products being developed and existing products amended in response to user needs, including the use of NISRA data to monitor and support the draft Programme for Government (PfG) population and performance indicators.</p> <p>Work towards 2021 census continues, an Outputs Strategy has been developed and a large scale rehearsal is planned for Autumn 2019.</p> <p>Preparations to maximise the provisions of the Digital Economy Act have commenced in several NISRA Branches such as BSO, CSU, DE and PSNI.</p> <p>In addition NISRA delivered the NICS People Survey providing results down to the level of small teams with 10 or more members. This increased the level of reporting to over 700 individual outputs and has facilitated detailed responses on both the NICS and local business area level.</p>
V2: Impact and value of NISRA's outputs and services increased through continuous improvement	<p>V2.1: Explore and agree Agency-wide Data Visualisation solutions</p> <p>V2.2: Scope NISRA's technology requirements and develop options for future IT estate.</p> <p>V2.3: Improve documentation and efficiency of business processes</p>	<p>V2a: Number of Lean Six Sigma projects implemented.</p> <p>V2b: Each branch has process documentation in place for at least one official statistics product, based on the GSBPM (Generic Statistical Business Process Model).</p> <p>V2c: Potential solutions identified to meet NISRA's existing and future technology requirements and presented to Agency Board.</p>	<p>Achieved: Work on data visualisation continues, with a project completed and presented to Agency Board (Dissemination Branch). Progress continues in other business areas e.g. dashboard being developed for the Benefit Summary Statistics (BSS).</p> <p>A bespoke technical platform pilot containing a range of open source analytical tools commonly used in Data Science has been coordinated and evaluated.</p> <p>Some 19 Lean Six Sigma projects were registered during the reporting year but only two have been implemented and of these one has been formally registered. With the appointment of a Business Development Manager work will continue to follow-through on the other projects identified.</p>

¹ This measure applies to all branches publishing official statistics, and those contributing to the official statistics production process.

			Process Documentation and the GSBPM was delivered on October 2018, with a further two workshops in November 2018. At the end of March 2019, 91% of branches reported to have full or partial process documentation in place for at least one official statistics product.
Trust			
T1: Users have high levels of confidence in NISRA outputs	<p>T1.1: Maintain National Statistics designations (where appropriate) for all current NISRA National Statistics and put forward more Official Statistics for assessment as National Statistics.</p> <p>T1.2: Increase profile of NISRA as a producer of Official Statistics</p> <p>T1.3: Use multiple approaches and channels to reach a wider audience, e.g. develop relevant narratives on cross-cutting topics, using NISRA statistics.</p> <p>T1.4: Quality information published alongside all NISRA official statistics.</p>	<p>T1a: Number of hits (visits) to NISRA website, NINIS website, and NISRA section on Departmental/ Organisational websites.</p> <p>T1b: % public aware of, and have trust in, NISRA and NISRA statistics; % public agree that the statistics produced by NISRA are free from political interference</p> <p>T1c: Number of publications/ outputs with National Statistics designation or being assessed for National Statistics designation.</p> <p>T1d: % users participating in user engagement activities reporting that they found the event beneficial.</p>	<p>Achieved: NISRA branches continue to engage with users, with several branches reporting that users benefit from this engagement with high levels of confidence in their outputs e.g. DfC and Dissemination Branch. NISRA branches continuing to expand their use of multi-channel communications to reach a wider audience, including Departmental websites, NISRA website, NINIS, Twitter, YouTube.</p> <p>NINIS Sessions: 110,293 NINIS Page Views: 522,610 NISRA Sessions: 352,571 NISRA Page Views: 1,181,611</p> <p>Statistics which have been assessed this year for National Statistics (NS) designation have received this designation, and NISRA has maintained NS designation for all current NISRA National Statistics. Of all NISRA outputs published in 2018/19, 98 NISRA outputs are designated as National Statistics.</p> <p>Branches continue to publish key quality information, such as background quality reports, within or alongside their publications (DE, DfC, DfI, DoJ and PSNI). Work undertaken by numerous branches in connection with PfG and in support of EU Exit activity (DE, DfC, DfE, ELMS and TEO), has positively raised the profile of NISRA. The Deprivation Team was awarded a prestigious Champion Award for Excellence in Official Statistics by the Royal Statistical Society and the UK Statistics Authority.</p> <p>The 2018 Public Confidence and Trust in Official Statistics survey (a biennial survey), captures information on T1b, however, the results are not available until July 2019.</p>

<p>T2: Fully compliant with Code of Practice, GDPR, and other relevant legislation/ regulations</p>	<p>T2.1: All breaches of Code of Practice reported as appropriate</p> <p>T2.2: All NISRA statisticians trained in Code of Practice</p> <p>T2.3: All issues highlighted by National Statistics assessments or the UK Statistics Authority addressed appropriately.</p> <p>T2.4: Implement policies and procedures in line with Departmental/ Organisational action plans, to ensure NISRA fulfils its Data Protection obligations and conforms with GDPR by 25th May 2018.</p>	<p>T2a: Number of breaches of the Code of Practice.</p> <p>T2b: Number of breaches of the Data Protection Act.</p> <p>T2c: % statistical staff trained in new Code of Practice.</p>	<p>Achieved: There have been no breaches of the Data Protection Act, and three breaches of the Code of Practice in 2018/19 (release time, and pre-release breaches).</p> <p>All NISRA Statisticians have received mandatory training on the Code of Practice for Statistics, including new entrants. In total, 95% of NISRA Statisticians have attended a formal training course on the application of the Code.</p> <p>NISRA branches have addressed, or are currently addressing, any issues identified as a result of the National Statistics assessments or compliance checks.</p> <p>NISRA is compliant with the Code of Practice, GDPR, and other relevant legislation and regulation.</p>
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Quality

<p>Q1: High quality outputs/ publications²</p>	<p>Q1.1: Implement NISRA Quality Review and Assurance procedures for all NISRA official statistics outputs.</p> <p>Q1.2: Ensure robust quality assurance mechanisms are in place and quality assurance checks are documented, implemented and monitored</p>	<p>Q1a: Number of staff trained in quality assurance.</p> <p>Q1b: % of official statistics outputs with a documented quality assurance process.</p> <p>Q1c: % of official statistics outputs with a Background Quality Report (BQR) and Quality Assessment (QMHT³ or QAAD⁴) completed.</p> <p>Q1d: % of official statistics outputs based on admin data sources with a QAAD completed.</p>	<p>Achieved: NISRA is effective in producing high quality outputs, although 2.5% of publications (including National and Official Statistics) released in 2018/19, required a minor correction. Identification of these errors is also evidence of a robust Quality Assurance process.</p> <p>Branches have actively progressed documenting quality assurance processes (GSBPM, BQR, QMHT and / or QAAD), for example DfC, DfI and DoJ. Three quarters of NISRA outputs published in 2018/19 have documented quality assurance processes. In addition a further 16% of NISRA outputs published in 2018/ 19 are in the process of completing quality assurance processes.</p> <p>All staff are trained in the quality assurance aspects of the official statistics output.</p>
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² Quality has many dimensions including relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability, and coherence (European Statistical System Quality Framework).

³ Quality Methods and Harmonisation Tool.

⁴ Quality Assurance of Administrative Data Toolkit.

		Q1e: Number of Official Statistics publications that were corrected.	
Q2: NISRA has highly skilled, fulfilled and engaged staff	<p>Q2.1: Identify training needs of NISRA staff</p> <p>Q2.2: Align training provision with business needs and development of NISRA staff</p> <p>Q2.3: Develop resilient managers that can set challenging and stretching objectives for their staff</p> <p>Q2.4: Create an environment where NISRA staff can develop and reach their full potential</p>	<p>Q2a: % employee engagement index.</p> <p>Q2b: % NISRA staff reporting that their training and development needs have been met.</p> <p>Q2c: % NISRA line managers reporting staff have appropriate skills for future needs of their role.</p> <p>Q2d: % NISRA staff with PPAs and EYRs completed on time.</p>	<p>Substantially Achieved: NISRA continues to invest in training in a structured manner that reflects the needs identified in the annual Training Needs Analysis and staff development surveys. NISRA encourages career development through staff transfer, training and development through courses and on the job training.</p> <p>A NISRA Leadership and Management Development Programme has been agreed with CAL in March 2019. This will launch in May 2019.</p> <p>Employee engagement was recorded as 55% in the NISRA staff survey, compared to 51% in NICS. This overall result was influenced by factors beyond NISRA control such as NICS pay and conditions. Almost three quarters (73%) reported that their training and development needs have been met, and the majority of staff reported they have the skills they need to do their job effectively (87%).</p> <p>86.4% of NISRA 2018/19 Personal Performance Agreements were completed by the (90%) target date of 30 June 2018. 84.2% of NISRA 2018/19 End of Year Performance Reviews were completed by the (90%) target date of 31 May 2019.</p>
Governance			
G1: NISRA is well managed and optimises its resources	<p>G1.1: Resources (people, finances, time) are aligned against business priorities</p> <p>G1.2: Resources are managed in line with best practice</p> <p>G1.3: Accounting Officer's duties are discharged in line with the Managing Public Money NI (MPMNI) guidelines</p>	<p>G1a: No overspend and under spend within 2.5% of budget.</p> <p>G1b: % of staff reporting that NISRA is well managed.</p> <p>G1c: Staff Resourcing reviews and implementation to address issues of skills, people and job balance.</p>	<p>Achieved: NISRA seeks to operate within budget and current resource constraints. However, due to unanticipated and unprecedented high GRO receipts the Agency recorded a 3.4% underspend for 2018/19. The Department has not set a limit for percentage underspend against budget for 2018/19. The Annual reports and Stewardship Statements were completed to the agreed deadlines. The Accounting Officer's duties were discharged in line with the Managing Public Money NI (MPMNI) guidelines).</p> <p>NISRA Agency Board agree strategic deployment of staff and resources. NISRA was recognised as being well managed by over half of the respondents in the NISRA Staff Survey.</p>

