



# ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ended  
31 March 2015



# NDPB NICCY ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Commissioner for Children  
and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003  
by OFMDFM

on

20 October 2015

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# FOREWORD

FROM the NI Commissioner for Children and young people



I am delighted to welcome you to the Annual Report 2014-2015. Although I only took up appointment as Commissioner on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 it is an honour to present this report. Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor Patricia Lewsley-Mooney who left office on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and worked tirelessly for children and young people across Northern Ireland. You will see from reading the report the

breadth and depth of work that NICCY has undertaken during the year and I have highlighted a few areas going forward.

Embedding children's rights into all our government and statutory processes and systems has continued to be a strong focus of NICCY's work during the year. We have worked to give effect to Article 4 of the UNCRC by highlighting the need for the general measures of implementation to be evident in relevant processes and systems. To this end we have been advising government on the key components of a child right's compliant 'Children and Young People's Strategy' (from 2016) which should ensure the participation of children and young people; we have commissioned work on co-ordination across government and on children's budgeting and have been pleased to support the passage of MLA Steven Agnew's Private Member's Bill which proposes a statutory duty to co-operate between departments; this is vital if we are to ensure more effective and efficient outcomes for our C&YP on in children's services.

As the challenges facing children, young people, their families and communities become more concerning – particularly those in relation to the impact of austerity measures and possible social security changes - NICCY will continue to scrutinise government proposals to ensure the adverse impacts on children have been fully assessed and understood.

The voices and experience of children and young people continue to be the key driver of our work both directly within the Office and when holding relevant authorities to account. I am optimistic that the Participation Policy Statement of Intent initiative that we have introduced will begin to see tangible changes in both the quality of engagement and improved outcomes for children and young people. The Office has continued to focus on

the key issues in education, health and social care (particularly child protection), youth justice and issues facing disadvantaged groups of children and young people. We have continued to chair the roundtable on children who have been/are sexually exploited ensuring that agencies are working together and engaged with the independent Marshall Inquiry. The Report recommendations are welcome. We will carefully monitor the implementation of these recommendations alongside those of the SBNI's Thematic Review which should be published soon.

In February OFMDFM announced that they would be introducing Age Discrimination Legislation (in accessing goods, facilities and services – 'Age GFS') which would not apply to people under the age of 16. This despite extensive evidence from NICCY and the Equality Commission NI and advice from the Commissioner for Older People NI, our NGO Colleagues and others, emphasising there can be no legitimate reason to exclude Children and Young People under 16 and highlighting our position that Age Discrimination legislation should protect people of all ages. Therefore it is clear a lot of our work will be centred on reiterating that advice.

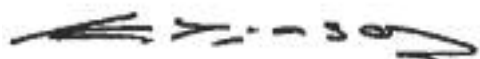
Article 24 of NICCY's (2003) founding legislation included a duty on the Commissioner to "keep under review the working of this Order" and "make reports on it to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister." Full and comprehensive reports were made in 2007 and 2013 – endorsed and reiterated by me - outlining some anomalies in the legislation, recommending that NICCY has "victim status" and that in order to be compliant with international standards, should be independent of government by being made a Body of the Assembly. The latter issue has come into sharper focus with the announcement of Public Sector Reform following the Stormont House Agreement. It is unacceptable that NICCY should have had to wait 8 years for a formal response from Government on recommendations that will make us more effective in the promotion and safeguarding of children's rights.

During the next year the UK Government will be examined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child therefore the Commissioners across the 4 UK jurisdictions, have been working on the preparation of a joint report on the State's delivery of its promises to Children and Young People. I look forward to engagement with the Committee later in 2015 and the concluding observations next year.

Since taking up appointment I have made some clear commitments in regard to the priorities of the Office over the next four years. These will include child poverty, education inequalities, child and adolescent mental health and ensuring that government has clear processes to enhance children's rights.

There can be no doubt that the coming years will be very challenging for Northern Ireland. We cannot underestimate the impacts of continued reductions in government expenditure and changes in social security on children and their families; NICCY will work to ensure that the impact of these changes is thoroughly assessed and all possible mitigations are in place.

In conclusion it is clear from this report that the organisation has undertaken a significant amount of work in the last 12 months; there remains however, much still to do and I am looking forward to working with the team to continue to safeguard and promote the rights of all Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTARY



The year under report is Year 1 of our new Corporate Plan 2014-17 which sees a greater emphasis on NICCY's duties and powers. As the Statutory Body set up 'to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people' it was vital that the 8 high level corporate objectives reflect this enhanced focus in keeping with the remit of the Office.

In focusing on our mission, we have continued to review, monitor and advise Government on the adequacy and effectiveness of law, practice and services in relation to Children's and Young People's rights – increasingly providing 'upstream' advice to Government and its Agencies. This has included work on upcoming legislation on Special Educational Needs and Disability, Anti Bullying in Schools, Children's Services Co-operation and the Human Trafficking Bill; as well as advice/input on Guidance on Pupil Participation, EOTAS provision, Elective Home Education, the future delivery of Paediatric Congenital Heart Surgery, Healthcare entitlement for Asylum Seekers, Community Planning Guidance, Youth Justice Review recommendations, the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR), and work in relation to Children with disabilities i.e. our UNCRPD submission (to be updated reflecting the Committee's timescales).

As well as strengthening our work in collaboration with stakeholders locally, nationally and internationally on issues of common concern e.g. Austerity Measures / Child Poverty in Europe, Child Sexual Exploitation, Age GFS, SEN and Child Poverty; we have also continued to develop 'working in partnership'. This year we worked with the Law Centre on the Human Trafficking Bill, to secure statutory protection for separated or trafficked Children and Young People and also with the NI Youth Forum to promote effective and appropriate participation mechanisms in Schools.

NICCY's Annual Conference in November was a great success in focusing on some of the practicalities in considering a Child Rights Approach to services / service delivery. UN Committee member Professor Olga Khazova was our keynote speaker, Gerison Lansdown, a well known Child Rights expert and Practitioners from our Government Departments of Education, Health and Justice all contributed to progressing the promotion

and understanding of a rights based approach and application. These annual conferences have been key in highlighting the need for more effective implementation of Children's and Young People's Rights - as outlined in the UN Committee's General Comment No.5.

This year was one of transition with outgoing and incoming Commissioners. After being in Office for 2 terms i.e. 8 years, we said goodbye to Patricia Lewsley-Mooney in January 2015 and welcome to Koulla Yiasouma in March 2015. The Transition programme of work for the outgoing and incoming Commissioners involved a series of events, visits and meetings with Ministers, Officials, NGO Colleagues, Community and Voluntary organisations, Schools, Youth Centres and most importantly with Children and Young People. The visits with Children and Young People in 2014 were organised to thank them, listen to them and hear their issues and concerns which were then collated and sent to all our Executive Ministers as promised.

During the gap period between both Commissioners, I took on the additional responsibilities as required and would like to take this opportunity to thank the other members of the Senior Management Team for their support during this time. As Chief Executive, I am required to deputise for the Commissioner as/when necessary and I appreciate when others 'step up'. I have enjoyed participating as Speaker in a range of events this year including the launch of the Children's Services Co-operation Bill, NRC Annual Graduation Ceremony, Raising the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility event, Rights Respecting Schools events and of course our own NICCY Participation Awards.

The ongoing economic downturn has continued to impact. NICCY is mindful that the Westminster Government austerity measures resulting in reductions to the NI block grant will continue to result in service reduction as NI Departments address the effects of these. It is the impact on children and young people – and levels of child poverty / disadvantage - with which NICCY is/will continue to be concerned as we witness further cuts in spend.

For NICCY these have resulted in budget cuts in-year and, going forward, next year's annual budget will be cut by 7%, inevitably meaning we will have to reduce staffing levels to meet necessary savings. While NICCY, like others, is addressing how to implement savings measures, we have continued to highlight the potential adverse impact on NICCY's legislative remit should cuts continue.

Public Sector Reform (PSR) announcements will see a reduction in the number of our Government Departments from 12 to 9 in 2016 and the resultant transfer of functions among those departments. The Children's and Young People's branch within OFMDFM is to move to DE. There are also proposals to move NICCY under the remit of DE, however, this is contrary to recommendations within our reports reviewing the legislation as well as

our Article 24 report (2007 and 2013) therefore we will continue to engage with Ministers, Officials and Colleagues across the statutory, community and voluntary sectors in relation to this.

Thank you to all the Staff in NICCY who have shown commitment, dedication and professionalism during what has been a challenging yet rewarding year. Finally I would like to reiterate our very warm welcome to our new Commissioner Koulla Yiasouma who joined us on 2 March 2015 – we are very much looking forward to working with her.



**Mairéad McCafferty**  
**Chief Executive**



# DIRECTOR'S REPORT



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland (NICCY) is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). NICCY was established on 1st October 2003 under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

These accounts are prepared in accordance with Schedule 2 11 (1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and in accordance with the 2014-15 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland (DFP).

### Principal Activities

- The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's principal aim is to 'safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people' up to the age of 18 or up to 21 for those with a disability or who have experience of being in the care of the State. While the detailed duties and powers (in support of the fulfilment of those duties) are set out in the legislation, they may be grouped as follows:
- Promoting Awareness of Children's and Young People's Rights, the UNCRC and NICCY - the Commissioner's work is fundamentally guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the

Child (UNCRC), an international agreement setting out how Children and Young People should be treated and their rights (ratified in 1989);

- Advising Government on Children's and Young People's Rights and Best Interests – both reactively - in response to requests from Government; and proactively - as the Commissioner so determines; monitoring and reviewing law, practice and services as they impact/may impact on them, their lives and outcomes;
- Addressing Rights Breaches and Complaints – [legal action] - the Commissioner can deal with individual complaints from children and young persons, or their parents/guardians or others on their behalf, in the outworkings of law, practice and service delivery.

