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Arms-Length Bodies of the Executive Office

1 Introduction

This paper summarises functional and financial aspects of the following arms-length bodies under the responsibility of the Executive Office:

- The Community Relations Council
- The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- The Commission for Victims and Survivors
- The Victims and Survivor Service

The paper briefly explains the role and function of each body and outlines costs associated with each¹, indicating administration and programme costs.

¹ 2016 accounts are only available for the Equality Commission, the other three being analysed are from 2015.

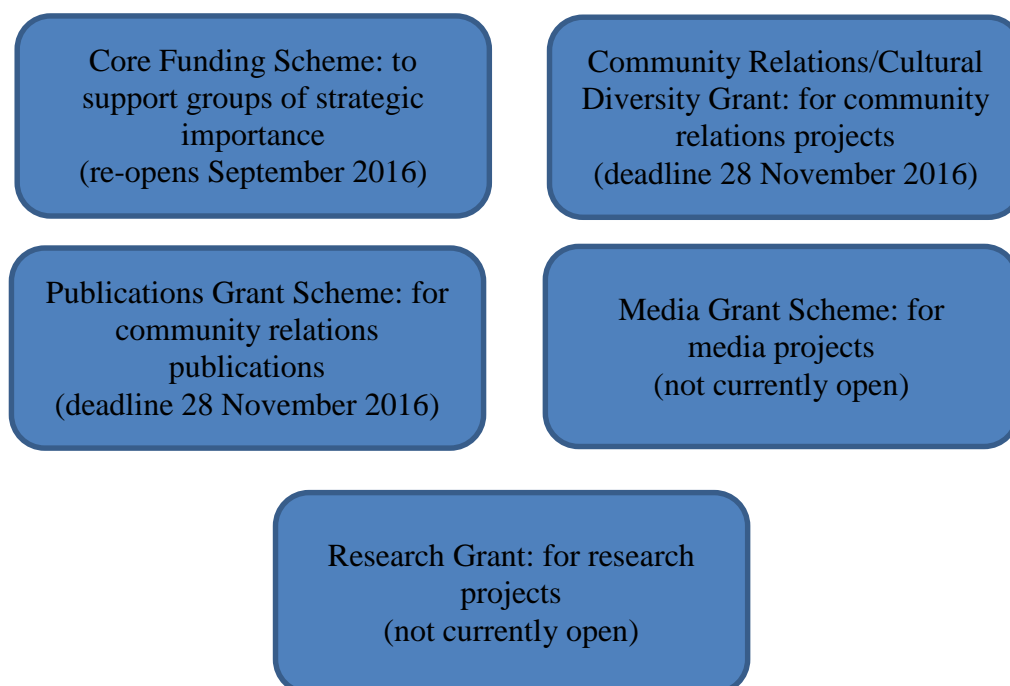
2 The Community Relations Council

The Community Relations Council (CRC) was established in 1990 to promote better community relations between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland and to promote recognition of cultural diversity. The strategic aim of the Council is to: *promote a peaceful and fair society based on reconciliation and mutual trust*².

The organisation seeks to achieve this by:

- Providing support (finance, advice, information) for local groups and organisations
- Developing opportunities for cross-community understanding
- Increasing public awareness of community relations work
- Encouraging constructive debate throughout Northern Ireland

The CRC administers a number of funds to support community relations activities. These are set out below³.



The CRC has also pursued programmes to further the aims of the organisation, such as providing and disseminating information, promoting cultural diversity and policy development. Specific projects have also been undertaken in the past with external funding⁴.

² 'About us', CRC website, accessed 30 June 2016: <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/about-us/>.

³ 'Funding schemes', CRC website, accessed 30 June 2016: <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/funding-schemes/>.

⁴ 'Programmes', CRC website, accessed 30 June 2016: <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/programmes/>.

The main source of funding is the Executive Office (previously the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister), however other streams of financing have also been accessed. For example, in 2013-14 the CRC received grants of £3,936,746, of which £503,708 was from other sources, the remainder coming from OFMdFM, although no such income was received in 2014-15⁵.

Grants received from OFMdFM over the past four years have been as follows⁶:

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
£9,146,000	£3,433,000	£2,389,000	£2,997,000

The decline in income from OFMdFM between 2012-13 and 2013-14 is due to the transfer of the role of funding for victims and survivors from the CRC to the Victims and Survivors service (see section 5). As with other publicly funded bodies, there have also been year on year cuts over recent years.