		<p>G1d: Number of working days lost per staff year due to sick absence, appropriately benchmarked.</p> <p>G1e: Number of cross-branch working groups (e.g. task & finish groups) and cross-NISRA information sharing events (e.g. show and tell seminars)</p> <p>G1f: Annual reports and stewardship statements completed to agreed deadlines.</p>	<p>The YTD sickness absence figures for 2018/19 (9.9 Days per staff year lost) show an increase on the equivalent figures for 2017/18 (9.2 days per staff year lost).</p> <p>There are a number of resource reviews on-going to identify potential solutions to managing within the resources currently available. Branches have been endeavouring to align resources (people, finances, time) against business priorities.</p> <p>There have been a number of cross-NISRA events this year including the NISRA Conference, volunteering event, MacMillan Coffee morning, workshops on Data Science, GDPR and GSBPM.</p>
G2: NISRA manages risks effectively	<p>G2.1: NISRA risk register in place and actively monitored by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)</p> <p>G2.2: Branch risk registers and risk management strategies in place</p> <p>G2.3: Annual Process Risk Assessments completed and reviewed by Agency Board</p>	<p>G2a: Emergent risks entered into the appropriate risk register within 2 weeks of identification. Risk management strategy to be in place within 4 weeks where appropriate.</p> <p>G2b: Any broad areas of risk emerging from the Annual Process Risk Assessments, that require Agency level solutions, considered and addressed by Agency Board.</p>	<p>Achieved: Branches are actively monitoring and entering risks into their branch / divisional / departmental risk registers.</p> <p>Updates on the NISRA Risk Register are provided on a quarterly basis to the Audit and Risk Committee. Any issues arising throughout the year are reported to Agency Board on an exception basis.</p> <p>Annual NISRA Process Risk Assessments were completed in January 2019, and presented to Agency Board in February 2019.</p>

GRO Balanced Scorecard 2018/19

CUSTOMERS			
Outcome	Action(s)	Measure(s)	Comments
C1: DRO registration service and GRO Operations Team service delivered ⁵ .	C1.1: Provide advice to GRO & DRO staff. C1.2 Helpdesk logs maintained accurately and timely. C1.3 Maintenance of database of standard responses. C1.4 All District workloads reviewed by February 2019. C1.5 Compile NIROS training manuals for DRO & GRO Operations staff by December 2018. C1.6 Complete training sessions with DRO & GRO staff on updates to NIROS and reporting options by December 2018. C1.7 Review and update registration handbooks by 31 March 2019.	C1a: NIROS & GeNI Support services available Mon – Fri, 9.00am – 4.30pm. C1b: Outcome of workload review notified to each District Council.	Substantially achieved The team was under extreme pressure in 18/19 due to the unprecedented orders for certificates so resources were diverted to meet the public/customer needs. Actions: C1.5: Not started due to resources issues C1.6: Not started due to resources issues C1.7 Started but not completed due to increase in certificate production
PROCESSES			
Outcome	Action(s)	Measure(s)	Comments
P1: Accurate and timely GRO Operations service ⁶ .	P1.1: Production of certificates and amendments to records P1.2: Using Lean Six Sigma methodology review operations procedures. P1.3: Implement processes to ensure applications are handled correctly and to enable identification of errors. P1.4: Review postal system to ensure actions are taken to minimise delays in customer receiving certificates. P1.5: Develop and use the Management reports to identify areas of concern.	P1a: Casework applications processed within 15 working days. P1b: Counter Certificate applications processed within 3 working days. P1c: Online and postal applications processed within 5 working days. P1d: Priority certificate applications processed as appropriate - 30 mins counter & 1 day all other methods of application.	Substantially achieved The team was under extreme pressure in 18/19 due to the unprecedented orders for certificates. Targets times were increased to ensure accuracy with the increased demand.

⁵ Links to V1:NISRA meet customer needs

⁶ Links to Q1: High quality outputs/ publications

<p>P2: Records of Northern Ireland births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships and adoptions retained and managed⁷.</p>	<p>P2.1: Develop, test and implement NIROS and GeNI releases as required.</p> <p>P2.2: Liaise with Enterprise Shared Services (ESS) in order to establish GRO's position in relation to the continuance/replacement of the BT/support services contract for NIROS.</p> <p>P2.3: Upload electronic registrations records in line with legislative guidelines.</p> <p>P2.4: Review and monitor registration records maintained in offsite storage. Discussion with PRONI and current service provider regarding standards required for storing registers and completing the self-assessment for archive accreditation.</p>	<p>P2a: Releases are invisible to the staff and public.</p> <p>P2b: Clear direction received from ESS on action required by GRO regarding NIROS support contract.</p> <p>P2c: Availability of the records on the NI Direct site.</p> <p>P2d: Paper records held securely in the right conditions.</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
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PEOPLE

Outcome	Action(s)	Measure(s)	Comments
<p>PE1: GRO has highly skilled, fulfilled and engaged staff, working within the NICS framework/guidance⁸.</p>	<p>PE1.1: Adhere to Performance Management System.</p> <p>PE1.2: Implement the NICS handbook including work life balance and to manage staff absenteeism. Work with NICS HR and monitor the effect on staff and business needs.</p> <p>PE1.3: Provide training to enable staff to cover all posts within sections at their grade.</p> <p>PE1.4: Training of staff on specialist areas of GRO work.</p> <p>PE1.5: Develop CPS and Casework handbooks by 31 March 2019.</p>	<p>PE1a: All EYRs completed by April 2018 and all new PPAs by end May 2018.</p> <p>PE1b: All GRO staff trained to an acceptable level in order to obtain the business objectives.</p>	<p>Substantially achieved</p> <p>The team was under extreme pressure in 18/19 due to the unprecedented orders for certificates, staffing levels reduced due to promotions and resources were diverted to meet the public/customer needs.</p> <p>Actions: PE1.5: not started due to resource issues</p>

⁷ Links to T2: Fully compliant with Code of Practice, GDPR, and other relevant legislation/ regulations

⁸ Links to Q2: NISRA has highly skilled, fulfilled and engaged staff

Governance			
Outcome	Action(s)	Measure(s)	Comments
G1: Fully compliant with legislation/ regulations, including GDPR, leaving the EU and Registration legislation ⁹ .	<p>G.1: Freedom of Information (FOI) requests completed within timescale.</p> <p>G1.2: Implement policies and procedures in line with Departmental/Organisation action plans, to ensure NISRA conforms with GDPR by 25th May 2018</p> <p>G1.3: All staff completed mandatory departmental/ organisational training (e.g. GDPR, health & safety, fire safety, diversity training).</p> <p>Complete review of registration legislation against EU legislation.</p> <p>G1.4: Obtain DSO agreement to legislation changes, including Judicial Reviews, lay and commence regulations.</p> <p>G1.5: Establish costs for the provision of GRO and DRO services for 18/19 and establish relevant Fees for services provided.</p> <p>G1.6: Discuss with DoF Finance workload exercise methods and collection of recoupment from Councils.</p>	<p>G1a: FOIs completed within timescale.</p> <p>G1b: Number of GDPR breaches.</p> <p>G1c: staff completed mandatory training.</p> <p>G1d: Fully compliant legislation.</p> <p>G1e: Regulations in place to facilitate access by Government Departments to NIROS records.</p> <p>G1f: Review of service costs and fees in place.</p>	Achieved.
G2: GRO and DRO are appropriately resourced (people and funding) and managed ¹⁰ .	<p>G2.1: Resources (people, finances and time) are aligned against business priorities</p> <p>G2.2: Resources are managed in line with best practice</p>	<p>G2a: No overspend and underspend within 2.5% of reduced budget.</p> <p>G2b: Number of posts vacant for more than three months.</p> <p>G2c: GRO performance against budget allocation during 2018/19 financial year.</p>	Substantially achieved. Due to the unprecedented requests for certificates in 18/19 GRO was unable to meet its financial commitment at G2a.

⁹ Links to T2: Fully compliant with Code of Practice, GDPR and other relevant legislation/ regulations

¹⁰ Links to G1: NISRA is well managed and optimises its resources

<p>G3: Appropriate information assurance integrated within the branch in line with NISRA and DoF guidelines¹¹.</p>	<p>G3.1: Continuation of cross-departmental liaison for new and existing applications for DDRI data and process information requests within DDRI specified deadlines.</p> <p>G3.2: Develop, review, update & renew as required DSAs in respect of all organisations that GRO shares data with.</p> <p>G3.3: Maintenance of GRO Information Asset Register.</p>	<p>G3a: Secure sharing of GRO registration data with government departments and other organisations.</p> <p>G3b: Data Sharing Agreements (DSA) are in place with data sharing partners.</p> <p>G3c: GRO Information Asset Register is updated</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
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¹¹ Links to T2: Fully compliant with Code of Practice, GDPR and other relevant legislation/ regulations

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

NISRA is an information based business. The service it delivers to customers, whether internal or external, depends on how well it can use information to aid decision-making and analysis, and thereby meet its business objectives. This information needs to be recorded and stored in a shared area that allows easy access, and published in an appropriate manner.

NISRA is committed to increasing the amount of data released in open and re-usable formats and thereby continues to publish high value datasets on the OpenDataNI portal.

Personal Data

NISRA is fully committed to complying with the Data Protection Act 2018 and has processes in place to ensure that all employees, contractors, agents, consultants and other parties who have access to personal information held by or on behalf of NISRA are fully aware of and abide by their responsibilities under the Act.

To address the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), effective from 25th May 2018, an Action Plan was put in place to ensure NISRA's compliance with the new legislative requirements, which included:

- NISRA having in place the Information Asset Owner (IAO) / Support Information Manager (SIM) structure in each branch, with a Business Area Information Manager (BAIM) in post for DoF NISRA;
- Building accountability and privacy by design into all aspects of the business planning process;
- Communicating and raising awareness of GDPR with all staff through e-mails, DoF Intranet updates, Departmental / Team briefs etc.;
- IAO's and relevant staff attending a GDPR Awareness Session delivered by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO);
- Robust policies which support GDPR requirements are in place in line with DoF;
- Guidance issued to all DoF NISRA staff i.e. Data Protection Impact Assessments / Data Breach Management Plan / Data Sharing Agreements / Contracts etc.;
- GDPR on-line training completed by all staff including Agency staff;
- Ensuring all holdings of personal data are compliant with GDPR requirements, identifying the lawful basis for processing;
- NISRA branches having updated the DoF on-line Information Asset Register, with approval by respective IAO's;
- Branch procedures for handling personal information held in all branches
- Privacy Notices for NISRA and Civil Registration Services produced and published on internet, supported by Privacy Information Statements as required;
- Procedures are in place to detect, report and investigate data breaches;
- NISRA Retention and Disposal Schedule has been reviewed and updated, to ensure NISRA complies with the requirements of the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 and the Disposal of Documents Order (S.R. & O. 1925 No.167);
- NISRA Fileplan classifications have been reviewed within NICS Records Management system;

- Correct safeguards are in place to protect personal data held on Information Technology (IT) systems;
- Correct safeguards are in place in all cases where personal data is shared with other organisations, with completion of Data Sharing Agreements, with details logged in the Department's Data Sharing Agreement register; and
- Data Protection induction documentation has been provided to all new staff, including Agency staff, with records of completion retained.