### Organisational Structure, Senior Management Team and Staff Complement

NICCY comprises the Commissioner, Chief Executive and 4 Departments – Corporate Services, Legal & Investigations, Policy & Research and Communications & Participation. Each has a Head of Department except Corporate Services (an additional role for the Chief Executive). The Senior Management Team (SMT) is comprised of the Chief Executive and the Heads of Departments and works to clearly defined terms of reference to realise NICCY's corporate and business objectives in line with the legislative remit and function of the office. NICCY's Staff complement totals 24 staff - 7 male and 17 female.

## Senior Management Team

### **Mairéad McCafferty**

Chief Executive

### **Marlene Kinghan**

Head of Communication and Participation

### **Mollie Simpson**

Head of Legal and Investigations

### **Alex Tennant**

Head of Policy and Research

## Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland seeks to ensure the highest standards of corporate governance and compliance with the values of public service. NICCY has appointed an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which oversees internal audit arrangements and ensures they are conducted in accordance with the standards as set out in the Government Internal Audit Manual. It is an independent advisory committee with no executive functions. The Committee provides an independent oversight function to NICCY. It oversees the Commissioner's arrangements for risk management and supports NICCY in regard to systems of internal control. The Committee meets at least four times per year and thanks are due to its members for their work, commitment and expertise. Its members are:

### **Julie Erskine**

Committee Chairperson

### **JP Irvine**

Committee Member

### **Joe Campbell**

Committee Member

## Important Events Occurring After the Year End

There have been no significant events occurring after the year end that would affect this report and the accounts.

## Results for the Year

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland operates as a going concern. The Commissioner is financed by funding from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. Funding for 2014-15 has been approved.

The results for the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland for the period are set out in detail on pages 60 - 64. The net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2015 was £1,387,292. This net expenditure resulted in a balance in reserves of £44,011 at 31 March 2015.

## Non Current Assets

Details of the movements of non current assets are set out in Notes 5 and 6 to the Accounts.

## Research & Development

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland does not engage in any research and development activities as defined by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

### **Charitable Donations**

A donation of £100 was made to the NI Children's Hospice during the period to mark 8 years of the outgoing Commissioner's tenure.

### **Pensions Liabilities**

Staff Pension Liabilities are borne by the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) – see Remuneration Report and notes 1.8 and 2(b) to the Accounts.

### **Payments to Suppliers**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the Confederation of British Industry's Prompt Payer's Code.

Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment was due within 10 working days of receipt of the goods or services, or presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand, whichever is later.

During the period 78.2% of bills were paid within this standard (82.67% in 2013-14) and 97.5% of invoices were paid within 30 calendar days standard (95.79% in 2013-14).

### **Disabled Persons**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland seeks to follow best practice guidance as set out in Disability Codes of Practice, on employment and the provision of services to disabled persons.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity and fair participation to all persons regardless of gender, marital status, religious belief, political affiliation/opinion, age, family status, ethnic or racial background, sexual orientation, disability, nationality or trade union membership.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland will, in all its actions, conform to both the letter and the spirit of the relevant equality legislation. The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland will provide equality of opportunity to all persons irrespective of whether or not there are legislative provisions in place.

### **Employee Involvement**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland encourages widespread consultation, dissemination and exchange of information at all levels within the organisation through senior management team meetings, staff meetings, team briefings and union meetings.

### **Data Protection and Freedom of Information**

The Commissioner has in place policies and arrangements for compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation.

NICCY disposes of data no longer required – both physical and computerised – safely and securely according to its Data Retention Policy. All staff are required to ensure that data being stored is not kept for longer than is necessary and when disposal dates approach, steps are taken to dispose of this securely with disposal notifications confirming destruction.

In relation to portable media, NICCY locks all USB ports on work stations, ensuring no data can be transferred to portable devices without authorisation. All staff who have been issued with mobile phones, have also signed up to the Mobile Device Policy, ensuring these devices are not used for storage or onward transmission of data.

Following a review of NICCY's computer systems, all staff signed up to a confidentiality agreement but further steps have been taken in relation to user access on the NICCY network. Controls are in place which prevent staff viewing files or folders they are not authorized to view. Passwords and account details of staff who leave NICCY's employment are also changed on the day they leave, ensuring there is no unauthorized access.

NICCY have also in place an agreed Service Level Agreement with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) for the 3 years (2013-2016) which covers all security matters in relation to NICCY computer systems.

Freedom of Information requests are logged and maintained by the Information Officer. A spreadsheet details all requests made by

individuals, including the nature of the request and the timescales involved. During the year there were twelve Freedom of Information requests, all of which were responded to within the statutory time limit.

NICCY is confident that it complies with the current Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation and will continue to monitor this on an on-going basis.

There were no personal data related incidents during the year.

### **Sick Absence Data**

During the course of the year, 5.2% of the available working days were lost due to staff sickness in NICCY (4.7% in 2013-14). This figure also includes long-term absence which contributed 2.1% of the working days lost (0.9% in 2013-14).

### **Register of Interests**

An up to date Register of Interests is maintained by NICCY and is available for inspection at the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland offices in Equality House, 7 – 9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP.

### **Auditors**

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



The audit of the financial statements for 2014-15 resulted in an audit fee of £11,249 which is included in the Operating Costs within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. No additional remuneration was paid to the NIAO for non-audit work during the 2014-15 year.

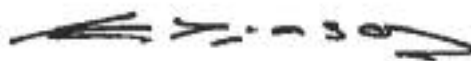
### **Disclosure of Audit Information**

As far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the entity's auditors are unaware. The Accounting Officer has taken all steps that she ought to have taken to make herself aware of any audit information and to establish that the entity's auditors are aware of that information.

Offices of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland:  
Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast  
BT2 7DP

Auditor:  
Northern Ireland Audit Office  
106 University Street  
Belfast  
BT7 1EU

Signed by:



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
**30<sup>th</sup> September 2015**



# STRATEGIC REPORT

# STRATEGIC REPORT

## Context

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland has prepared this report in accordance with Schedule 2 11(1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and in accordance with the 2014-15 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland (DFP).

## The Commissioner

Koulla Yiasouma took up appointment as Commissioner for Children and Young People on 2 March 2015. Her initial term is for 4 years. The previous Commissioner, Patricia Lewsley-Mooney left her post on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

## Mission

Article 6(1) of the 2003 Order established the Commissioner's principal aim/mission which is to:

'Safeguard and Promote the Rights and Best Interests of Children and Young People'.

NICCY reports on its progress against objectives and targets within its annual Business Plan on a quarterly basis to OFMDFM. This Strategic Report details the outputs, broad outcomes and achievements over the course of the 2014-15 business year.

Full details of our priorities and objectives are set out in NICCY's Corporate Plan 2014-17 and the annual Business Plans, all of which are available on the NICCY website ([www.niccy.org](http://www.niccy.org)).

Our work entails effective working relationships with our Stakeholders not only in terms of accountability, transparency and collaborative and partnership working but also in terms of fulfilling our legislative function and remit. NICCY's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy identifies them as:

- Children and Young People;
- Parents and Adults;
- Government, Government Ministers, MLAs and Politicians (NI Executive, NI Assembly, Westminster Government);
- Government Departments (including Sponsor Dept OFMDFM) and officials;
- Statutory Bodies and ALBs (NDPBs);
- Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs);
- Legal institutions and agencies;
- Media – print, online, TV, radio;
- Domestic, National and International Rights bodies (Equality and Human Rights Commissions, British and Irish Network of Ombudsmen and Children's Commissioners (BINOCC), European Network of Ombudsmen's for Children (ENOC), UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Fundamental Rights Agency, Council of Europe (CoE) as well as those Bodies/Committee overseeing other International Human Rights Instruments).

## **NICCY's Work: 2014-15 Business Year**

NICCY's Business Plan 2014-15 was the first year of our Corporate plan 2014-17 and takes forward a focus on the 8 High Level Objectives. As stated, the aim was to drive progress on the following desired outcomes for our Children and Young People:

### **Desired Outcomes for Children and Young People**

That:

1. Government will meet its obligations to undertake all the appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the UNCRC.
2. Breaches or violations of children and young people's rights will be identified, challenged and resolution sought/achieved using the most appropriate of the range of legal powers vested in the Commissioner.
3. Key stakeholders will have an increased awareness of children and young people's rights, the UNCRC and the functions of the Commissioner.
4. All children and young people will access a high quality education which develops their personality, talents and abilities to the full.
5. All children and young people will enjoy the best possible health and will be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment.
6. All Children and young people in conflict with the law will be treated with dignity and their rights respected.
7. All Children and young people who are vulnerable due to poverty, family background, age, disability or other reasons will not experience discrimination, but enjoy their rights on an equal basis to other children.
8. NICCY utilises Organisational resources – Human and Financial - effectively and efficiently to maximise overall Corporate Performance and Impact in pursuit of the rights and best Interests of children and young people.

### **Progress against agreed Key Performance Indicators**

Having noted earlier some of the highlights from 2014–15, I am pleased to report that in terms of our progress against key performance indicators under our eight high level objectives – detail of which follows - all have been met except 2 parts of 1 objective relating to the Review of the Office and a Review of the 2003 Order establishing the Office. The Review of the Office was postponed by OFMDFM due to budget constraints in-year and the Review of the Legislation is an ongoing area of work being addressed by OFMDFM. Both these were outside the control of NICCY however, we have addressed them on an ongoing basis and hope to achieve completion in the near future.



## 1. Government will meet its obligations to undertake all the appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the UNCRC.