Average staffing levels 2014-15 were 23 whole time equivalents, compared with 33 in 2013-14. Staffing costs are given in the table below⁷:

	2015	2014
The costs associated with their employment were:	£	£
Salaries and wages	685,701	1,084,453
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(31,300)	(17,350)
Social security costs	38,215	58,670
Agency staff costs	34,911	20,516
Current service cost	154,000	244,000
Past service cost (incl.curtailments)	10,000	(107,000)
	-----	-----
	891,527	1,283,289
	=====	=====

Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2015 is divided between 'direct charitable expenditure' and 'other expenditure', as shown below⁸:

⁵ CRC (2015), *Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015*, Belfast: CRC, p.83: <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CRC-Annual-Report-4.pdf>.

⁶ From OFMdFM annual reports and accounts 2012-13 to 2015-16: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/financial-information>.

⁷ CRC (2015), *Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015*, Belfast: CRC, p.84.

⁸ Derived from CRC (2015), *Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015*, Belfast: CRC, p.74.

Direct Charitable Expenditure	
Grants Payable	£1,956,428
Support Costs	£1,097,536
	£3,053,964
Other Expenditure	
Administration and Management	£212,101
Total Resources Expended	£3,266,065

Support costs for direct charitable expenditure are itemised as follows⁹:

	Total Funds 2015 £	Total Funds 2014 £
Support costs continuing operations:		
Salaries and wages	748,260	1,112,814
Interest on net defined benefit liability	21,000	28,000
Programme costs	94,590	177,982
Staff travel and subsistence	11,499	19,580
Advertising and public relations	6,671	10,881
Postage and stationery	14,452	12,631
Light, heat and telephone	23,235	24,797
Rent, rates and insurance	97,358	138,841
Repairs and maintenance	13,503	14,825
Depreciation	33,037	36,352
Disposal of assets	-	1,660
Professional fees	8,112	10,585
Sundry expenses	4,275	7,865
HR costs	2,160	2,922
Chairperson fee	19,384	19,509
	----- 1,097,536 -----	----- 1,619,244 -----

Within this table, 'programme costs' were £94,590 in 2015, which also received the greatest proportion of reduction in spending from the previous year.

The CRC moved from its own premises to Equality House in March 2016¹⁰. The Together: Building a United Community strategy included a commitment to create a new 'Equality and Good Relations Commission', which would *incorporate the existing Equality Commission and the policy and advisory work of the Community Relations*

⁹ CRC (2015), Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015, Belfast: CRC, p.85.

¹⁰ CRC press release 16 March 2016: <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/news-events/>.

*Council*¹¹, but the Transition Project to establish the new Equality and Good Relations Commission was suspended in September 2014 to allow for consideration of the underpinning legislation¹².

¹¹ Northern Ireland Executive (2013), *Together: Building a United Community*, Belfast: NI Executive, pp.5-6:
<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/together-building-united-community-strategy>.

¹² CRC (2015), *Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015*, Belfast: CRC, p.7.

3 The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Equality Commission was established by the Northern Ireland Act 1998¹³ with a statutory remit to¹⁴:

- promote equality of opportunity and affirmative action
- work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment
- keep relevant legislation under review
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups and good disability practice
- oversee the effectiveness of statutory equality duties on public authorities

The services of the Equality Commission include the following¹⁵:

- Giving advice and support to individuals with potential complaints under the anti-discrimination legislation
- Giving guidance to employers and service providers about their obligations under the law and good practice
- Encouraging public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and address inequalities in fulfilling their equality and good relations duties
- Ensuring that equality considerations are central to decision-making by focusing particular attention in a number of key public policy areas

Grants received from OFMdFM over the past four years have been as follows¹⁶:

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
£6,200,000	£6,246,000	£6,216,000	£5,762,000

In 2014-15 the Commission had on average 105 whole time equivalent staff, compared with 110 in 2013-14. General costs, including those associated with staffing and premises, are given below.

¹³ Northern Ireland Act 1998: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/contents>.

¹⁴ 'Who we are', Equality Commission website, accessed 5 July 2016: <http://www.equalityni.org/HeaderLinks/About-Us/About-us-Who-are-we>.

¹⁵ 'What we do', Equality Commission website, accessed 5 July 2016: <http://www.equalityni.org/WhatWeDo>.

¹⁶ From OFMdFM annual reports and accounts 2012-13 to 2015-16: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/financial-information>.