There were no reportable data breaches between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019.

NISRA's DoF branches have contributed to the core Department maintaining Level 3 compliance of the Information Assurance Maturity Model. NISRA's IAOs provide annual input to the Senior Information Risk Owner on the security and use of their information asset and provide Information Assurance Stewardship Statements twice yearly, which are recorded in the NISRA Governance Statement.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

NISRA's net expenditure for the three most recent financial years is outlined below:

	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000	2016-17 £000
Revenue from contracts with customers	(17,267)	(16,469)	(15,660)
Total operating income	(17,267)	(16,469)	(15,660)
Staff costs	22,412	20,437	19,210
Purchase of goods and services	2,610	2,646	2,483
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,527	1,309	1,306
Provision expense	–	45	–
Other operating expenditure	5,780	5,055	4,496
Total operating expenditure	32,329	29,492	27,495
Net expenditure for the year	15,062	13,023	11,835

The net resource expenditure for the year excluding non-cash expenditure was £10.9m against the closing non cash budget position of £11.2m. The underspend was due to a number of factors including lower salary costs from those forecast due to difficulties in filling all vacancies throughout the year and higher than expected (of the order of £250k) certificate income in GRO.

The Agency employed an average of 541 staff during the financial year and total staff costs were £22,412k (2017-18 £20,437k). The increase is due to filling of vacancies and the 2021 Census contributing to average staff numbers increasing from 474 to 541 over the year.

Other operating expenditure (excluding non-cash items, see note 3 in the Financial Statement section) has increased to £3,169k (2017-18 £2,431k) mainly as costs increase in preparation for Census 2021.

The Agency has been allocated an indicative opening budget of £14.1m for 2019-20.

LONG TERM EXPENDITURE TREND

	2018-19 Outturn £000	2017-18 Outturn £000	2016-17 Outturn £000
Total Resource DEL	30,467	29,492	27,495
<i>Of which:</i>			
Staff costs	22,412	20,437	19,210
Purchase of goods and services	2,610	2,646	2,483
Other operating expenditure	5,780	5,055	4,496
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,527	1,309	1,306
 Total Resource AME	 -	 45	 -
<i>Of which:</i>			
Provision expense	-	45	-

In 2018-19 the increase is mainly due to increased spend on preparatory work for Census 2021 and subsequent increase in whole time equivalent staff numbers.

Census funding will continue to increase until completion of the Census. Additional funding of £2.8M has been made available for Census 2021 in 2019-20.

AUDITORS

The financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. He is head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO); he and his staff are wholly independent of the Agency and he reports his findings to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The audit of the financial statements for 2018-19 resulted in a notional audit fee of £19,400 (2017-18: £10,000) and is included in the operating expenditure in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

During 2018-19 the Agency did not purchase any non-audit services from its auditor.

EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There have been no significant events since the year-end that would affect the accounts.

PAYMENT TO SUPPLIERS

The Agency's policy is to pay bills from all suppliers within 10 working days of receipt of the goods or performance of the services following receipt of a properly rendered invoice or in accordance with contractual conditions, whichever is the earlier.

During the financial year, the Agency achieved an average of 88% (2017-18: 81%, restated) of invoices paid to suppliers within 10 working days. The Agency achieved an average of 96% (2017-18: 93%) of invoices paid within 30 calendar days.

During this period NISRA did not make any interest payments under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest Act 1988).

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

NISRA, through its occupancy of Colby House, continues to follow DoF guidance as set out in the Department's Office Estate Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Plan 2017/18 – 2019-20 which is aimed at improving energy efficiency across the Northern Ireland Civil Service Office Estate.

Additionally, at Colby House NISRA continues to implement a Waste Management regime which focuses on paper as the dominant waste stream. A number of measures have been implemented including: discouraging routine printing of e-mails; promoting full usage of NICS Records Management system; encouraging double sided and monochrome photocopying / printing; and using recycled paper. Receptacles have been made available to facilitate recycling of paper, cans, plastic containers, paper towels, envelopes, magazines and empty printer cartridges. Dry recyclable materials are kept separate from standard domestic waste for collection and recycling by the Department's Waste Recycling service provider.

This Performance Report is approved and signed



Siobhan Carey

Accounting Officer, Registrar General and Chief Executive
26 June 2019

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

OVERVIEW

The Accountability Report comprises the following:

Corporate Governance Report

The purpose of the corporate governance report is to explain the composition and organisation of the Northern Ireland Statistics Research and Agency's (NISRA) governance structures and how they support the achievement of NISRA's objectives.

Remuneration and Staff Report

The remuneration and staff report sets out NISRA's remuneration policy for directors, reports on how that policy has been implemented and sets out the amounts awarded to directors. In addition the report provides details on pension arrangements, staff costs, staff numbers and staff policies.

Assembly Accountability and Audit Report

The Assembly Accountability and Audit report brings together the key Assembly accountability documents within the annual report and accounts. It includes sections on the Regularity of Expenditure (losses and special payments), the Assembly Accountability Disclosure (fees and charges), Remote Contingent Liabilities and the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Introduction

NISRA presents its Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2019.

Management

Ministerial responsibility for the Agency for the 2018-19 financial year rested with the Department of Finance (DoF). During this reporting period Ms Siobhan Carey was the Registrar General and Chief Executive [and thereby Accounting Officer] and was responsible to the Minister (in the absence of a Minister in 2018-19 the Accounting Officer was responsible to the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Finance) for the management of the Agency's performance, operations and finances.

Agency Board

The Chief Executive was assisted in the management of the Agency by the NISRA Agency Board comprised of three Grade 5 Statisticians, ten Senior Principal Statisticians, one Senior Principal and two Administrative Grade 7s. The Board advises the Chief Executive on strategy and major issues of Agency policy and is responsible for ensuring the effective operation and performance of NISRA.

The Agency Board members during the year were as follows:

Ms S Carey	Chief Executive and Registrar General
Dr T Power	Director of Analysis
Dr D Marshall	Director of Census
Mr B Green	Director of Sources
Dr S Donnelly	Head of Criminal Justice and Secondments
Dr K Sweeney	Head of Central Survey Unit
Dr J Gillan	Head of EU Exit and Statistics of Trade
Dr E Mooney	Head of Information and Analysis Directorate DoH
Mrs M Crawford	Head of Analytical Services DfC
Mr A Fitzpatrick	Head of Census
Mr M Mayock	Head of Information and Registration Unit BSO
Mrs N Fisher	Head of Analytical Services Unit DfE
Mr G Colgan	Head of Economic and Labour Market Statistics (from July 2018)
Ms D Lyness	Head of Demographic Statistics
Mr D Patterson	Head of Business Development (from November 2018)
Mrs K Walker	Deputy Registrar General
Mrs J Hyvart	Head of Corporate Services & Facilities Management

A Senior Leadership Group (SLG), comprised of Agency Board and Grade 7 Statistical / Administrative Heads of Branches, supports and advises the Chief Executive in the formulation,

implementation and review of Agency policies. The SLG is in turn supported by a series of working groups that deal with cross-Agency issues remitted to them by the Board.

Register of Interests

A Register of Interests is maintained by the Agency and no significant interests are currently held by board members which may conflict with their management responsibilities.

Pension Liabilities

The treatment of pension costs and liabilities is disclosed in the Remuneration and Staff Report and in the Accounting Policies note in the financial statements (Note 1.9).

Personal Data

The Agency remains fully committed to complying with the Data Protection Act 1998. DoF NISRA acts in accordance with a number of DoF policies to ensure the safe handling of personal information - the DoF Data Protection Policy, the DoF Information Security Policy, DoF Records and Information Management Policy, DoF Access Information Policy and DoF Data Breach Management Plan

No reportable data breaches were identified between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 within DoF NISRA.

Reporting of Complaints

NISRA is committed to providing a high quality service and, as such, welcomes all feedback, both positive and negative, which is used to assist with the improvement of our services.

The Agency is responsible for keeping a register of complaints received and ensuring that these are investigated in line with DoF Complaints Procedure and that appropriate responses are issued to the complainant. The Agency will also evaluate 'lessons learned' from individual cases to see if any improvements can be embedded into existing operating procedures.

Complaints can be made in the first instance to the Head of Branch occasioning the complaint. Internal unresolved complaints can then be made to the NISRA Chief Executive. Continued dissatisfaction can be brought to the Office of the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

In 2018-19 NISRA dealt with 15 complaints.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under Section 11(2) of the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, the DoF have directed NISRA to prepare a statement of Accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The Accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the Agency's state of affairs, its income and expenditure, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the Accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the DoF, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgments and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The DoF has appointed the Chief Executive of NISRA as the Accounting Officer for the Agency. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which an Accounting Officer is answerable, for the keeping of proper records and for safeguarding NISRA's assets, are set out in Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland published by the DoF.

So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Agency's auditors are unaware.

The Accounting Officer has taken all the steps necessary to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Agency's auditors are aware of that information.

The Accounting Office can confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable and that she takes personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

NISRA is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance. It was established on 1 April 1996 under the Government's Next Steps Initiative. The Agency incorporates the General Register Office (GRO) for NI.

The Agency is governed under a model with the following responsibilities. The Accounting Officer is responsible to the Minister of DoF (*In the absence of a Minister in 2018-19 the Accounting Officer was responsible to the Permanent Secretary of the DoF) for the Agency's performance and operates in accordance with the NISRA Framework Document and NISRA Business Plan:

- The Accounting Officer has responsibilities for the overall day-to-day leadership and management of the Agency, making regular reports to the Minister* on performance and progress, and
- The Agency Board is responsible for reviewing the strategic direction of the Agency, monitoring performance at the corporate level and ensuring that adequate governance controls are in place. The Agency Board comprises three Grade 5 Statisticians, ten Senior Principal Statisticians, one Senior Principal and two Administrative Grade 7s.