While, over the years, NICCY has provided advice to government on a wide range of issues affecting children's rights and best interests, a consistent theme in our advice has been in relation to the processes by which government delivers for children. The UNCRC is very explicit about the processes which States should put in place to deliver for children, with article 4 requiring states to:

*'...undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention.'*

Having worked with the Centre for Children's Rights at QUB to produce a set of options for Child Rights Legislation in 2013-14, NICCY engaged with government to advise on the necessity of such legislation to effectively implement the UNCRC.

### **General Measures of Implementation: UN General Comment No. 5**

We have been progressing work on the general measures of implementation as set out by the UN Committee in General Comment No. 5 i.e. Child Rights Impact Assessments; Transparency in Public Expenditure on Children; Overarching Strategy for Children; Data Collection and

Child Rights Indicators; Joined Up Working and Delivery; Training and Awareness raising for Government Officials; and the Participation of Children and Young People. The development/expansion of Child Rights Indicators is vital for Government in drafting the next Children's & Young People's Strategy - due to be released in 2016 – both in establishing the targets in the Strategy but also for reporting (data collection) purposes. NICCY will advise on this process, so that both the processes for producing the Strategy, as well as the Strategy itself, will be informed by, and rooted in, the UNCRC. This will also include continuing to advise OFMDFM on Child Right Impact Assessments; we previously provided input in relation to an initial draft.

Work NICCY has conducted in previous years highlighted problems in relation to a lack of joined up working in the planning and delivery of children's services. This work helped to provide support for a Private Member's Bill at the Northern Ireland Assembly: Stephen Agnew's *Children's Services Co-operation Bill*. Over this year, we met with Officials and Mr Agnew to advise on the drafting of the Bill. We also commissioned a research report into best practice elsewhere in relation to the implementation of similar legislation, to help inform the implementation of the Northern Ireland Bill. This will be completed and released early in 2015-16 business year.

Having ended the previous financial year with a report looking at the difficulties in bringing visibility to spend on children within government budgets, we commissioned researchers from Dartington SRU, to engage with government agencies to identify spending on children's services. This research, jointly funded by Atlantic, also sought to identify how each funded programme would be categorised in relation to preventative or reactive services, and whether they had been evaluated.

Encouragingly, all government departments have provided information to the researchers, and the final report will be completed and launched early in the 2015-16 business year. NICCY has also set up a Children's Budgeting Group involving civil society, government and academic representatives to explore further how greater transparency on budgeting for children can be achieved and made more visible in government budgets.

NICCY's Training and Education Strategy sees the continued roll out of awareness raising, education and training sessions and programmes for those who work with / are studying to work with Children and Young People. This is vital in promoting awareness of Children's and Young People's Rights but also in the application of those Rights to practice across the various disciplines. We are currently updating this.

### **UK State Party Report: Joint UK Commissioners' Report to UN Committee**

As the Human Rights Institution for Children and Young People in N. Ireland, NICCY has been working with the other three UK Children's Commissioners to produce a joint Alternative Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This will be completed and submitted by 1 July 2015, to inform the pre-sessional meeting with the UN Committee in October 2015.

### **Advancing the Participation of Children and Young People**

Following NICCY's publication of the 'Walking or Talking Participation?' report which focused on the impact of direct participation with children and young people in developing departmental policies, strategies, legislation and services, we progressed the recommendations including those for government departments. These were to establish robust mechanisms and systems for engaging children and young people in public decision making; to ensure evaluation can identify changes made as a result of the engagement; to identify someone in a policy role to lead on engaging children and young people, and for Departments to carry out a Child Rights Impact Assessments.

In response to the report, OFMDFM as the lead department on children and young people's issues, endorsed all but one of the six recommendations stating, "we fully

recognise that more remains to be done to ensure active engagement of children and young people in terms of policy process”. Subsequently, NICCY is providing ongoing advice to the Children and Young People’s Unit at OFMDFM on the participation of children and young people within and between Departments.

A number of Ministers also responded positively, advising of actions they were or will be taking as a result of the findings which we will follow up. NICCY’s Youth Panel used their learning to further develop criteria for the Commissioner’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Participation Awards, which illustrated best practice in participation, as implemented by a number of government departments and public bodies. The panel hosted the Awards event where the Junior Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the UNCRC and to enabling effective participation of children and young people. Bodies associated with DEL, DE, DHSSPS, DoJ, DRD and DoE received awards. The DoJ Minister commended his colleagues and spoke of the importance of communication and engagement with children and young people.

This year following 11 of our 12 Government Departments who endorsed NICCY’s Participation Policy Statement of Intent (PPSI) a further 30 public bodies (ALBs and Councils) ‘signed up’. 66% of these public bodies also completed

NICCY’s follow-up ‘Participation Review’ questionnaire, initial analysis of which highlighted both positive practice and some gaps, including the need to provide UN children’s rights’ awareness training for staff; the development of a formal participation strategy or policy; the development of a children’s rights impact assessment tool and the development of an overarching evaluation strategy to identify the short term and long term benefit and impact of engaging with children and young people.

### **Local Government Reform - Community Planning**

The restructuring of local government and the transfer of planning to the new councils provided the opportunity to ensure inclusion of the meaningful participation with children and young people in local communities. NICCY advised the Department of Environment on the importance of specifically referencing engagement with children and young people within the Community Planning Guidance. Therefore, we welcomed specific reference to this within the draft Guidance (at the time of writing). Alongside this, NICCY also undertook a programme of engagement with the Chief Executives of the new councils, highlighting NICCY’s role and the importance of engaging with children and young people with regard to Community Planning and to get their endorsement of participation in any new structures.

## **2. Breaches or violations of children and young people's rights will be identified, challenged and resolution sought/achieved using the most appropriate of the range of legal powers vested in the Commissioner.**

### **Casework**

Within the casework function of NICCY we dealt with 332 new enquiries this year together with outstanding cases/matters brought forward as necessary from the previous year. Once again enquiries in relation to education formed the bulk of those received in the department. Of the enquiries in relation to education, the area of special educational need was the highest concern of complainants. Objectives were set in all cases and we exceeded our target of 90% for objectives having been met when the matter concluded.

Evaluation forms sent to all clients and feedback received showed a satisfaction rate of in excess of 96% with the service received. Any feedback which was not positive related once again to our remit and our inability to deal with some matters due to restrictions in our legislation.

As we piloted an Annual Casework Report for the business year 2013-14 which was extremely well received by stakeholders, we will be producing another such report for the 2014-15 business year.

### **Legal Proceedings**

NICCY sought and was granted leave to intervene in a matter before the High Court. This case concerned a young person who

was remanded in the juvenile justice centre and was seeking bail and centred around the definition of a 'child in need'. The Trust concerned were arguing that they did not have a duty to offer accommodation to the child as they submitted that he was not a child in need. NICCY's intervention centred on the definition of a child in need and the associated UNCRC rights which were engaged. The Court found in favour of the child and confirmed that the Trust did have a duty towards the child. As a result the child was provided with accommodation and was admitted to bail.

NICCY subsequently engaged with various external stakeholders including the HSCB and the HSC Trusts in order to raise awareness of this judgement and how it should lead to change in practice going forward.

NICCY also engaged with legal stakeholders and held a CPD event to advise how this judgement could be used in legal practice.

NICCY funded a number of legal cases in this business year, which meant that children and young people who would not otherwise have had access to court were provided with legal representation. One case resulted in an ELB changing their policy which will have a widespread positive impact on all children with SEN in that area. Another case concerned the privacy of a young person and access to their social services records. As a result of NICCY funding robust representation for this young person their privacy was respected.



NICCY also provided an amicus curiae service to the Court in a secure accommodation matter, wherein we were able to assist the Court by highlighting matters regarding service provision which contributed to improvements to services for children and young people.

### **SENDIST**

In line with our business objective we began to provide representation and funding in relation to SENDIST cases. We achieved a number of successful outcomes including one matter which ran to a full hearing and judgement in favour of the young person, confirming that he had been discriminated against. This resulted in positive media coverage due to the fact that this case set a precedent which can be relied upon by others in a similar situation. NICCY engaged with a number of external stakeholders in relation to this judgement and offered advice on how this judgement could be used to benefit their clients.

NICCY also issued SENDIST proceedings in several matters which were subsequently conceded on the papers by the ELB's without the need for a hearing.

### **3. Key stakeholders will have an increased awareness of children and young people's rights, the UNCRC and the functions of the Commissioner.**

#### **Raising Awareness and Influencing Practice**

In line with NICCY's duties to promote awareness of children's rights, the UNCRC

and the role of the Commissioner, we have continued to deliver our awareness, education and training workshops and programmes. Supporting children and young people to exercise their Article 12 right, to have a say in decisions that affect them continues to be a key feature in our work. We have also worked on specific children's rights issues such as education, family life and access to adequate health care. Feedback from our training programmes and input from other NICCY staff with experience in the legal and policy fields is used in developing new programmes and content.

This year we have directly engaged with over 800 children and young people; delivered training on children's rights to over 500 professionals or trainee professionals in the education, health and social care fields and piloted a children's rights training programme to staff at Derry City Council.

#### **Involving children and young people in our work**

Promoting the 'voice' of children and young people, and engagement with children and young people continues to be a fundamental principle of NICCY's work. We do this specifically on a strategic level and also in our own work internally through participation screening and engaging with the NICCY Youth Panel (NYP). The work of the Youth Panel reflected the experience and interests of the young people themselves. Throughout the year the NYP have been involved in supporting NICCY's work by hosting events; delivering

presentations; developing campaign strategies; providing advice on engaging with children and young people. As an example the NYP worked with and advised the Chair of the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation on engaging with children and young people.

The young people were also part of interview panels for staff recruitment and we have also developed guidance to identify and provide consistency for the NYP in engaging with external organisations.