	2014-15	2013-14
	£	£
Note		
General Costs		
Travel and Subsistence	21,127	22,989
Staff Recruitment	2,419	11,662
Staff Costs (incl. severance)	39,606	20,811
Postage	11,565	12,257
Telephones	33,998	38,353
Hospitality	0	79
Audit	10,014	9,600
Insurance	0	18,202
Miscellaneous	22,545	9,431
Office Consumables	37,471	52,258
R&M Equipment	0	961
Annual Contracts	44,095	40,847
Legal Costs	19,508	9,490
Corporate Services	39,092	15,048
Early Retirement Costs	(3,682)	26,400
Severance Payments	49,277	37,067
	327,035	325,455
Premises		
Rents	346,110	346,869
Rates	209,916	206,850
Service Charge	21,974	21,339
Fuel Charge	73,075	75,901
R&M Buildings	17,997	61,585
Facilities	153,148	148,067
	822,220	860,611
Programme		
Education & Advice	154,786	230,438
Legal Fees	281,603	329,215
Other	80,253	118,973
	516,642	678,626

The table below shows operating costs by segment for the year ending 31 March 2015¹⁷.

	Salaries & Associated Costs £	Programme Costs £	*Other Costs £	12 mths to 31/03/2015 Total £
Integrated/ New Areas	1,194,224	230,547	0	1,424,771
Disability	415,638	80,166	0	495,804
Religion & Politics	546,491	9,752	0	556,243
Gender	289,742	90,365	0	380,107
Race	392,600	62,322	0	454,922
Statutory Duty	424,871	1,326	0	426,197
Resources	755,730	35,105	0	790,835
Executive	282,578	0	0	282,578
Total Costs	4,301,874	509,583	0	4,811,457
Members Costs	158,848	7,058	0	165,906
Other Costs	0	0	991,645	991,645
Total	4,460,722	516,641	991,645	5,969,008

* Other costs include general administrative costs, premises and non cash costs less income from activities

¹⁷ ECNI (2015), *Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15*, Belfast: CRC, p.79:
<http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Corporate/Annual%20Reports/AnnualReport2014-15.pdf>.

4 Commission for Victims and Survivors

The Commission for Victims and Survivors was established by the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006¹⁸. The duties of the Commissioner, as defined in Section 6 of the 2006 Order, are as follows¹⁹:

1. The Commissioner shall promote an awareness of matters relating to the interests of victims and survivors and of the need to safeguard those interests.
2. The Commissioner shall keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice affecting the interests of victims and survivors.
3. The Commissioner shall keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for victims and survivors by bodies or persons.
4. The Commissioner shall advise the Secretary of State, the Executive Committee of the Assembly and anybody or person providing services for victims and survivors on matters concerning the interests of victims and survivors:
 - as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of a request for advice; and
 - on such other occasions as the Commissioner thinks appropriate;
5. The Commissioner shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the views of victims and survivors are sought concerning the interests of victims and survivors.
6. The Commissioner shall make arrangements for a forum for consultation and discussion with victims and survivors

Grants received from OFMdFM over the past four years have been as follows²⁰:

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
£815,000	£1,067,000	£820,000	£913,000

The office had on average 11 staff in 2014-15 (not including the Commissioner), compared with 10 in 2013-14. Costs associated with staffing are given in the table below²¹.

¹⁸ Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/2953/contents>.

¹⁹ 'About us – the Commissioner', CVSNI website, accessed 5 July 2016: <http://www.cvsni.org/index.php/about-us/the-commissioner>.

²⁰ From OFMdFM annual reports and accounts 2012-13 to 2015-16: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/financial-information>.

²¹ CVSNI (2015), *Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15*, Belfast: CVSNI, p.60: <http://www.cvsni.org/images/about/governance/publications/CSVNI-Annual%20Report-14-15.pdf>.

	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Commissioners' fees treated as programme cost	33,608	85,957
Staff salaries treated as programme cost	166,679	148,984
Staff salaries treated as administrative cost	260,841	245,339
	461,128	480,280

2.1 Commissioners' Fees	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Commissioners' fees	17,542	39,530
Social security costs	10,317	24,924
Other pension costs	5,749	21,503
	33,608	85,957

2.2 Total staff costs	Total 2014-15 £	Permanent Staff £	Other £	Total 2013-14 £
Wages & salaries	284,709	238,864	45,845	303,923
Social security costs	88,621	88,621	-	96,369
Other pension costs	87,798	87,798	-	79,988
Total	461,128	415,283	45,845	480,280

Operating costs for the organisation are given below.