The Agency Board members are listed in the Directors' Report on page 27. The Agency Board met 10 times during the year and was attended as follows:

	April 2018	May 2018	June 2018	July 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019
Siobhan Carey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tracy Power	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x
David Marshall	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kevin Sweeney	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
James Gillan ¹	✓	✓								
Sandy Fitzpatrick	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brian Green	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eugene Mooney ²	✓	✓	x	x	✓					
Stephen Donnelly	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓
Michelle Crawford	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jacque Hyvart	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gerard Colgan ⁵	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x

Kathie Walker	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Martin Mayock	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nicola Fisher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Deborah Lyness ³					x	x	✓	✓	✓	x
David Patterson ⁴							✓	✓	✓	✓

The Governance Statement, which has been agreed by the Agency Board, sets out how these responsibilities have been discharged throughout the year to 31 March 2019.

^{1,2} – Unavailable

^{3,4} – Not applicable

⁵ – Temporary capacity

Context

The overall aim of the Department is ‘to help the Executive secure the most appropriate and effective use of resources and services for the benefit of the community’ within a Programme for Government (PfG) focused on achieving outcomes of societal wellbeing.

The work we do makes a significant and positive difference to the everyday lives of all the citizens of NI. We provide and support public services, by:

- providing Government departments and agencies with statistics and research services which help inform the policy, process and delivery of their objectives and actions;
- continuing to address the needs of a wide range of users, producing high quality statistics and research, ensuring the quality of those statistics and disseminating information to its users efficiently and effectively;
- providing official information on NI’s population and socio-economic conditions. The statistics produced by the Agency not only inform the policy process within Government, but also inform academic research and contribute to debate in the wider community; and by
- providing the GRO which offers a civil registration service to the public and produces summary statistics relating to life events.

Financial Management

NISRA regularly reviews actual income and expenditure against budget to form the basis of collective Agency Board decisions regarding the allocation and use of resource to ensure that the NISRA financial management target of avoiding overspend is met.

Risk and Control Framework

Risk management within NISRA continues to be an integral part of our business planning process. This includes identification of risks, assignment of ownership, presentation of the risks, mitigation, management, evaluation and review.

The Corporate Risk Register is an integral part of the NISRA Risk Management policy and approach. The Risk Register records the status of each high level risk and the actions being taken to address that risk.

The Risk Register is regularly reviewed and monitored by the Agency Board and NISRA's Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The ARC is chaired by one of its three independent members and functions in accordance with best practice contained in the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) 2018 issued under DAO (DoF) 5/14 in March 2014.

The Agency Board ensures the risk management and internal controls are regularly reviewed and reported on in the following manner:

- all business areas use pre-determined weightings and a standardised approach to risk assessment;
- key risks identified at Agency level are documented on a Risk Register and are reviewed on a formal basis by the Agency Board at least three times during the course of a year;
- NISRA ARC formally reviews risks and controls on a regular basis and assesses the continued appropriateness of the respective risks and the means through which they are managed - the need to add, delete, delegate or promote risks is also determined in order to reflect the current business environment;
- Heads of Branches complete stewardship statements at the end of each financial year;
- the Chief Executive provides the NISRA and DoF ARC's with a mid-year and end-year Stewardship Statement; and
- the Agency adheres to and promotes the department's 'Whistle Blowing' policy.

The main areas of concern for NISRA are not achieving the Departmental targets noted on page 10 of this report and the targets outlined in the NISRA Balanced Scorecard on pages 11 to 19.

Two Departmental targets for 2018/19 have been achieved and have been validated by DoF Internal Audit. The Agency performance against Balanced Scorecard targets are published on pages 11 to 19 of this report.

Agency Performance

The NISRA Business Plan 2018-19 sets out the targets and objectives for the year against which performance is reported and monitored. Progress regularly reported to Agency Board provides details of actual results against target (Ministerial and Chief Executive) and a narrative on the actions taken to deliver the expected outcomes.

Accounting Officer

The Department has designated the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer (AO) for NISRA. The responsibilities of an AO include, ensuring propriety and regularity of the public finances for which an Accounting Officer is answerable, the keeping of proper records and for safeguarding NISRA assets as set out in the 'Accounting Officer's Memorandum' issued by DoF and published in 'Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland'.

The AO has responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of Agency policies, aims and objectives set by the Minister of Finance, whilst safeguarding the public funds and Agency's assets for which they are responsible in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them by Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland (MPMNI).

At the beginning of the financial year, the AO delegated responsibility to each of the Heads of Branches for management of budgets within their respective business areas. The AO receives assurance from each Director on risk management, governance, financial management and delegation within their respective areas of responsibility in the format of Stewardship Statements. Key issues emanating from these statements are reflected in this Governance Statement.

The AO chairs the NISRA Agency Board which met on 10 occasions in 2018-19. The Agency Board operates in compliance with 'Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013' and directs the strategic management of NISRA by reviewing its strategic options and setting its corporate direction. The Agency Board considered the information received to be fit for purpose.

The Agency maintains a Register of Significant Interests held by Board members which may conflict with their management responsibilities. Board members are requested annually to make such a declaration. No such interests have been declared by members for the Agency Board for the year ended 31 March 2019.

In response to a request from the Departmental Permanent Secretary, the Agency has obtained declarations of interest from all DoF based Agency staff at DP to Grade 7. No interests have been declared which the Agency consider to represent a potential conflict of interest.

The Agency Board also considered and reviewed NISRA risks as detailed in the NISRA Corporate Risk Register.

NISRA’s ARC, which is chaired by an independent Non-Executive Member of the DoF board, supports the AO and the Agency Board on issues of risk, control and governance. In addition, the ARC provides assurance and advice to the AO on the adequacy of both internal and external audit coverage. The ARC met on four occasions in 2018-19, attended by its Non-Executive Members as follows:

	18 May 2018	20 June 2018	24 October 2018	26 February 2019
Tom Taylor	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Smyth	✓	✓	✓	✓
Liz Ensor	✓	✓	x	✓

In the absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly no ministerial directions were received by NISRA during 2018-19.

Level of Assurance

The AO has responsibility for ensuring that a robust risk management system is in place, so that risks faced by NISRA are identified and managed accordingly. The Accounting Officer is also responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review is informed by the work of DoF’s Internal Audit Team and Departmental Board members who have responsibility for ensuring that the controls and actions recommended are implemented.

The Department’s Internal Audit Team reported on the work of the Agency during 2018-19. These reports provide an objective and widespread assessment of the systems of internal control in operation across the Agency, together with prioritised recommendations to strengthen controls and implement further improvements.

Internal Audit completed a programme of audits during 2018/19 and in his Annual Report the Head of Internal Audit provided NISRA with a satisfactory audit opinion.

Further details on the Internal Audit output for the year are included in the following section, ‘Significant Internal Control Problems’.

The Agency maintains Information Risk Registers in each Business Area which are linked into the Departmental Risk Register and provide the Departmental Board and the Senior Information Risk Owner with an oversight of corporate and operational information risks.

NISRA has maintained ‘Level 3 compliance’ within the HMG Information Assurance Maturity Model and Assessment Framework and Security Policy Framework.

NISRA is committed to complying with the principles of the UKSAs Code of Practice and its statistical output is monitored and assessed by the UK Statistics Authority. During the year a number of NISRA’s National Statistics and some of its Official Statistics products were assessed for compliance with the Code of Practice, and all of those where an outcome was declared were successfully accredited / reaccredited as National Statistics. No outputs have failed to achieve National Statistics designation.

Fraud Prevention and Assurance

NISRA takes a zero tolerance approach to fraud and will report all instances of fraud to DoF and the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) as well as to the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI). The Agency complies with the DoF Anti-Fraud Policy that sets out staff responsibilities with regard to the prevention of fraud.

Whistle blowing arrangements are in place and can be used to raise concerns about alleged impropriety, wrongdoing, corruption, fraud or malpractice.

The Agency has not recorded any instances of suspected or actual fraud, nor any cases of whistle blowing during the year.

Significant Internal Control Problems

Internal Audit

DoF Internal Audit undertook the following audits during 2018-19:

- Validation exercise of the Departmental targets for 2017-18 – All targets achieved and accurately reported,
- Review risk management, control and governance – CSU – IA 44/17 – Satisfactory opinion,
- Risk Based Internal Audit of Procurement – IA 51/17 – Limited opinion,
- Follow-up review of IA 51/17 Audit of Procurement – All recommendations fully implemented.
- Risk Based Systems Audit of GRO – IA 07/18 – Satisfactory opinion.
- Audit of Economics and Labour Market Statistics (ELMSB) - field work completed but the draft report has not issued yet.

The report on Procurement (IA 51/17) was issued in May 2018 and made twelve Priority 2 and six Priority 3 recommendations. The issues identified included the need for consistent application of Departmental procurement policy throughout the Agency. Internal Audit issued a follow-up review in January 2019 which concluded that all recommendations have been fully implemented by the Agency.

Consultancy Expenditure

During the year NISRA expended £30k on external consultancy without the necessary business case approval, therefore this expenditure is considered irregular.

Review of Effectiveness

As AO, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the Governance procedures within the Agency. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the Agency who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their 'Report to those charged with Governance' and other reports. I have

been advised on the implications, of the result of this review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Senior Management Group and the ARC and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

I consider the information presented to the Agency Board in the Corporate Performance report to be of a high quality, accurate and relevant to the internal control systems within the Agency and that the Agency has complied with the Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013 in all respects.

Conclusion

Taking into account all of the arrangements set out in this Governance Statement, NISRA has an effective governance structure in place and has satisfactory systems of internal control which have operated effectively throughout 2018-19.

REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT

Remuneration Policy

The pay remit for the Northern Ireland (NI) public sector, including senior civil servants (SCS), is normally approved by the Minister of Finance. In the absence of an Executive, the Department of Finance's Permanent Secretary has set the 2018-19 NI public sector pay policy in line with the overarching HMT parameters and in a manner consistent with the approach taken by the previous Finance Minister in 2016-17. The pay award for SCS staff for 2018-19 has not yet been finalised.

The pay of SCS is based on a system of pay scales for each SCS grade containing a number of pay points from minima to maxima, allowing progression towards the maxima based on performance.

Service Contracts

The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Recruitment Code published by the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland specifies the circumstances when appointments may be made otherwise.

Unless otherwise stated, the officials covered by this report hold appointments that are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland can be found at www.nicscommissioners.org

Salary and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the senior management of the Agency (Grade 6 and above).