### Communications

As part of our commitment, to raise awareness and increase engagement with our stakeholders, we commissioned a media audit to assess this and are currently taking forward the recommendations from this. We communicated on the range of NICCY's work, referred to throughout this report. In addition a new website was developed and we reviewed and improved ways to ensure we were reaching the right audiences with the right messages. This focussed our activity on increasing the use of social media and targeting weekly newspaper titles to reach into local communities across Northern Ireland.

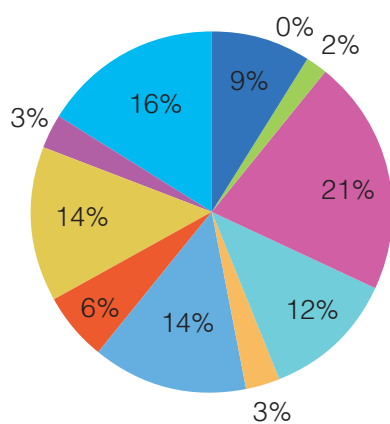


Figure 1 – Breakdown in weekly newspaper coverage in the 11 Local Government areas

Ongoing monitoring of NICCY's media coverage helped in targeting the most appropriate newspapers, radio and television. Independent evaluation is carried out in line with best practice, and measurement tools are in place to assess all media and online activity.

Over the course of the year the website had 18,359 visitors. Of those 45% were 'returning visitors'. The re-designed site went live in March, producing increased visits and favourable feedback. Staff also received training in using online tools to help create content.



Twitter continued to show growth over the year with an increase in followers from 1552 to 2339 - nearly 25% up from last year.

Four Corporate e-zines were issued to stakeholders including parents, professionals, politicians and academics. As well as sharing key messages this encouraged visitors to the corporate website. There were positive responses to the e-zines which attracted 2,150 views. Two legal e-zines were also issued during the year to legal stakeholders to inform and advise of NICCY's legal work and recent relevant jurisprudence from the Courts. These were well received with well above

industry standard figures for opening and click through rates.

Communicating the transition between the outgoing Commissioner and the new appointee Koulla Yiasouma, was a key focus of the work in the latter part of the year and achieved increased media coverage and online activity.

#### **4. All children and young people will access a high quality education which develops their personality, talents and abilities to the full.**

NICCY provided the Department and Education and education NDPBs with advice on a broad and diverse range of educational issues during the year. These included EOTAS (Education Other than at School) guidance, elective home education, bullying in schools, shared education policy and legislation, the education budget, the deferral of compulsory school starting age and relationships and sexuality education. Written and oral evidence was submitted to the NI Assembly Education Committee to inform its inquiry into shared education and integrated education. Advice was also provided to the Committee on the importance of pupils' participation in the school inspection process<sup>1</sup>.

During the year we engaged with a wide range of stakeholders from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to discuss these and other issues. Of particular importance was our ongoing work and discussions on the SEN and Inclusion

proposals which were still in development during 2014-15. It is hoped that our advice is evident in the upcoming legislation, regulations and code of practice in the coming year.

In providing advice and evidence to the Department and to the NI Assembly Committee, NICCY strongly emphasised the importance of Children's and Young People's views and experiences being taken into account and for them to be actively involved in decision-making about their education. As part of its efforts to promote the voice of the child with regard to education, NICCY compiled a series of questions about Article 29 of the UNCRC for inclusion in the 'Kids' and 'Young Life and Times' Surveys. These surveys are developed by ARK at Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster. Article 29 of the UNCRC outlines the goals or aims of education, which include helping children and young people develop their talents and abilities, make decisions, resolve conflict and encourage creative talents. Pupils were asked if their school helped them to develop these skills and abilities. Their responses were extremely interesting and reflective with 60%-85% of pupils indicating that their schools had been helpful in this respect.

#### **Pupil Participation in Schools**

DE provided guidance for Principals and Boards of Governors on how to encourage/develop pupil participation in decision making in schools and to identify ways to ensure the 'pupil voice' is heard. The Education Minister made a commitment

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<sup>1</sup> NICCY's advice to the Department of Education and the NIA Education Committee may be accessed on NICCY's website

to review the Circular and, if sufficient progress is not made, to consider the case for stronger action.

In the last quarter of this business year, NICCY in partnership with the Northern Ireland Youth Forum carried out a youth led study into pupil participation within primary and primary schools in Northern Ireland.

The recommendations included suggestions as to how this could be enhanced as well as those for NICCY to progress the updating of its Democra School Guidance and that the Education Minister should set out a timescale to review the DE Circular on Pupil Participation.

**5. All children and young people will enjoy the best possible health and will be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment.**

NICCY continues to engage with the DHSSPS and relevant agencies including HSCB, SBNI, RQIA, PHA, CYPSP on a range of relevant issues which relate to promoting the rights of Children and Young People to the best possible health and to be protected from harm.

This also included providing written policy advice on the recommendations from the International Working Group on the Future Delivery of Paediatric Congenial Heart Surgery, reviewing the Service Standards Framework for Children and Young People and commenting on Mental Capacity legislation proposals.

With regard to migrant children, NICCY has collaborated with the NGO sector to influence regulations around healthcare entitlements for asylum seekers, victims of trafficking and importantly their children and strengthened the rights basis of legislation affecting separated and trafficked children (more detail below).

NICCY continued to monitor progress on key strands of work related to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) during the 2014-15 period; this included facilitating roundtable meetings with key officials and statutory authorities from DHSSPS, DoJ, DE, PSNI and SBNI monitoring actions through these meetings and seeking written updates.

We are disappointed that there have been significant delays in the release of updated policies on some specific issues affecting the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland including the Adoption and Children's Bill and the Department's Child Protection Policy, 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children'.

**6. All Children and young people in conflict with the law will be treated with dignity and their rights respected.**

**Youth Justice**

NICCY engaged with a number of external stakeholders in relation to Youth Justice this business year. With regard to the implementation of the Youth Justice Review recommendations NICCY attended a number of fora with the Department of Justice to discuss progress in this area. We also met with CJI to discuss same and their forthcoming Inspection Report.

NICCY legal staff attended a number of seminars including those on criminal records and young people; vulnerable witnesses; and the minimum age of criminal responsibility. Our Chief Executive input at an event on 'raising the age' - in line with international best practice - organised by Include Youth in January.

We continued our participation in the PSNI Youth Champions Forum throughout the year to address areas of concern. NICCY met separately with PSNI regarding the launch of the alcohol test purchasing scheme, raising concerns about the implications of the scheme for Children and Young People and provided practical solutions to ensure the scheme was child rights compliant.

Our Youth Panel considered a draft version of the youth engagement clinic leaflet aimed at young people. They provided comment on the content and accessibility of same and this was fed back to DOJ for revision of the leaflet.

As NICCY had concerns around the movement of the Belfast Youth Court to Laganside and the facilities provided for young people who attends court as defendants, victims or witnesses, we engaged with the Youth Justice Agency and the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service in relation to these matters and conducted an inspection of the current and proposed facilities in the Laganside complex. We will be taking our concerns to the Minister for Justice in the coming business year, and providing advice to government regarding proposals for the rationalisation of the Court estate.

The legal team provided an analysis of juvenile justice and children in detention within Northern Ireland for the joint Commissioner's Shadow Report to the United Nations.

## **7. All Children and young people who are vulnerable due to poverty, family background, age, disability or other reasons will not experience discrimination, but enjoy their rights on an equal basis to other children.**

Our work under this objective focussed particularly on three groups of children and young people: children with disabilities, children experiencing poverty, and separated children subject to immigration control. We also focused on proposed legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in accessing goods, facilities and services.

### **Children with disabilities**

As the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was due to examine the first UK State Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, NICCY produced a shadow report to submit as part of this process. However, the examination was then delayed; we will update the report and submit it at the appropriate time.

The Commissioner also continued to engage with government in relation to the forthcoming Special Educational Needs Bill (see earlier) which was introduced to the Assembly in March 2015. It is vital that this opportunity is taken to 'get it right' for vulnerable Children and Young People; NICCY as well as colleagues in the NGO



Sector, have worked extremely hard to ensure this is so, having submitted advice and given evidence which we will continue to do as the passage of legislation continues. We will also give the same scrutiny to the pending Regulations and Code of Practice when they are produced by DE.

### **Children experiencing poverty**

We also engaged with OFMDFM in relation to the delayed Child Poverty Strategy. Despite the legislative requirement under the Child Poverty Act 2010 to publish a 2014-17 Child Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland in March 2014, one year later this had still not been released. NICCY had provided advice to the Executive on 'Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People' in March 2014, and stated that the Children's Strategy and Child Poverty Strategy should not be merged. While we were pleased that this advice was accepted, the delays in publishing and implementing the new strategy is a matter of deep concern, given the impact that austerity measures and poverty are having on a significant proportion of children in Northern Ireland.

### **Separated children**

NICCY has been particularly concerned about the needs of separated children, the small and largely invisible group of children who arrive into Northern Ireland on their own and who are likely to have experienced difficulties and traumatic experiences before, during and after they arrive here. In 2014, NICCY published research to better understand the profile and needs of this group of Young People and how Northern

Ireland could best meet the rights and best interests of this group when they arrive here.

New opportunities emerged in late 2014 for NICCY to strengthen provisions for separated children through the Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill. In partnership with The Law Centre (NI), NICCY worked to secure guardianship provisions for all separated and trafficked children under 18, who arrive in Northern Ireland without a parent, or primary care giver. In practice this extension to the legislation means that unidentified victims of trafficking, unaccompanied children and any other overseas child who has no-one exercising parental responsibilities, such as an orphan or abandoned child will be provided with an independent guardian.