Other Expenditure	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Travel & subsistence	2,078	2,654
Staff recruitment	14,917	-
Staff training	8,150	17,630
Postage	224	1,042
Telephone	11,064	15,248
Hospitality	607	1,095
Audit	14,547	15,758
Internal audit	6,984	7,680
Accountancy fees	3,553	5,697
Insurance	34	1,671
Conferences	-	6,104
Miscellaneous	726	689
Office consumables	8,045	6,104
Annual contracts	6,985	7,603
IT licences/services	15,206	11,967
Legal costs	3,510	11,933
HR Services	1,839	
Equality Services	1,800	
Corporate services	24,993	14,735
	125,262	127,610
Premises Costs		
Rents - buildings	62,396	58,996
Rents - car parks	-	798
Rates	35,097	37,273
Service charge	41,718	39,863
Electricity	12,881	13,260
R&M buildings	1,481	7,714
Cleaning	6,607	6,439
Dilapidation costs	230	42,228
Refurbishment costs	-	30,795
	160,410	237,366
Total Other Expenditure	285,672	364,976
Non Cash Items		
Depreciation and Amortisation	2,472	2,693
Impairment loss	-	-
Total Non Cash Items	2,472	2,693
Total Other Expenditure	288,144	367,669

The Commission moved to Equality House in November 2015²² as a cost-saving measure²³.

²² CVSNI press release 5 November 2015: <http://www.cvsni.org/index.php/media-centre/news/344-commission-premises-move>.

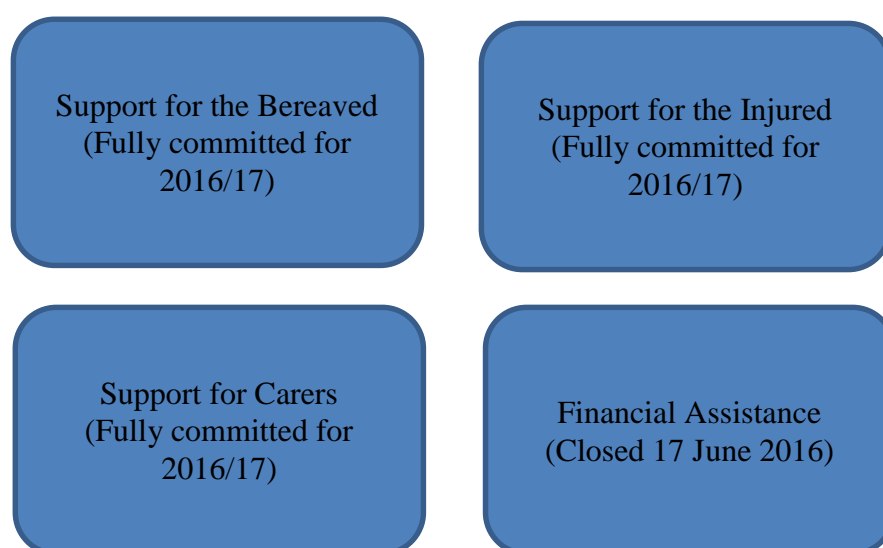
²³ Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, meeting on Wednesday, 21 October 2015: <http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/minutesofevidencereport.aspx?AgendaId=15525&evidID=8765>.

5 Victims and Survivors Service

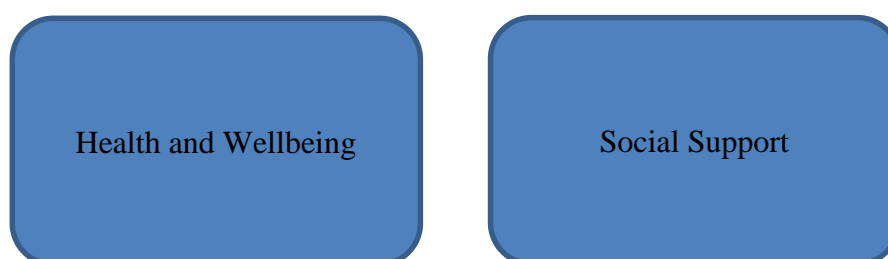
The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was established as a consequence of the Strategy for Victims and Survivors 2009-19²⁴, absorbing the functions of distributing funding for victims and survivors from the Community Relations Council in 2012-13 and the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund in 2013-14²⁵. The VSS provides support to people affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland in the following ways²⁶:

- those who have been injured (physically or psychologically);
- those who care for people who have been injured in this way; and
- those who have been bereaved

Funding is distributed to individuals through the schemes indicated below²⁷.