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements (Audited)

Officials	2018-19			2017-18		
	Salary £000	Pension Benefits * to nearest £1,000)	Total £000	Salary £000	Pension Benefits* to nearest £1,000)	Total £000
Siobhan Carey	96-100	9	106-110	90-95	27#	120-125
Gerard Colgan	56-60	24	80-85	N/A	N/A	N/A
Michelle Crawford	60-65	20	80-85	60-65	19	80-85
Stephen Donnelly	60-65	1	66-70	60-65	-44	60-65
Nicola Fisher	56-60	38	96-100	10-15 (FYE 56-60)#	10	20-25 (FYE 66- 70)#
Alexander Fitzpatrick	60-65	14	76-80	65-70	13	80-85
James Gillan	56-60	23	80-85	65-70	11	80-85
Brian Green	66-70	35	100-105	60-65	-1	60-65
Deborah Lyness From 1 September 2018	30-35 (FYE 56-60)	22	56-60 (FYE 80- 85)	N/A	N/A	N/A
David Marshall	70-75	4	76-80	70-75	16#	90-95#
Martin Mayock	56-60	32	90-95	10-15 (FYE 56-60)#	8	20-25 (FYE 66- 70)#
Eugene Mooney	60-65	7	70-75	60-65	1	65-70
David Patterson From 26 November 2018	15-20 (FYE 56-60)	60	76-80 (FYE 116- 120)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tracy Power	60-65	-16	46-50	70-75	3	75-80
Kevin Sweeney	50-55 (FYE 60-65)	10	60-65 (FYE 70- 75)	50-55 (FYE 60-65)	10	60-65 (FYE 70- 75)

None of the Agency Board members received any benefits in kind in 2018-19 or 2017-18.

(FYE – Full Year Equivalent)

** The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation and any increase or decrease due to a transfer of pension rights.*

restated based on updated information.

Pension benefit accrued and Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) will increase from one year to the next by virtue of an extra year's service and any pay rise during the year. Where there is little or no pay rise, the increase in pension due to extra service may not be sufficient to offset the inflation increase. In real terms the pension value can therefore reduce, hence the negative values.

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any severance or ex gratia payments.

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved on 26 January 2017. An Executive was not formed following the 2 March 2017 election, and from this date Ministers ceased to hold office. As a consequence, no Minister has been in place in the department during 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument.

Bonuses

The Agency did not make any bonus payments to any individuals during the year.

Fair pay disclosure (Audited)

The Agency is required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in the Agency and the median remuneration of the Agency's workforce.

The median remuneration of the Agency's staff is the total remuneration of the staff members lying in the middle of the linear distribution of the total staff, excluding the highest paid director. The median total is based on the annualised full-time equivalent remuneration of staff directly employed by the Agency as at March 2019.

The comparative banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in the Agency is as shown in (i) below. In 2018-19, this was 3.1 times the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £31,760.

	2018-19	2017-18
i. Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Remuneration	£95,000-100,000	£90,000-95,000
ii. Median Total Remuneration	£31,760	£31,446
iii. Remuneration ratio	3.1	2.9

The remuneration of the highest paid director in 2018-19 showed an increase on prior year of 2.9%. The median remuneration has increased by 1.0% to £31,760 from £31,446 in the two years concerned. There is a 4.4% increase in the remuneration ratio between 2018-19 and 2017-18.

Remuneration ranged from £17,000 to £100,000 (2017-18: £17,000 to £95,000).

In 2018-19 and 2017-18, no employees included in this disclosure received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director.

Pension Entitlements (Audited)

Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/19 (or date of leaving if earlier) and related lump sum £000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000	CETV at 31/03/19 £000	CETV at 31/03/18 £000	Real increase in CETV £000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account (nearest £100)
Siobhan Carey	35-40 plus lump sum of 105 – 110	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	851	792	10	N/a
Gerard Colgan	15-20 plus lump sum of 30–35	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	242	201	12	N/a
Michelle Crawford	20-25 plus a lump sum of 40-45	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	312	263	7	N/a
Stephen Donnelly	20-25 plus a lump sum of 140-145	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	583	562	1	N/a
Nicola Fisher	15-20 plus a lump sum of 35-40	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	255	201	21	N/a
Alexander Fitzpatrick	25-30 plus a lump sum of 55-60	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	455	405	4	N/a
James Gillan	35-40 plus a lump sum of 50-55	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	775	718	23	N/a
Brian Green	20 - 25 plus a lump sum of 70 - 75	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 5-7.5	545	467	33	N/a
Deborah Lyness	15-20 plus a lump sum of 30-35	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	234	199	12	N/a
David Marshall	20–25 plus a lump sum of 50 – 55	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	419	378	-6	N/a
Martin Mayock	20–25 plus a lump sum of 50–55	0–2.5 plus a lump sum of 0–2.5	418	356	20	N/a
Eugene Mooney	20–25 plus a lump sum of 65–70	0–2.5 plus a lump sum of 0–2.5	522	473	7	N/a
David Patterson	20–25 plus a lump sum of 60–65	2.5–5 plus a lump sum of 7.5-10	469	407	57	N/a

Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/19 (or date of leaving if earlier) and related lump sum £000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000	CETV at 31/03/19 £000	CETV at 31/03/18 £000	Real increase in CETV £000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account (nearest £100)
Tracy Power	25-30 plus a lump sum of 70-75	0 plus a lump sum of 0	538	506	-23	-
Kevin Sweeney	0-5 plus a lump sum of 10-15	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	85	72	9	-

Pension benefit accrued and CETV will increase from one year to the next by virtue of an extra year's service and any pay rise during the year. Where there is little or no pay rise, the increase in pension due to extra service may not be sufficient to offset the inflation increase. In real terms the pension value can therefore reduce, hence the negative values.

* where additional information becomes available CETV's figures can change from the previously reported figures

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes

Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension schemes which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP).

The alpha pension scheme was introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of existing members of the classic, premium, classic plus and Nuvos pension arrangements also moved to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age did not move to alpha and those who were within 13.5 years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age. Alpha is a 'Career Average Revalued Earnings' (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate is 2.32%.

New entrants joining can choose between membership of alpha or joining a 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account).

New entrants joining on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a partnership pension account. Nuvos is also a CARE arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The current rate is 2.3%.

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may be in one of three statutory based ‘final salary’ defined benefit arrangements (classic, premium and classic plus). From April 2011, pensions payable under classic, premium, and classic plus are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining the partnership pension account.

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2018 was 2.4% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2019.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 are as follows:

Scheme Year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings		Contribution rates – All members
(Salary Bands)		
From	To	From 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020
£0.00	£23,500.99	4.60%
£23,501.00	£54,500.99	5.45%
£54,501.00	£150,000.99	7.35%
£150,001.00 and above		8.05%

Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years’ pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic plus is essentially a variation of premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic.

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer’s basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Scheme Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**. The normal scheme pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/civil-service-pensions-ni>.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 and do not take account of any actual or potential benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period. However, the real increase calculation uses common actuarial factors at the start and end of the period so that it disregards the effect of any changes in factors and focuses only on the increase that is funded by the employer.

Compensation for loss of office

The Agency did not make any payments for loss of office during 2018-19.

STAFF REPORT

Number of senior civil service staff (or equivalent) by band (Audited)

The number of staff serving as senior civil servants (or equivalent) as at 31 March 2019 is as follows:

Pay Band*	2018-19	2017-18
£60,000 - £64,999	1	-
£70,000 - £74,999	2	2
£90,000 - £94,999	1	1

* Based on full year equivalent.

Staff costs

Staff costs comprise:

	2018-19		2017-18	
	Permanently employed staff £000	Others £000	Total £000	Total £000
Wages and salaries	14,951	2,690	17,641	16,290
Social security costs	1,476	-	1,476	1,236
Other pension costs	3,295	-	3,295	2,911
Sub total	19,722	2,690	22,412	20,437
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(10,113)	-	(10,113)	(9,518)
Total net costs	9,609	2,690	12,299	10,919

£639k (2017-18: £198k) of salary costs have been charged to capital.

Pension arrangements

The Northern Ireland Civil Service main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but Department of Finance is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is responsible for carrying out scheme valuations. The Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following the scheme valuation. The 2012 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in February 2015. The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2019.

For 2018-19, employers' contributions of £3,357,703 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2017-18 £3,010,991) at one of three rates in the range 20.8% to 26.3% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

Work was completed on the 2016 valuation, based on the position as at 31 March 2016. The outcome of this scheme valuation informed employer contribution rates for 2019-20. Employer contribution rates payable will range from 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. This change is primarily due to the reduction in the SCAPE discount rate (as announced at Budget 2018) to 2.4% pa above CPI. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2019-20 to be paid when the member retires, and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £8,783 (2017-18 £10,701) were paid to one or more of the panel of two appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2017-18, 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay.

The partnership pension account offers the member the opportunity of having a 'free' pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the member does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match member contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings.

Employer contributions of £396, 0.5% (2017-18 £442, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS Pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £Nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were £Nil (2017-18: £Nil).

Ill-health retirement

There were no ill-health retirement during the year (2017-18: Nil). The total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £Nil (2017-18: £Nil).

Average number of persons employed

The average number of whole-time equivalent persons employed during the year was as follows.

Number	Permanently employed staff	2018-19		2017-18
		Others	Total	Total
NISRA Board	17	-	17	12
NISRA Employees	392	-	392	389
Other	-	132	132	99 **
Staff engaged on capital projects*	-	-	-	-
Total	409	132	541	500

* The Agency does not employ any staff exclusively on capital projects.

** Restated to include Agency staff.

Staff composition

The gender analysis of permanent Agency staff as at 31 March 2019 was as follows.

Comparative data for the previous year is shown in brackets.

	Number of female staff		Number of male staff		Total number of staff	
Senior Civil Service	2	(2)	2	(1)	4	(3)
Agency Board	5	(4)	8	(7)	13	(9)
Other NISRA employees	246	(214)	212	(186)	458	(402)
TOTAL	253	(220)	222	(194)	475	(414)

Sickness absence

The average number of days lost per staff member (on a staff year equivalent basis¹²) during 2018-19 was 9.9 days (2017-18: 9.2 days). The Agency is actively working to decrease its sickness absence and has a nominated 'Well Champion' who organises seminars and other events to highlight health and wellness issues.

Staff Policies

Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations

In carrying out its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland, the Agency, as part of the Department of Finance (DoF), promotes equality of opportunity between certain specified groups, and promotes good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group, in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In addition, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Agency has due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and to encourage the participation of people with a disability in public life. The Agency is committed to fulfilling its obligations and has mainstreamed these duties across all business areas.