Extremely positive engagement with members of the Assembly, in particular Lord Morrow, the sponsor of the Bill, has led to provisions which other countries, including other parts of the UK, aspire to in terms of their provision for such vulnerable children and in terms of human rights compliance.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK to establish an independent guardianship service for trafficked and separated children on a statutory basis.

### **Age discrimination**

In the 2014/15 Business Year NICCY has continued to work on the area of age discrimination, particularly in advising Government regarding their proposals to extend age discrimination legislation to

cover goods, facilities and services. In April 2014 we, along with ECNI and COPNI, jointly gave evidence to the OFMDFM Committee. Robin Allen QC also gave evidence as he had previously provided a legal opinion on the matter to ourselves and ECNI. In advance of our Committee appearance we also met with the Junior Ministers and organised a demonstration on the steps of Stormont which brought together Children, Young People and Parents / Grandparents who wished to visibly register their concern at the potential for Young People to be excluded from the extension of the law.

Throughout the year we continued to seek to influence the decision makers through political engagement and ongoing liaison with our colleagues in the Children's and Young People's Sector. In February 2015 the Junior Ministers announced their intention to bring forward a consultation on extending the law only to those aged sixteen years and over. NICCY have been vociferous in our opposition to this and is continuing to engage with relevant Stakeholders in order to co-ordinate our efforts to oppose this proposal. NICCY will continue to work determinedly on this issue in the next business year, when we expect the consultation and EQIA will be released.

**8. NICCY utilises Organisational resources – Human and Financial - effectively and efficiently to maximise overall Corporate Performance and Impact in pursuit of the rights and best interests of children and young people.**

We are mindful that, as with Government Departments, their Agencies and NDPBs across the public sector, we all have to manage organisational resources – Human and Financial - to ensure effective and efficient performance. NICCY works to do this in line with its legislative remit i.e. in fulfilling its duties and exercise of powers. This year we have further raised the profile of the organisation and enhanced stakeholder engagement through engagement in taking forward our objectives. Our Annual Child Rights Conference brought experts from the UN Committee Professor Olga Khazova, Gerison Lansdown from England, and those 'closer to home' whose work is/should be informed by the rights and best interests of Children and Young People on an ongoing basis.

Performance against objectives is a focus for NICCY and reporting on same. As well as submitting such reports to our sponsor department, we also report on performance through a performance Management and Evaluation Framework which enables I and the senior management team to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of our work. It is undoubtedly the case that some of our work is 'longer term' – effecting change does, as we know, take time.

Effective corporate governance and risk management underpins our work at NICCY – this ensures confidence in us employing the appropriate systems and mechanisms in governing the organisation e.g. managing staff and public money, ensuring accountability, value for money and

effectively utilising resources in achievement of our mission.

This has been a year of transition as our outgoing Commissioner completed her term on 7 January 2015 and our incoming Commissioner took up appointment on 2 March. Staff have worked hard to ensure as smooth a transition as possible and that objectives were met.

While the Review of the Office did not take place, nonetheless preparatory work was undertaken which involved the review of previous 2010 Review to ensure outstanding actions were completed.

### **Review of Legislation: Commissioner for Children and Young People Order (NI) 2003**

NICCY was requested by OFMDFM to carry out another review given the time lapse since the first one submitted back in 2007. This was carried out and submitted along with the required 'Article 24 Report' in 2013. NICCY has since been engaging with OFMDFM to progress Ministers' formal response to this. The Report contains 12 recommendations – significantly reiterating the need for NICCY to be made accountable to the NI Assembly rather than a specific Government Department to ensure independence in compliance with the 'Paris Principles' (1993). It also restates the necessity to remove duplication and/or contradictory clauses as well as addressing the issue of 'victim status' to enable NICCY to effectively exercise its powers on behalf of groups of children. It is anticipated that

these and the other recommendations will be given a formal, positive response in the near future.

## **Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legislative - 'PESTEL' Context**

### **Political context**

Our work with the NI Assembly Executive Ministers and politicians continued this year through meetings, submissions, advice and evidence sessions with Assembly Committees, etc as we addressed a range of issues affecting the Rights of our Children and Young People – particularly our most vulnerable - from those living in poverty, separated children, those subject to sexual exploitation, looked after children, 'at risk' children and those with disabilities, as well as in progressing the UNCRC's general measures of implementation. These include application of Children's Rights in developing legislation, policies and strategies; training and awareness among Government Officials; transparency in children's budgeting; data collection and child rights indicators; joined up working; the participation of Children and Young People; an overall Action Plan for Children; and reporting mechanism/systems.

NICCY particularly welcomes MLA Stephen Agnew's Private Member's Bill which aims to place a mandatory obligation on Departments to work together in developing, delivering and resourcing services for Children and Young People. NICCY supports this, having identified the need for same and engaged with Ministers



to advise accordingly. We have also commissioned work to explore examples of good practice in 'joined up working' as stated earlier, which will further support the Bill as it progresses through the legislative process and the development of a Children's and Young People's Strategy in 2016. Also as referenced earlier, NICCY is very pleased that its work with the Law Centre resulted in the inclusion of an independent legal Guardian for separated or trafficked children.

Politically, NI is in a time of transition - we are mindful of the upcoming Westminster elections May 2015 and the impact this will have for Children and Young People. NICCY will respond accordingly in line with the remit of the Office. The reduction in the number of Councils in NI – from 26 to 11 – has given us an opportunity to promote the need for the inclusion of Children and Young People in the Community Planning process and NICCY has engaged extensively in the development of the legislative guidance in this respect.

It is invariably the case that continuing Budget cuts across Government Departments and public sector reform will have a significant impact on NICCY – as with all others across the Public and the Children's and Young People's sectors. Decisions to move the Children's and Young People's Unit under the remit of Department of Education from OFMDFM and proposals to move NICCY's sponsoring department in similar fashion have given cause for concern – not just for NICCY but also within the Children's and Young People's sector.

We will continue to address with Ministers, Officials and relevant stakeholders.

The reduction from 12 Government Departments to 9 before the 2016 NI Assembly elections, reduction in the numbers of employees and the reconfiguration of Departmental remits remains to be seen. NICCY will work to influence the Programme for Government in the best interests of our Children and Young People as its key Child Rights Advisor.

NICCY is a member of the European Network of Ombudsmen and Commissioners for Children (ENOC) [www.ombudsnet.org](http://www.ombudsnet.org) as well as the British Irish Network (BINOCC); as such we work collectively on issues of common concern (see later).

### **Economic context**

It has been a difficult year as austerity measures and cuts by Governments across Europe impact on Children, Young People and families. In N. Ireland, cuts to the block grant from Westminster, Public Sector Reform e.g. the reduction in the number of Government Departments, reductions in staffing levels across the public sector including NDPBs such as NICCY have all impacted. The reduction in funding levels available to the NGO sector is also increasingly resulting in a reduction of service provision for Children and Young People. NICCY has been approached by organisations concerned that they can no longer provide the necessary support services as levels of socio economic disadvantage rise. We will continue to

highlight the adverse impacts of cuts, austerity measures, child poverty levels and indeed, the impact of pending welfare reform and further anticipated cuts to budgets on our most vulnerable.

For NICCY these cuts meant in-year cuts of 4% and resulted in a 7% reduction to our annual budget going forward into the 2015-16 business year. Given that we had to reduce spend annually by 3% over the CSR period, this now necessitates – as it does across other NDPBs – in a reduction in staffing levels and restructuring as well as a review of our annual Business Plan.

### **Social context**

NICCY has focused on the negative stereotyping of Children and Young People which has been evident in the proposed Age discrimination legislation in relation to access to goods, facilities and services. It has been of great concern since this legislation was proposed that it would exclude under 18 year olds. The UN committee in its concluding observations in 2008 has called on the UK Government to address the issue of the negative stereotyping of Children and Young People. NICCY has worked tirelessly on this with Ministers, Politicians and with the Children's and Young People's sector as well as with Children and Young People and Parents to ensure that this anti discriminatory piece of legislation does not discriminate against them.

In February 2015 at a meeting in Stormont Castle, the OFMDFM Junior Ministers

informed us that the upcoming consultation would in fact, exclude under 16 year olds. NICCY in collaboration with the Equality Commission NI has given evidence to the OFMDFM Committee, commissioned and submitted expert legal opinion, held joint events and continued to engage with stakeholders. We raised the necessity to include reference to the scope of the age range in this legislation in the consultation document and EQIA due to be launched soon. NICCY like others, is keen to ensure that our Children and Young People are not discriminated on the basis of age in age discrimination legislation!

### **Technological context**

Social media continues to bring concerns alongside its benefits. Issues of online exploitation, grooming and cyber bullying continue to inform the work NICCY has engaged in with Government Departments as part of its work on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) following the Marshall Inquiry (DHSSPS, DoJ and DE/ETI), PSNI's Operation OWL and the awaited SBNI's Thematic Review. The roundtable meetings held have facilitated monitoring and information sharing.

We appreciate that our children and young people, as well as adults, continue to engage with these new and developing technologies, shaping how they engage and interact with each other and wider society. As always our priority is to ensure, as far as possible, that children and young people are safeguarded and protected.

In NICCY our upgrading of online / social media communications has continued as we finalised the new website to make it more accessible, user friendly and relevant to/for all our stakeholders. We are also finalising our new management information system which is nearing completion. This will be more 'fit for purpose'.

### **Environmental context**

We operate in a complex environment, much of which has been highlighted already, and we are aware of the various 'environmental factors', political, economic, social, technological and indeed physical, which impact on our work. Corporate social responsibility means we are aware of the need to develop 'green' policies, sharing of services, energy efficiencies where possible.