Funding for organisations is through the Victim Support Programme (closed at the time of writing²⁸), which consists of two main streams:



²⁴ OFMdfM (2009), *Strategy for Victims and Survivors 2009-2019*, Belfast: OFMdfM, p.9: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/strategy-victims-and-survivors-2009>.

²⁵ VSS (2013), *Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2013*, Belfast: VSS, p.6: <http://www.victimsservice.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/VSS-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2012-2013.pdf>.

²⁶ What we do', VSS website, accessed 5 July 2016: <http://www.victimsservice.org/about-us/what-we-do/>.

²⁷ 'What assistance can we offer?', VSS website, accessed 5 July 2016: <http://www.victimsservice.org/support-for-individuals/what-assistance-can-we-offer/>.

²⁸ As at 5 July 2016.

Grants received from OFMdFM over the past four years have been as follows²⁹:

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
£2,976,000	£12,019,000	£13,165,000	£13,500,000

There were on average 32.73 staff during the financial year 2014-15. The following table shows net expenditure broken down by staff costs, programme costs and operating costs³⁰.

	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	1,227,161	1,357,912
Programme Costs	10,363,086	10,666,016
Operating Costs	808,863	775,339
Depreciation	19,624	14,253
Loss on Fixed Asset Disposal	43,380	0
Provision provided for in period	21,250	0
Total Expenditure	12,483,364	12,813,520

²⁹ From OFMdFM annual reports and accounts 2012-13 to 2015-16: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/financial-information>.

³⁰ VSS (2015) *Annual Report and Accounts*, Belfast: VSS, p.81: <http://www.victimsservice.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Annual-Report-And-Accounts-2014-2015-D23-21.12.15-FINAL-PUBLISHED-COPY-Uploaded-to-Website.pdf>.

6 Overview

This section takes the four arms-length bodies and views their function and resources in context. It should be noted that they differ in nature and role: The CVSNI and the Equality Commission have statutory roles as advocates or scrutiny bodies, the VSS is a funding distribution body and the CRC combines both of these roles. The CRC also differs in that it does not necessarily depend on statutory funds alone.

The role of the CRC has also undergone much change: The VSS took over funding for victims and survivors from the CRC in 2012-13 and the community relations advisory functions of the CRC are to be merged with a new Equality and Community Relations Commission, once enabling legislation has been developed. A substantial part of the CRC's grant is distributed in community relations funding³¹, comprising around £2 million in the year ending 31 March 2015³².

The CVSNI and CRC have moved premises in 2015-16 to join the Equality Commission, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Commissioner for Older People in Equality House, Belfast. This has the effect of cost savings for the organisations concerned, offsets some of the Equality Commission's building costs and facilitates a degree of resource sharing³³.

The following table shows the financial outturn for each of the bodies 2012-13 to 2015-16³⁴ and the allocations to each in the 2016-17 Main Estimates³⁵.

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Estimate 2016-17
Equality Commission	£6,200,000	£6,246,000	£6,216,000	£5,762,000	£6,088,000
Commission for Victims and Survivors	£815,000	£1,067,000	£820,000	£913,000	£881,000
Community Relations Council	£9,146,000	£3,433,000	£2,389,000	£2,997,000	£2,926,000
Victims and Survivors Service	£2,976,000	£12,019,000	£13,165,000	£13,500,000	£13,220,000

³¹ For an overview of community relations funding in Northern Ireland, see Research and Information Service Briefing Paper 99/14 Community Relations Funding in Northern Ireland, 9 October 2014: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/research-and-information-service-raise/research-publications-2016/research-publications-2014/>.

³² CRC (2015), *Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015*, Belfast: CRC, p.85.

³³ See Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, meeting 19 November 2014, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

³⁴ From OFMdfM annual reports and accounts 2012-13 to 2015-16.

³⁵ Department of Finance (2016), *Main Estimates 2016-17*, Belfast: TSO, p.232.

The 2016-17 estimates may change. Those for the CVSNI, CRC and VSS are the same as in the 2015-16 estimates, but each received an increase in the 2015 Spring Supplement³⁶. The allocation for the Equality Commission remained the same.

³⁶ Department of Finance and Personnel (2015), *Northern Ireland Spring Supplementary Estimates 2015-2016*, Belfast: TSO, p.293: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/estimates-publications>.