The Agency as part of DoF has outlined how it will fulfil its Section 75 obligations in its Equality Scheme and it submits Annual Progress reports to the Equality Commission in relation to this and on the progress made against the DoF's Disability Action Plan. DoF's Revised Section 75 and Disability Action Plans for 2018-23 were finalised following the responses to the public consultation and published in October 2018.

¹² One staff year equivalent (sye) equates to one member of staff having been available for the entire period being analysed.

Employment, training and advancement of disabled persons

The Agency as part of the wider Northern Ireland Civil Service applies the recruitment principles as set out in the Recruitment Code of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland, appointing candidates based on merit through fair and open competition. Recruitment and selection training, which includes raising awareness of unconscious bias, is offered to all chairs of NICS recruitment panels. The NICS also has mandatory unconscious bias training for all staff.

To maintain and promote a diverse and inclusive workforce, the NICS has policies in place to support any alterations to the working environment required by disabled persons.

The NICS has an active network of Diversity Champions and has appointed one of its' Deputy Secretaries as the NICS Diversity Lead for Disability. The NICS has an active Disability Working Group and is a lead partner with Employers for Disability Northern Ireland. Through this collaboration the NICS is working towards creating a truly inclusive workplace where all staff feel valued. The NICS promotes a number of schemes for disabled staff, including a successful Work Experience Scheme for People with Disabilities.

Other employee matters

The Agency is part of DoF and therefore follows the policies of DoF and NICS.

The 2018-21 [NICS People Strategy](#) sets out the shared view of the people priorities across the NICS under the following themes:

- A well-led NICS
- High performing NICS
- Outcomes-focused NICS
- An inclusive NICS in which diversity is truly valued – a great place to work

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The [NICS People Strategy 2018-21](#) places diversity and inclusion at its centre and includes a range of actions that will help accelerate the NICS' ambition to be a service that reflects the society we serve.

The NICS continues to carry out its statutory obligations under fair employment legislation, including the annual return to the Equality Commission for NI. The NICS publishes a wide range of [NICS human resource statistics](#).

Health and safety

DoF has a Health and Safety Policy which complies with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation (NI) 2000, and all other relevant legislation. The Agency, as part of DoF, regards it as an integral part of its duties and objectives to ensure, so far as is

reasonable practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work and of all other persons who may be affected by the Agency's undertakings.

Employee Consultation and Trade Union Relationships

DoF is responsible for the NICS Industrial Relations Policy. The centralised human resource function, NICSHR, consults on HR policy with all recognised Trade Unions and local departmental arrangements are in place to enable consultation on matters specific to a department or individual business area.

Human capital management

(i) Learning & Development

The NICS recognises the importance of having skilled and engaged employees and continues to invest in learning and development.

The NICS Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) is responsible for development and delivery of all generic staff training. It offers a variety of learning delivery channels to enable flexible access to learning, blending different learning solutions into coherent learning pathways that are aligned to both corporate need and the NICS Competency Framework.

The NICS offers a wide range of career development opportunities through mentoring, secondment and interchange opportunities, elective transfers, temporary promotion, job rotation and job shadowing.

Talent Management is a key theme of the NICS People Strategy and work is underway to develop a more corporate approach to managing talent across the NICS.

(ii) Pay policy

Under the Civil Service (NI) Order 1999, the Department of Finance is responsible for the pay arrangements of NICS civil servants (apart from those agencies, non-ministerial government departments and other bodies with an agreed pay delegation). The pay award system aims to:

- a. be a system which will help to recruit, retain and motivate staff to perform efficiently the duties required of them;
- b. encourage staff to improve their individual performance by providing a direct and regular link between satisfactory performance and pay;
- c. ensure equity of treatment in respect of pay in accordance with legal requirements and the equal opportunities policy of the NICS;
- d. secure the confidence of staff that their pay will be determined fairly;
- e. secure the confidence of the public and their representatives in the system for determining the pay of the staff; and
- f. enable the Government to reconcile its responsibilities for the control of public expenditure with its responsibilities as an employer.

Expenditure on consultancy

The Agency incurred £93k spend on consultancy during 2018-19 (2017-18: £Nil) of which £30k is irregular as NISRA did not receive the necessary business case approval.

Off-payroll engagements

The Agency did not have any off-payroll engagements during 2018-19.

Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages

There were no early retirements or compulsory redundancies in 2018-19 (2017-18: £Nil).

Ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in this section.

OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT

Other Assembly Accountability Disclosures

Regularity of Expenditure

i. Losses and special payments

Losses statement

The Agency did not make any individual losses in excess of £250,000.

Special payments

The Agency did not make any special payments during the year. (2017-18: £Nil).

ii. Fees and Charges

General Register Office

In setting fees, the General Register Office (GRO) aims to recover 100% of costs directly attributable to estimated volumes of certificates produced and marriage and civil partnership notices and ceremonies. GRO is legislatively required to provide a birth, death, marriage and civil partnership registration service and no costs are charged for this service. In 2018-19 GRO estimated that it would recover £3,340k (2017-18: £3,030k) from the supply of certificates and services. The actual cost recovery for the year was £3,762k (2017-18: £3,576k).

Central Survey Unit

In 2018-19 the Central Survey Unit (CSU) estimated that it would recover £1,855k (2017-18: £1,600k) from carrying out surveys on behalf of government departments and non-departmental public bodies. The actual cost recovery for the year was £1,873k (2017-18: £1,585k). The information provided in the table below is for fees and charges purposes, not for IFRS 8.

			2018-19	2017-18
	Income	Full cost	Surplus/ (deficit)	Surplus/ (deficit)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Registration Services	3,762	(3,116)	646	85
Statistics and Research work carried out by CSU	1,873	(1,950)	(77)	(60)
Recovery of staff costs for staff outside DoF	10,113	(10,143)	(30)	(149)
Other services	1,519	(1,730)	(211)	196
	17,267	(16,939)	328	72

The above figures represent services where the full cost of the service is in excess of £1m. For Registration Services, the Statutory Provision is as noted in Article 7 to the Births and Deaths Registration (NI) Order 1976. For other services, NISRA's financial objective was to recover the total cost of those activities for which DoF funding was not provided. This objective was met.

iii. Remote Contingent Liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities requiring disclosure under assembly reporting requirements (in addition to within the meaning of IAS 37) for liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability.

This Accountability Report is approved and signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siobhan Carey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Siobhan Carey

Accounting Officer, Registrar General and Chief Executive
26 June 2019

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for the year ended 31 March 2019 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes including significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's affairs as at 31 March 2019 and of its net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Department of Finance directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis of opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate. My staff and I are independent of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Other Information

The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information included in the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in the report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Finance directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001.

My objectives are to obtain evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate. In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Matters on which I report by exception

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



KJ Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

27 June 2019

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2019

	Note	2018-19	2017-18
		£000	£000
Revenue from contracts with customers	4	<u>(17,267)</u>	<u>(16,469)</u>
Total operating income		<u>(17,267)</u>	<u>(16,469)</u>
Staff costs	3	22,412	20,437
Purchase of goods and services	3	2,610	2,646
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	1,527	1,309
Provision expense	3	-	45
Other operating expenditure	3	<u>5,780</u>	<u>5,055</u>
Total operating expenditure		<u>32,329</u>	<u>29,492</u>
Net operating expenditure		15,062	13,023
Net expenditure for the year		15,062	13,023
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	5	(3)	(7)
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of intangible assets	6	(90)	(156)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		<u>14,969</u>	<u>12,860</u>

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2019

	Note	2019 £000	2018 £000
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	925	802
Intangible assets	6	3,585	4,009
Total non-current assets		4,510	4,811
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	9	4,172	5,385
Cash and cash equivalents	8	305	259
Total current assets		4,477	5,644
Total assets		8,987	10,455
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	(2,803)	(2,555)
Provisions	11	(45)	(45)
Total current liabilities		(2,848)	(2,600)
Total assets less current liabilities		6,139	7,855
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves			
General fund		5,738	7,404
Revaluation reserve		401	451
Total equity		6,139	7,855



Siobhan Carey

Accounting Officer, Registrar General and Chief Executive
26 June 2019

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2019

	Note	2018-19	2017-18
		£000	£000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating cost	SoCNE	(15,062)	(13,023)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
(Profit)/loss on disposal of non-current assets	3	–	1
Notional charges	3	2,611	2,623
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	1,527	1,309
Provision expense	3	–	45
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	9	1,213	149
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	10	248	398
<i>less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</i>	10	249	(230)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(9,214)	(8,728)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(226)	(222)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	(1,156)	(291)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(1,382)	(513)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net Assembly Funding - drawn down		10,642	9,288
Net financing		10,642	9,288
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		46	47
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	8	259	212
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	8	305	259

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2019

	Note	General Fund	Revaluation Reserve	Taxpayers' Equity
		£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2017		8,419	385	8,804
Net Assembly Funding		9,288	–	9,288
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(13,023)	163	(12,860)
Auditor's remuneration	3	10	–	10
Non-cash notional charges	3	2,613	–	2,613
Transfer between reserves		97	(97)	–
Balance at 31 March 2018		7,404	451	7,855
Net Assembly Funding		10,642	–	10,642
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(15,062)	93	(14,969)
Auditor's remuneration	3	19	–	19
Non-cash notional charges	3	2,592	–	2,592
Transfer between reserves		143	(143)	–
Balance at 31 March 2019		5,738	401	6,139

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2018-19 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance. The accounting policies contained in FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy that has been judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Agency for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Agency for 2018-19 are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the Accounts.

1.1 Accounting Convention

The Accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets.

1.2 Property, plant and equipment

The Agency's property, plant and equipment includes computer equipment, office machinery, fixtures and fittings which are capitalised at their cost of acquisition and installation and are revalued annually using appropriate indices compiled by the Office for National Statistics. The threshold for capitalisation, as an individual or grouped fixed asset, remains at £500 for the Agency for computer equipment, with all other equipment at £1,000.

Where appropriate, surpluses and deficits on revaluation are taken to the revaluation reserve and reductions in the value of non-current assets arising from a clear consumption of economic benefit should be charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

The Agency does not own the property it occupies, but incurs a notional accommodation charge which is included in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

1.3 Intangible assets

The Agency's intangible assets include computer software, internally and externally developed software, licences, bespoke systems, databases and a website, which are capitalised at their cost of acquisition and installation. Intangible assets are revalued annually using appropriate indices compiled by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

Notes to the Accounts

The threshold for capitalisation, as an individual or grouped fixed asset, remains at £500 for the Agency.