Due to the size and nature of the office – where we share a building with other NDPBs - there is limited scope to promote sustainability in comparison with larger NDPBs and central government departments. A key activity in which we contribute to sustainability is through recycling e.g. the majority of waste paper is shredded and recycled and printer cartridges - after use, are returned to the manufacturers for recycling.

Furthermore, through the building's 'Energy Group' in Equality House, the sustainability measures and procedures introduced by the Equality Commission are disseminated and adopted by the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland in order to promote greener and more energy efficient ways of working.

### **Legislative Context**

NICCY was established by the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (see earlier). The Order outlines NICCY's functions, duties and powers though the principal aim of the Office is to 'safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people' up to the age of 18 or up to 21 for those with a disability or who have experience of being in the care of the State. While the detailed duties and powers (in support of the fulfilment of those duties) are set out in the legislation, they may be grouped as follows:

- Promoting Awareness of Children's and Young People's Rights, the UNCRC and NICCY - the Commissioner's work is fundamentally guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); in promoting rights, the Commissioner must communicate effectively with children and young people and their parents/guardians/carers and must raise awareness of her functions, location of her office and how she may be contacted. She is also required to seek the views of children and young people in her work;
- Advising Government on Children's and Young People's Rights and Best Interests – both reactively - in response to requests from Government; and proactively - as the Commissioner so determines; monitoring and reviewing law, practice and services as they impact/may impact on them, their lives

and outcomes; The Commissioner bases her work in evidence whether through research, casework trends, and/or matters brought to her attention.

- Addressing Rights Breaches and Complaints – [legal action] - the Commissioner can deal with individual complaints from children and young persons, or their parents/guardians/ carers about any services provided by ‘relevant authorities’.

The Commissioner has the power to undertake service reviews, general inquiries, research or investigations into issues where she believes children and young people’s rights are being adversely affected.

Other key areas of legislation, proposed legislation, policies and strategies as well as international recommendations such as Concluding Observations following State Party examinations, General Comments from the United Nations’ Committee and calls for Optional Protocols to be adopted all have a major influence on the lives of children and young people within Northern Ireland. These are all areas ‘kept under review’ as required in statute, in terms of their ‘adequacy and effectiveness’.

This year saw the introduction of the Human Trafficking Act; ongoing work on the SEND Bill; Children’s Services Co-operation Bill; Age legislation progressed and the aforementioned Public Sector Reform necessitating a ‘Transfer of Functions’.

In relation to NICCY, the review of the legislation remains a focus for us as we await the formal final response to recommendations from OFMDFM as highlighted earlier.

### **Domestic, National and International Dimensions**

NICCY has continued to work towards strengthening children’s rights through its membership and work with the Equality and Human Rights Commissions, British and Irish Network of Ombudsmen and Children’s Commissioners (BINOCC), European Network of Ombudsmen’s for Children (ENOC), UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), Council of Europe (CoE) as well as those Bodies/Committee overseeing other International Human Rights Instruments.

### **British Irish Network of Ombudsman and Commissioners [BINOCC]**

The network holds quarterly meetings on a rotational basis to address and collaborate on issues of common concern across the jurisdictions. This year they have included a focus on Child Poverty and the impact of austerity measures; Child Sexual Exploitation; legislative developments in each jurisdiction; and other relevant issues as they arose, as well as the production of a 4 Commissioners’ Report to the UN Committee in relation to the UK State Party 5<sup>th</sup> Periodic Report.

The Commissioner Patricia Lewsley-Mooney and I also met with, and presented a paper to, the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) who were carrying out work on Human Rights in the devolved UK administrations.

It has been a year of transition for 4 of the 5 BINOCC Offices due to the ending of tenure by Commissioners here in N. Ireland and also in England, Ireland and Wales. Koulla Yiasouma took up appointment on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 in N. Ireland. Anne Longfield in England, Sally Ireland in Wales and Niall Muldoon in Ireland.

### **European Network of Commissioners**

ENOC aims to encourage the fullest possible implementation of the UNCRC, share and disseminate information, promote children's rights and support and promote the development of effective independent offices for Children. Its Annual Conference this year was held in Edinburgh, the theme of which was 'The Impact of Austerity on the Realisation of Children's Rights'.

The Network of Commissioners and Ombudsmen across Europe issued their collective statement on austerity measures and the adverse impact these were / are having on Children and Young People - calling on Governments across the EU to implement appropriate actions to address these ([you can read the ENOC statement](#)). NICCY also disseminated this – as with other statements/information - to NI Government, our MEPs and stakeholders as and when we received them.

Young People from member States i.e. the European Network Youth Advisors (ENYA) worked to produce a video project on how they were experiencing the impact of austerity measures / poverty. This was shown at the Annual Conference and subsequently made available across member States – NICCY facilitated the showing of this by the Child Poverty Alliance at the launch of their report in Parliament Buildings.

### **Council of Europe**

NICCY is developing its European links and to this end, met Ms. Regina Jensdottir, Coordinator for Children's Rights and Head of Children's Rights Division, Council of Europe at the ENOC annual conference and discussed areas of common interest, inviting her here in the future. We will continue to work on these links and those with our MEPs.

### **United Nations**

This year our focus has very much been on the UK State Party Report to the Committee in preparation of the session on its fifth periodic report to the UN Committee overseeing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. (UNCRC). NICCY along with the other 3 Children's Commissioners from each of the UK jurisdictions is currently working on the submission of a combined report as in 2008. While there are overarching areas which affect each jurisdiction, we are also keen to ensure focus on those areas specific to N. Ireland.



Since 2012 when we had Kirsten Sandberg (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child) at our first Annual Conference – we have continued to engage and liaise with the Committee. This year we were delighted that Professor Olga Khazova from the Committee was our keynote Speaker at NICCY’s Annual Conference (see earlier). Just as we organised visits to secure facilities for Kirsten so too, we organised visits to Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre and to speak with Young People ‘educated other than at school’. These visits give some understanding and appreciation to the Committee members when they then return and feedback to the others on the Committee.

NICCY has also prepared a submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which will be reviewed and updated for submission in line with the appropriate timescales.

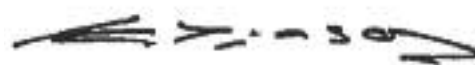
### **Commissioner’s Concluding Remarks**

As I took up the post of Commissioner for Children and Young People on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 I commend and acknowledge the work of the previous Commissioner Patricia Lewsley-Mooney, Mairéad

McCafferty (CEO) and all the staff at NICCY for their hard work over the year and am looking forward to building on this work.

The rights of all our children and young people and their families must be protected at all times and the uncertain economic climate that we are facing in Northern Ireland must not be an excuse to compromise on our society’s responsibility to protect and promote these rights.

NICCY will take seriously our role as the statutory body charged with protecting the rights of all children and young people and will continue to work them and their families to ensure that they have a voice and we fully understand the reality of their lives. We will continue to work collaboratively with children’s rights advocates across all sectors to ensure maximum impact and will scrutinise and hold government to account in line with the duties, powers and functions of this Office.



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
**30<sup>th</sup> September 2015**



# REMUNERATION REPORT

# REMUNERATION REPORT

## Remuneration Policy

The remuneration of the Commissioner and the Chief Executive is approved by the Minister for Finance and Personnel following independent advice from the Review Body on Senior Salaries. Further information about the work of the Review Body can be found at <http://www.ome.uk.com>.

The Director of Equality and Strategy Directorate in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister assesses the performance of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, whilst the performance of the Chief Executive is assessed by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, using the formal appraisal system adopted by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

The remuneration of senior civil servants is set by the Minister for Finance and Personnel. The Minister approved a restructured SCS pay settlement broadly in line with the Senior Salaries Review Board report which he commissioned in 2010. The commitment to a Pay and Grading Review for SCS was the second phase of the equal pay settlement approved by the Executive.

## Service Contracts

The appointment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is made by the First Minister and deputy First Minister under Article 5 of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003, and in accordance with the recruitment code of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The terms and conditions are as set out in Schedule 2 to the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003.

Patricia Lewsley was appointed as Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland on 8th January 2007 for a four-year period. On 8th January 2011 she was reappointed for a further four year period which was completed on 7th January 2015.

Koulla Yiasouma was appointed as Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland and took up appointment on 2nd March 2015 for a four year term.

The other members of the Senior Management Team are direct employees of the Commissioner; the appointments, which are permanent, are analogous to grades in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) with terms and conditions that are very similar but not necessarily identical to those that apply to the NICS.

Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil service Compensation Scheme.



## Salary and Pension Entitlement (Audited)

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioner and Senior Management.

Commissioner	2014-15				2013-14			
	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits** (to nearest £1000)	Total (to nearest £1000)	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits** (to nearest £1000)	Total (to nearest £1000)
K.Yiasouma (Commissioner) (From 2nd March 2015 until 31st March 2015)	5-10 (75-80 full year equivalent)	0	2	5 - 10	0	0	0	0
P.Lewsley (Previous Commissioner) (From 1st April 2014 until 7th January 2015)	60-65 (80-85 full year equivalent)	0	18	80 - 85	80 - 85	0	21	100-105

General Management	2014-15					2013-14				
	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits** (to nearest £10000)	Total (to nearest £1000)	Salary (to nearest £'000)	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits** (to nearest £1000)	Total (to nearest £1000)
M McCafferty (Chief Executive )	65-70	0	0	26	90-95	60 - 65	0	0	24	85-90
M Kinghan (Head of Communications and Participation)	50-55	0	0	24	75-80	50 – 55	0	0	54	105-110
A Tennant (Head of Policy & Research)	45-50	0	0	1	50-55	45 – 50	0	0	0	45-50
M Simpson (Head of Legal & Investigations)	55-60	0	0	22	75-80	55 - 60	0	0	20	75 - 80
<b>Band of Highest Paid Staff</b>	75 - 80					80 - 85				
<b>Member's Total Remuneration</b>										
<b>Median Total Remuneration</b>	30,081					29,554				
<b>Ratio</b>	2.5					2.8				

\*\* 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 include increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

## **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 gratia payments.

This report is based on payments made by the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland and thus recorded in these accounts.

## **Benefits in Kind**

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by the HM Revenue & Customs as a taxable emolument. The Commissioner and other members of the Senior Management Team did not receive any benefits in kind during the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

## **Bonuses**

Bonuses are based on performance levels attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. There were no bonuses reported in 2014-15 and there were no bonuses reported for 2013-14.

## Pension Entitlement (Audited)

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/15 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and sum related lump at pension age	CETV at 31/3/15	CETV at 31/3/14	Real increase in CETV	Employer contribution to partnership pension account
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	Nearest £100
<b>Commissioner</b>						
P Lewsley (From 1st April 2014 until 7th January 2015)	0 – 5 No lump sum	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	90	67	17	0
K Yiasouma (From 2nd March 2015 until 31st March 2015)	0 – 5 No lump sum	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	2	0	1	0
<b>General Management</b>						
M Kinghan (Head of Communications and Participation)	25 – 30 No lump sum	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	525	480	20	0
M Simpson (Head of Legal & Investigations)	5 – 10 No lump sum	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	86	66	13	0
M McCafferty (Chief Executive)	0 – 5 No lump sum	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	60	38	14	0
A. Tennant (Head of Policy & Research)	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	1	0	1	0

## Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension arrangements -

Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP). 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). These arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by the Assembly each year. From April 2011 pensions payable under classic, premium, and classic plus are increased annually in line with changes in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). Prior to 2011, pensions were increased in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index (RPI). New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining a good quality 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account). New entrants joining on or after 30 July 2007 are eligible for membership of the nuvos arrangement or they can opt for a partnership pension account. Nuvos 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 current rate is 2.3%. CARE pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases in the CPI.

A new pension scheme, alpha, will be introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The majority of existing members of the NICS pension arrangements will move to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age will 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 also 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 will be 2.32%. CARE pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases in the CPI. For 2015, public service pensions will be increased by 1.2% for pensions which began before 6 April 2014. Pensions which began after 6 April 2014 will be increased proportionately.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016 are as follows:

## Scheme Year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016:

Pay band – assessed each pay period		Contribution rates – Classic members	Contribution rates – Classic plus, premium, nuvos and alpha
From	To	From 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016	From 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016
£0	£15,000.99	3%	4.6%
£15,001.00	£21,000.99	4.6%	4.6%
£21,001.00	£47,000.99	5.45%	5.45%
£47,001.00	£150,000.99	7.35%	7.35%
£150,001.00 and above		8.05%	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 3% and 12.5% (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 0.8% 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 pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**. The normal pension age in alpha will be linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. Further details about the CSP arrangements can be found at the website [www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni](http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-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 CSP 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 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.

### **Compensation for Loss of Office**

There were no such cases during the 2014-15 business year.

Signed by:



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
**30<sup>th</sup> September 2015**



# STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

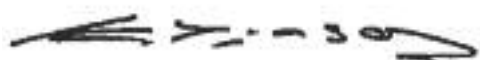
Under Schedule 2 11 (1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has directed the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts 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 state of affairs of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland and of its total comprehensive 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 Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, 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 a going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has designated the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland as Accounting Officer of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland. The Chief Executive assumed these responsibilities in the absence of the Commissioner prior to new appointee taking up position. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's assets, are set out in *Managing Public Money NI* published by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Signed by:



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
**30<sup>th</sup> September 2015**



# GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland (NICCY) is a Corporation Sole. The role was established under The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The Office of the Commissioner is an executive non departmental public body funded by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The Accounting Officer of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) has designated me as the Accounting Officer for NICCY. In this role I am personally responsible for propriety and regularity in the management of public funds for which I have charge and for the day to day operations and management of NICCY.

The relationship between NICCY and OFMDFM is set out in NICCY's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) as agreed with OFMDFM and DFP. The MSFM also sets out my role and responsibilities as Accounting Officer which include:

- Establish, in agreement with OFMDFM, the Commissioner's corporate and business plans in support of the Department's wider strategic aims and current Programme for Government objectives and targets;
- Ensure compliance with the Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy;
- Ensure that a system of risk management is maintained to inform decisions on financial and operational planning and to assist in achieving objectives and targets;
- Ensure that adequate internal management and financial controls are maintained by the Commissioner, including effective measures against fraud and theft; and
- Sign the accounts and be responsible for ensuring that proper records are kept relating to the accounts and that the accounts are properly prepared and presented in accordance with any directions issued by the Ministers, OFMDFM, or DFP.

There have been no Ministerial Directions given during the period under review.



## Framework / Instruments of Governance

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and departmental assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI).

The system of governance, internal control and risk management I have put in place is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide high and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

As Accounting Officer I retain ultimate responsibility for the organisation's system of internal control, providing clear direction and ensuring that effective risk management and governance processes are embedded throughout the organisation and that they are regularly reviewed. I am in this, supported by my Chief Executive Officer, Senior Management Team and Audit and Risk Committee.

An Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has been appointed, who take responsibility for oversight of the risk management process. They endorse the organisation's Risk Management Strategy/Policies and review the Corporate Risk Register to provide challenge and advice in a non executive capacity. Attendance of members for meetings held in the period under review is as follows:

- Julie Erskine (Chair) 4 out of 4
- JP Irvine (Member) 4 out of 4
- Joe Campbell (Member) 4 out of 4

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members undertake an annual evaluation of the committee's effectiveness and performance. The Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee were reviewed again in quarter 3 of 2014.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) is required to meet quarterly in line with its Terms of Reference. In July 2013 the 3 current members were appointed and ARAC then met once per quarter which fitted well with its work programme ensuring that all issues are dealt with on a timely basis. Meetings were held 4 July 2014, 13 October 2014, 1 December 2014 and 23 March 2015.

The Chief Executive of NICCY has delegated authority for day to day management of the Organisation, Staff, Finances, Strategic Planning, Resources and Governance arrangements as well as implementation of Corporate and Business Plan objectives.

The Chief Executive reports directly to me and is performance managed via regular 1:1 meetings and an annual appraisal process. The Chief Executive ensures appropriate monitoring and management of significant risks identified by SMT and oversees risk management procedures and has also produced a Corporate Governance Framework for the organisation which is periodically reviewed and updated.

The Senior Management Team comprises the Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Investigations, Head of Communications and Participation and Head of Policy and Research. The Senior Management Team is responsible for exercising management of the Commissioner's functions and activities, leading on and delivering my strategic vision, policies and services to the public and other stakeholders. Terms of Reference for SMT have been agreed and are reviewed and updated periodically. The Senior Management Team has formal meetings once every month; these are chaired by the Chief Executive. These meetings are the forum for business matters, objectives, information dissemination and direction. Consensus is the general 'modus operandi' with decisions and direction given by the Chief Executive. As ultimate decision making responsibility resides with me, strategically important decisions are brought to me and will not be made without my approval.

The Chief Executive takes direct reports from the three Heads of Department, the Finance Officer and the Human Resources Officer. It is the role of the Chief Executive to line manage them effectively, to ensure that their performance and respective outputs are of a high standard. This is achieved via the performance management and evaluation framework in operation, regular 1:1 meetings, quarterly assurance statements provided by the Heads of Departments and the annual appraisal process as well as ongoing daily support and advice. I am content that these systems and processes are working effectively and as a result I am satisfied that the quality of data and information provided by my Senior Management Team, upon which I base my decisions, is of a high standard.

The Senior Management Team meet formally with members of their own respective teams to steer and lead on strategically important areas of work at a departmental level.

A "Whistle Blowing" Policy is in place. This policy has been developed to support staff, including myself, in raising any serious concerns they may have, and provides a reporting framework and reassurance to staff that they will not be victimised as a result of using this policy.

Finally as Accounting Officer I am cognisant of the 'Corporate Governance Code in central government departments: Code of good practice'. In discharging my duties in relation to governance within NICCY has been in full compliance with the guidance in the period under review.

## Capacity to Handle Risk

As Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland, I have developed a robust structure and system for overseeing the risk management process within NICCY and for ensuring that objectives and risks have been identified alongside a range of organisational controls to manage and mitigate these risks. All members of the senior management team and other staff members have recently been trained in risk management best practice by CIPFA to identify and assess risks which might impact on corporate or business plan objectives.

A reviewed and updated Risk Management Policy and newly formatted Corporate Risk Register is in place to define NICCY's system for managing risk. The corporate register includes for each identified risk, the risk description, level of inherent risk and relating weighting, mitigating controls documented, level of residual risk, and further mitigating controls as well as highlighting a date of assessment and risk lead officer for each risk identified.

NICCY's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has oversight of the initiatives taken by executive officers to promote risk management throughout the organisation. Risk management is a standing agenda item at senior management team meetings where risks may be escalated to the Chief Executive and the Corporate Risk Register. I meet monthly with members of my senior management team to review and update NICCY's risk management processes and the corporate risk register.

Alongside the corporate risk register, each department within NICCY has recently developed in a new format its own specific risk register which is reviewed on a quarterly basis with guidance provided by the Finance Officer. Risk Management is a regular agenda item at departmental team meetings. The departmental risk registers link directly with the corporate risk register and business plan.