1.4 Depreciation and Amortisation

Depreciation/amortisation is provided on a straight line basis in order to write-off the valuation, less estimated residual value, of non-current assets over their estimated useful lives. The estimated useful lives, which are reviewed regularly, are:

Information technology	3-12 years
Telecoms equipment	5-10 years
Plant and machinery	3-30 years
Furniture and fittings	up to 10 years
Intangible assets (IT)	3-12 years

Depreciation/amortisation, on assets under construction commences when the assets are ready for their intended use.

1.5 Operating Income

Operating income is income which relates directly to the operating activities of the Agency. It principally comprises fees and charges for services provided on a full cost basis to other public bodies and citizens. The Agency's income relates directly to three main activities.

- Statistical Research Activities;
- Central Survey Unit - charges for statistics and research work carried out for all of the NICS and other public bodies; and
- Registration Services.

In 2018-19 the Agency adopted IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. The Agency has Service Level Agreements with a wide range of public sector organisations. These contracts enable the Agency to impose a charge on the customer and the requirement for the customer undertaking the relevant activities to be liable to pay the charge. The Service Level Agreement provides the enforceability on both parties. The income from these activities is effectively revenue from contracts with customers for services provided to the NI Departments, Public Bodies and UK Departments and Public Bodies and external customers. Note 4 shows the income by customers for each of the three activities.

The effect of the adoption of IFRS 15 has not required significant changes in the judgement on the recognition and recovery of these revenue, nor has it resulted in any differences between the previous carrying amount and the carrying amount at the beginning of the annual reporting period that includes the date of initial application in the opening general fund within taxpayers' equity.

Notes to the Accounts

The timing and amount of the levy due from the customer is set out in the Service Level Agreement. The customer is invoiced and the revenue recognised on completion of the services. It is probable that the Agency will collect the consideration to which it is entitled. Any amounts due at the year end but not yet invoiced to the customer are included as accrued income in the financial statements.

Services that are statutory in nature and provided to members of the public are usually paid for in advance of the service being provided or when the service is provided.

The income generated in pursuit of these activities or as part of managing the Agency's affairs is Operating Income in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Operating income is stated net of VAT.

1.6 Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is defined as any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

A financial instrument is recognised when, and only when, the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. A previously recognised financial asset is derecognised when, and only when, either the contractual rights to the cash flows from that asset expire, or the entity transfers the asset such that the transfer qualified for de-recognition. A financial liability is derecognised when, and only when, it is extinguished.

The Agency has financial instruments in the form of trade receivables and payables and cash and cash equivalents. In accordance with IAS 39 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement trade receivables, cash and other receivables are classified as 'loans and receivables'. Loans and receivables are initially measured at fair value and are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Agency assesses at each reporting date whether there is any objective evidence that a financial asset or group of financial assets classified as loans and receivables is impaired. Based on historic experience receivables that are past due beyond 361 days are generally not recoverable.

The Agency measures the amount of the loss as the difference between the carrying amount of the asset and the present value of estimated future cash flows from the asset discounted at the effective interest rate of the instrument at initial recognition.

Impairment losses are assessed individually for financial assets that are individually significant and individually or collectively for assets that are not individually significant. In making collective assessment of impairment, financial assets are grouped into portfolios on the basis of similar risk characteristics. Future cash flows from these portfolios are estimated on the basis of the contractual cash flows and historical loss experience for assets with similar risk characteristics.

Notes to the Accounts

Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and the carrying amount of the financial asset or group of financial assets reduced by establishing an allowance for impairment losses. If in a subsequent period the amount of the impairment loss reduces and the reduction can be ascribed to an event after the impairment was recognised, the previously recognised loss is reversed by adjusting the allowance.

When a financial asset is deemed unrecoverable the amount of the asset is reduced directly and the impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent that a provision was not previously recognised.

Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1.7 Value Added Tax

All income and expenditure is stated exclusive of VAT which is recoverable on a departmental basis.

1.8 Programme Expenditure

All of NISRA expenditure is classified as Programme expenditure.

1.9 Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the NICS Pension Schemes. The defined benefit scheme is unfunded and is non-contributory except in respect of dependants' benefits. The Agency recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the NICS Pension Schemes of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the NICS Pension Schemes. In respect of the defined contribution scheme, the Agency recognises the contributions payable for the year.

1.10 Contingent Liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities disclosed in accordance with IAS 37, the Agency discloses for Assembly reporting and accountability purposes certain statutory and non-statutory contingent liabilities where the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit is remote, but which have been reported to the Assembly in accordance with the requirements of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

Where the time value of money is material, contingent liabilities which are required to be disclosed under IAS 37 are stated at discounted amounts and the amount reported to the Assembly separately noted. Contingent liabilities that are not required to be disclosed by IAS 37 are stated at the amounts reported to the Assembly.

Notes to the Accounts

1.11 Employee Benefits

Under IAS19 Employee Benefits legislation, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken leave as at the year end. The cost of untaken leave has been determined using the data from leave records.

1.12 Provisions

The Agency provides for legal or constructive obligations, which are of uncertain timing or amount at the reporting date on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation. These relate to the settlement of equal pay claims, other potential legal actions and provision for future liabilities in respect of contracts. Where the effect of the time value of money is significant the estimated risk-adjusted cash flows are discounted using the real rate set by HM Treasury (currently 3.5 per cent).

1.13 Critical accounting estimates and key judgements

As a result of the uncertainties inherent in all business activities, many items in financial statements cannot be measured with precision but can only be estimated. Where estimates have been required in order to prepare these financial statements in conformity with FreM, management have used judgements based on the latest available, reliable information. Management continually review estimates to take account of any changes in the circumstances on which the estimate was based or as a result of new information or more experience.

1.14 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards and FReM – issued and effective in 2018-19 for the first time

NISRA has considered these standards and considers that they are not relevant or material to its operations.

1.15 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective

In addition, certain new standards, interpretations and amendments to existing standards have been published that are mandatory for NISRA's accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2019 or later periods, but which NISRA has not adopted early. Other than as outlined below, NISRA considers that these standards are not relevant or material to its operations.

Notes to the Accounts

Standard	IFRS 16 <i>Leases</i> IFRS 16 <i>Leases</i> (Replaces IAS 17 <i>Leases</i> and related interpretations)
Effective date	January 2019 (EU Endorsed 31 October 2017). FreM application is revised to 2020-21 from 2019-20.
Summary	<p>The IASB issued IFRS 16 in January 2016 with an effective date for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019. Early application is permitted for those entities applying IFRS 15.</p> <p>IFRS 16 represents a significant change in lessee accounting by largely removing the distinction between operating and finance leases and introducing a single lessee accounting model. A lessee is required to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying asset is of low value on the Statement of Financial Position. There are corresponding changes to the disclosure requirements to show the effect that leases have on the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the lessee.</p> <p>The lessor accounting model is significantly unchanged from IAS 17.</p> <p>The lessor accounting model is generally unchanged from IAS 17 but with the introduction and impacts of IFRS 9 <i>Financial Instruments</i>, enhanced disclosure requirements and that a sub-lessor now determines whether a lease is finance or operating based on the right of use asset it subleases.</p>
Comments	<p>NISRA is preparing for implementation in 2020-21.</p> <p>NISRA will consider the implications on the disclosures to the financial statements of the standards on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What operating leases commitments are currently held by the entity and whether these are material to the financial statements? • The nature of the assets being leased and whether they may be classed as short term or low value leases? • Whether there are sufficient existing disclosures in the financial statements regarding lease commitments where these are considered material.

1.16 Financial Reporting – Future Developments

NISRA has considered the accounting initiatives identified by HM Treasury for which the Standards are under development and considers these changes are not relevant or material to its operations.

Notes to the Accounts

2. Statement of Operating Costs by Operating Segments

2018-19

	Note	General Register Office	Central Survey Unit	Other	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross expenditure	3	4,692	3,948	23,689	32,329
Income	4	(3,762)	(1,873)	(11,632)	(17,267)
Net expenditure		930	2,075	12,057	15,062
Total assets		2,837	1,194	4,956	8,987
Total liabilities		(816)	(100)	(1,932)	(2,848)
Net assets		2,021	1,094	3,024	6,139

2017-18

	Note	General Register Office	Central Survey Unit	Other	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross expenditure	3	4,840	3,738	20,914	29,492
Income	4	(3,576)	(1,585)	(11,308)	(16,469)
Net expenditure		1,264	2,153	9,606	13,023
Total assets		3,586	647	6,222	10,455
Total liabilities		(677)	(108)	(1,815)	(2,600)
Net assets		2,909	539	4,407	7,855

General Register Office (GRO)

Consists of the unit that manages all public births, deaths and marriage records and the District Councils that manage this locally.

Central Survey Unit (CSU)

Consists of the survey unit that would be the largest income generating unit in NISRA that carries out work for all of the NICS and other public bodies.

Other

Covers all the other statistical research activities and the outposted and seconded staff.

Notes to the Accounts

3. Programme Costs

	2018-19	2017-18
	£000	£000
Staff costs		
Wages and salaries	17,642	16,290
Social security costs	1,476	1,236
Other pension costs	3,294	2,911
Total staff costs	22,412	20,437
Purchase of goods and services		
Registrar charges	2,271	2,339
Survey costs	325	294
Finance costs	13	11
Exchange losses/(gains)	1	2
Total purchase of goods and services	2,610	2,646
Other operating expenditure		
Accounting and information technology	1,226	1,034
Accommodation, maintenance and utilities	1,590	1,092
Personnel and training	119	134
Travel, subsistence and hospitality	121	90
Printing, stationery and advertising	99	78
Legal costs	3	–
Other costs	11	3
	3,169	2,431
Non-cash items:		
(Profit)/loss on disposal of non-current assets	–	1
Auditors' remuneration and expenses	19	10
Notional charges	–	45
Intra-departmental notional charges		
Accommodation	703	688
IT Assist	730	546
Finance	700	611
HR	275	586
Corporate Services	184	137
	2,611	2,624
Total other operating expenditure	5,780	5,055
Depreciation and impairment charges		
Depreciation	141	103
Amortisation	1,386	1,206
	1,527	1,309
Provision expense		
Provided in year	–	45
	–	45
Total	32,329	29,492

Notes to the Accounts

4. Income

Revenue from Contracts with Customers

The Agency charges for a variety of services provided to customers. The largest component is the recovery of salary costs for statistical staff on loan to departments and agencies outside DoF.

				2018-19	2017-18
	Registration Services (GRO) £000	Central Survey Unit (CSU) £000	Statistical Research Activities £000	Total £000	Total £000
Income from NI Departments	29	1,228	9,465	10,722	10,152
Income from other NI Public Bodies	11	16	1,324	1,351	1,327
Income from other UK departments and Public Bodies	134	629	247	1,010	749
Income from external customers	3,588	0	596	4,184	4,241
	3,762	1,873	11,632	17,267	16,469

The income is reported based on the operating segments.

Notes to the Accounts

5. Property, plant and equipment

2018-19

	Information technology	Plant and machinery	Furniture and fittings	Payments on account and assets under construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2018	667	22	41	423	1,153
Additions	52	–	27	182	261
Disposals	–	–	–	–	–
Indexation	6	–	1	–	7
At 31 March 2019	725	22	69	605	1,421
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2018	314	13	24	–	351
Charged in year	131	1	9	–	141
Disposals	–	–	–	–	–
Indexation	4	–	–	–	4
At 31 March 2019	449	14	33	–	496
Carrying amount at 31 March 2019	276	8	36	605	925
Carrying amount at 31 March 2018	353	9	17	423	802
Asset financing:					
Owned	276	8	36	605	925
Carrying amount at 31 March 2019	276	8	36	605	925

The Agency does not hold any Land and Buildings. Information Technology and Plant & Machinery were revalued using indices supplied by the Office for National Statistics. Furniture and fittings were not revalued as considered immaterial.

Notes to the Accounts

5. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

2017-18

	Information Technology	Plant and Machinery	Furniture and Fittings	Assets under Construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2017	933	52	41	348	1,374
Additions	162	5	2	75	244
Disposals	(442)	(35)	(2)	–	(479)
Indexation	14	–	–	–	14
At 31 March 2017	667	22	41	423	1,153
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2017	657	44	18	–	719
Charged in year	92	3	8	–	103
Disposals	(442)	(34)	(2)	–	(478)
Indexation	7	–	–	–	7
At 31 March 2018	314	13	24	–	351
Carrying amount at 31 March 2018	353	9	17	423	802
Carrying amount at 31 March 2017	276	8	23	348	655
Asset financing:					
Owned	353	9	17	423	802
Carrying amount at 31 March 2018	353	9	17	423	802

Notes to the Accounts

6. Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise bespoke systems and software licenses (see note 1.3).

2018-19

	Software licences	Internally developed software and website	Externally developed software	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2018	202	3,749	5,094	9,045
Additions	–	784	88	872
Disposals	–	–	–	–
Indexation	4	116	100	220
At 31 March 2019	206	4,649	5,282	10,137
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2018	127	1,863	3,046	5,036
Charged in year	36	425	925	1,386
Disposals	–	–	–	–
Indexation	3	59	68	130
At 31 March 2019	166	2,347	4,039	6,552
Carrying amount at 31 March 2019	40	2,302	1,243	3,585
Carrying amount at 31 March 2018	75	1,886	2,048	4,009
Asset financing:				
Owned	40	2,303	1,243	3,586
Carrying amount at 31 March 2019	40	2,303	1,243	3,586

Notes to the Accounts

6. Intangible assets (continued)

2017-18

	Licences	Internally Developed Software and Website	Externally Developed Software	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2017	256	3,267	4,798	8,321
Additions	11	388	100	499
Disposals	(72)	(51)	(1)	(124)
Indexation	7	145	197	349
At 31 March 2018	202	3,749	5,094	9,045
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2017	157	1,533	2,071	3,761
Charged in year	37	311	858	1,206
Disposals	(72)	(51)	(1)	(124)
Indexation	5	70	118	193
At 31 March 2018	127	1,863	3,046	5,036
Carrying amount at 31 March 2018	75	1,886	2,048	4,009
Carrying amount at 31 March 2017	99	1,734	2,727	4,560
Asset financing:				
Owned	75	1,886	2,048	4,009
Carrying value at 31 March 2018	75	1,886	2,048	4,009

Notes to the Accounts

7. Impairments

	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000
Taken through the revaluation reserve		
Property, plant and equipment	(3)	(7)
Intangible assets	(90)	(156)
	<u>(93)</u>	<u>(163)</u>
Total impairment charge for the year	<u>(93)</u>	<u>(163)</u>

8. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000
Balance at 1 April	259	212
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	46	47
Balance at 31 March	<u>305</u>	<u>259</u>
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	<u>305</u>	<u>259</u>

9. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	722	2,190
Other receivables	9	6
Prepayments and accrued income	3,225	3,122
VAT recoverable	216	67
	<u>4,172</u>	<u>5,385</u>

There are no amounts falling due after more than one year

Notes to the Accounts

10. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade payables	247	20
Accruals	2,556	2,535
	<u>2,803</u>	<u>2,555</u>

Accruals above include amounts relating to purchase of property, plant and equipment of £109,285 (2017-18 £73,905) and intangible assets of £36,391 (2017-18 £319,987).

There are no amounts falling due after more than one year.

11. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2018-19			2017-18
	Early departure costs £000	Other £000	Total £000	Total £000
Balance at 1 April	–	45	45	–
Provided in year	–	–	–	45
Balance at 31 March	<u>–</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>45</u>

Analysis of expected timing of cash

	2018-19			2017-18
	Early departure costs £000	Other £000	Total £000	Total £000
Not later than one year	–	45	45	45
Balance at 31 March	<u>–</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>45</u>

Provisions closing balance 2018-19 concern legal costs to be incurred in relation to ongoing judicial reviews within the General Register Office.

Notes to the Accounts

12. Capital commitments

There was no capital commitments at 31 March 2019 not otherwise included in these accounts.

13. Commitment under leases

Operating leases

Total future minimum lease payments under operating leases are given in the table below for each of the following periods:

	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000
Obligations under operating leases for the following periods comprise:		
Office equipment:		
Not later than one year	3	2
Later than one year and not later than five years	3	2
Later than five years	2	-
Total	8	4

14. Other Financial Commitments

The Agency has entered into non-cancellable contracts (which are not leases or PFI and other service concession arrangement contracts), for the NIROS support contract (GRO), IBSS Support (ELMSB) and for use of an encrypted link with the Office for National Statistics and provision of data from the Business Services Organisation (Census Office). The payments to which the Agency is committed are as follows.

	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000
Not later than one year	4,060	3,818
Later than one year and not later than five years	15,888	15,769
Later than five years	2,741	90
Total	22,689	19,677

Notes to the Accounts

15. Financial Instruments

IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures requires disclosure that enables evaluation of the significance of financial instruments for the Agency's financial position and performance, the nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments to which the Agency is exposed during the period and at the reporting date, and how the Agency manages those risks.

As a result of the nature of its activities and the way in which NISRA is financed, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non- public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with the Agency's expected purchase and usage requirements and the Agency is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset and financial liability are disclosed in Note 1 "Accounting Policies".

Categories of financial instruments

The Agency's financial assets are classified as loans and receivables and comprise trade receivables and other current assets (Note 9) and cash and cash equivalents (Note 8). The Agency's financial liabilities comprise trade payables and other current liabilities (Note 10). These financial assets and liabilities are held at cost which approximates to fair value because of their short maturities.

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash and demand deposits with banks. As at 31 March 2019, the carrying value of cash at bank approximates its fair value due to its short term nature.

16. Contingent Liabilities

On 17th June 2019 the Court of Appeal ruled in respect of Northern Ireland Industrial Tribunal's November 2018 decision on cases taken against the PSNI on backdated Holiday Pay. It is recognised that the final detail remains to be determined by the Industrial Tribunal who will be guided by the Court of Appeal's Judgement.

This is an extremely rare and complex case with a significant number of issues that still need to be resolved, including further legal advice with regards to the Judgement; the scope; timescales; process of appeals and engagement with Trade Unions. The legal issues arising from this judgment and the implications for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and wider public sector will need further consideration. The Department of Finance (DoF) is leading a piece of work across the NICS, reviewing the implications for each of the major staffing groups across the public sector.

Notes to the Accounts

Until there is further clarity when this work has concluded, and based on the inherent uncertainties in the final decision that will be made, a reliable estimate cannot be provided at this stage. The impact for NISRA is likely to be immaterial.

17. Related party transactions

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Finance.

The Department of Finance is regarded as a related party with which the Agency has had various material transactions during the year.

The Agency has also had various material transactions with all the other Northern Ireland government departments and other central government bodies. Other central government bodies have included:

- Electoral Office for NI
- Health and Social Care Board
- Health and Safety Executive for NI
- Home Office
- HSC Business Services Organisation
- Ilex-Urban Regeneration Company
- Invest NI
- Libraries NI
- National Centre for Social Research
- National Crime Agency
- NI Courts and Tribunals Service
- NI Policing Board
- Office for National Statistics
- Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Public Health Agency
- Youth Justice Agency Northern Ireland

During the year none of the board members, members of the key management staff or other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with the Agency.

18. Events after the Reporting Date

There were no events occurring after the reporting date that required disclosure.

Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised the issue of these financial statements on 27 June 2019.

GLOSSARY

Acronym	Details
AME	Annually Managed Expenditure
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
BAIM	Business Area Information Manager
BSO	Business Services Organisation
CARE	Career Average Revalued Earnings
CETV	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CSU	Central Survey Unit
DAO	Dear Accounting Officer Letter
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit (in accounts)
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DoF	Department of Finance
DoF NISRA	NISRA branches located within DoF
DoH	Department of Health
EU	European Union
FReM	Financial Reporting Manual
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GRO	General Register Office
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
IA	Information Assurance
IAO	Information Asset Owner
IAS	International Accounting Standard
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
IT	Information Technology
MPMNI	Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service

Acronym	Details
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NISRA DoF	NISRA branches located within DoF
NISRAnet	NISRA's intranet site
ONS	Office for National Statistics
ODP	Outcome Development Plan
PfG	Programme for Government
PRONI	Public Records of Northern Ireland
RAG	Red Amber Green Status (Risk Management)
SCS	Senior Civil Service
SIM	Support Information Manager
SLG	Senior Leadership Group
SRO	Senior Responsible Owner
TAP	Technical Assessment Panel
TEO	The Executive Office
UK	United Kingdom
UKSA	United Kingdom Statistics Authority
VAT	Value Added Tax
VES	Voluntary Exit Scheme