The corporate risk register details the following key business risks:

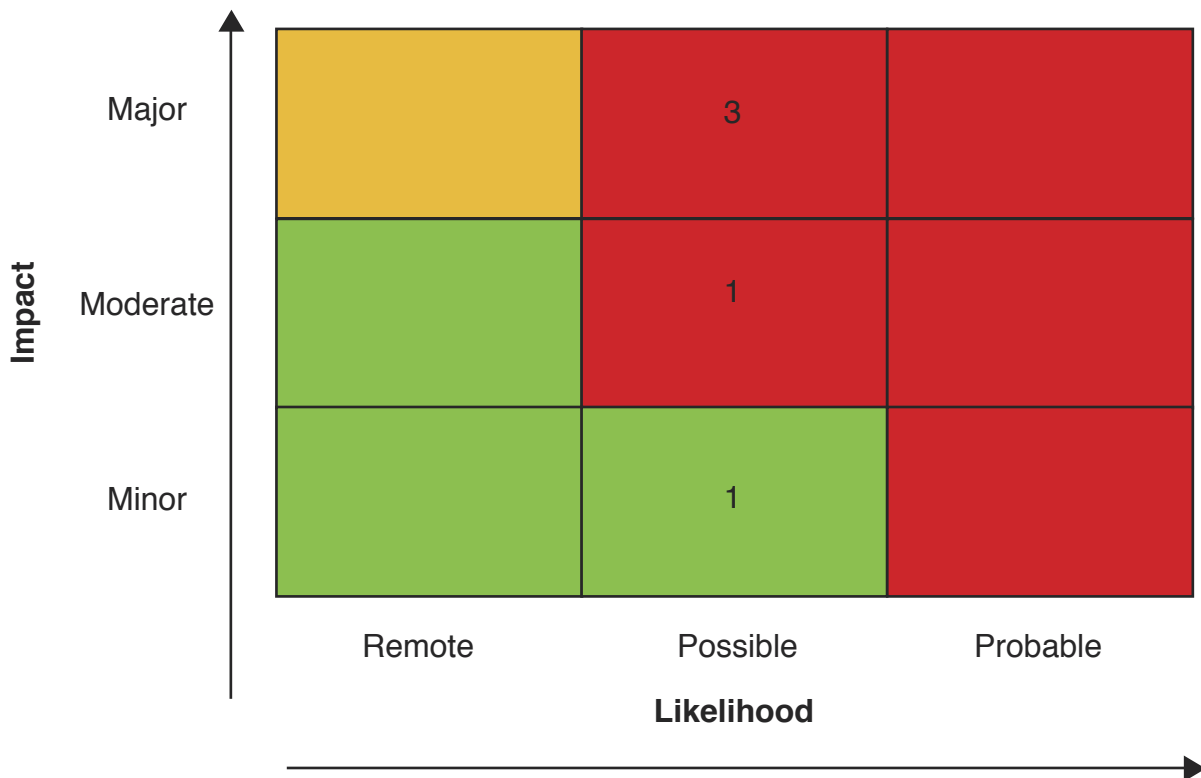
- 1. Corporate Governance:** Failure to maintain and further develop best practice governance arrangements to maximise efficient, effective and economical use of NICCY resources in order to deliver corporate objectives. Failure to deliver business objectives highlighted within the 2014-15 Business Plan.
- 2. Systems of Control:** Failure to ensure effective systems, internal controls and ICT protocols are in place and are being implemented, including business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements. Failure to ensure systems are adequate in relation to data protection guidelines. Failure of systems to adequately protect against Fraud or to identify cases of fraudulent activity.

**3. Compliance:** Failure to adequately manage necessary changes iro required savings / cuts to annual budget. Failure to comply with legislation in relation to issues such as Equality.

**4. Performance Management:** Failure to deliver objectives due to the absence of staff, under performance, industrial action and/or failure to recruit and retain appropriately skilled staff. Failure to deliver on budget. Failure to deliver on procurement/ tenders

**5. Corporate Identity:** Reputational damage due to the lack of understanding in the role of NICCY and the services it delivers

When plotted on to the heat map/matrix according to residual controlled risk, these risks result in an organisational risk profile as follows:



Specific controls in place and further mitigating actions required are contained within NICCY’s Corporate Risk Register.

I report on risk management to OFMDFM on a quarterly basis and keep OFMDFM appraised of any changes and/or developments to the Corporate Risk Register. OFMDFM has also designated a liaison officer who attends each quarterly meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

## Review of Effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. NICCY confirms its review of the governance, internal control and risk management arrangements which are operational within NICCY.

My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- The work of the Internal Auditors as part of the annual internal audit cycle;
- The work of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and comments/recommendations made by them in their Report to Those Charged with Governance;
- The work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee including observations made and advice given at ARAC meetings throughout the year; and
- The quality, timeliness and relevance of outputs from the Chief Executive and Heads of Department and implementation of audit recommendations within the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland throughout the year.

The progress observed in the implementation of recommendations stemming from various audit reports throughout the year and subsequent analysis of observed progress against expected.

The Internal Audit annual assurance report in respect of the year ended 31 March 2014 provided an overall level of assurance of “Satisfactory” in relation to the adequacy of the systems of control in place within the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland and their operation throughout the period under review. The areas under review for year 2013-14 were as follows:

<b>Audit Area</b>	<b>Assurance Rating</b>
IT, Information Security, Business Continuity, Data Protection and Freedom of Information	Satisfactory
Procurement and Contract Management	Satisfactory
Financial Systems	Satisfactory

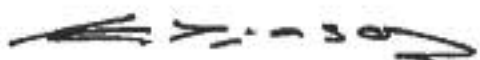


Whilst there have been no significant issues arising in the period under review, an action plan has been drawn up to address all weaknesses identified during the audit processes and I have given priority to improving the internal control environment and will ensure that all recommendations are implemented accordingly. Updates on the implementation of audit recommendations are provided to the Department via quarterly Assurance Statements. The Assurance Statement addresses a range of governance and control areas across the organisation including progression on internal/external audit recommendations as well as risk management reporting. There is also a section within the statement where Direct Award Contracts (DACs) are reported. Assurance Statements are completed and forwarded on to OFMDFM at the end of each quarter.

### **Review of my own effectiveness**

In order to review and ensure my own effectiveness as Accounting Officer I go through an annual appraisal process with the Director of Equality and Strategy Directorate within the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. This meeting provides an opportunity for the Department to raise any issues in relation to my performance and if necessary put in place arrangements to address any problems. To my knowledge no issues were raised in the most recent appraisal of the outgoing Commissioner. I have not yet had such a review meeting.

Furthermore, I have quarterly accountability meetings with Officials from the Department. In preparation for these meetings a checklist of NICCYs governance and risk management arrangements will have been completed to inform discussions at these meetings. During the four meetings held in the period under review there were no exceptions or issues noted.



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
**30th September 2015**



# THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL

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

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2015 under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. These comprise the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the information in the Remuneration Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

### **Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and auditor**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's 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. My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

### **Scope of the audit of the financial statements**

An audit involves obtaining 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. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition I read all the financial and non-financial information in the Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies I consider the implications for my certificate.

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.

### **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.

### **Opinion on financial statements**

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's affairs as at 31 March 2015 and of the net expenditure, cash flows and changes in taxpayers' equity for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister directions issued thereunder.

### **Opinion on other matters**

In my opinion:

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister directions made under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003; and
- the information given in the Director's Report and the Strategic Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

### **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 part of the Remuneration 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 Department of Finance and Personnel'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*  
*12th October 2015*





# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE  
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015**

	Notes	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Staff Salaries and Commissioner's Fees	2	(1,043,489)	(1,040,452)
Operating Costs	3	(227,808)	(237,924)
Programme Costs	4	(102,807)	(123,127)
Depreciation & Amortisation	3	(13,188)	(18,255)
Loss on disposal of non-current assets	3	(0)	(41,937)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Expenditure		(1,387,292)	(1,461,695)
<b>Other comprehensive net expenditure</b>			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of Property Plant and Equipment		161	(2,930)
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of Intangibles		163	102
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure</b>		<b>(1,386,968)</b>	<b>(1,464,523)</b>

The notes on pages 65-78 form part of these accounts.



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2015

	Notes	2015 £	2014 £
<b>Non-current Assets</b>			
Property, plant & equipment	5	16,437	24,451
Intangible assets	6	13,145	12,951
Total non-current assets		<u>29,582</u>	<u>37,402</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Trade and other receivables	8	44	2,056
Other current assets	8	11,808	12,641
Cash & cash equivalents	9	87,263	147,158
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>99,115</u>	<u>161,855</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u>128,697</u>	<u>199,257</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	(1,234)	(22,141)
Other liabilities	10	(83,452)	(97,137)
Total current liabilities		<u>(84,686)</u>	<u>(119,278)</u>
<b>Non-current assets plus net current assets less current liabilities</b>		<u>44,011</u>	<u>79,979</u>
<b>Assets less liabilities</b>		<u>44,011</u>	<u>79,979</u>
<b>Taxpayers' Equity</b>			
General Reserve		31,163	67,455
Revaluation Reserve		12,848	12,524
		<u>44,011</u>	<u>79,979</u>

The financial statements on pages 60-64 were approved by the Commissioner:

The notes on pages 65-78 form part of these accounts.

Signed by



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
**30<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

	Notes	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net deficit after interest		(1,387,292)	(1,461,695)
Adjustment for non-cash transactions:			
Depreciation & Amortisation	3	13,188	18,255
Loss on disposal of non-current assets	3	0	41,937
Decrease/(increase) in receivables	8	2,845	2,434
(Decrease)/increase in payables	10	(34,592)	13,365
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(1,405,851)</b>	<b>(1,385,704)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant & equipment	5	0	0
Purchase of intangible assets	6	(5,044)	(10,799)
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>(5,044)</b>	<b>(10,799)</b>
<b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>			
Grant-in-Aid received from OFMDFM		1,351,000	1,447,000
<b>Net Financing</b>		<b>1,351,000</b>	<b>1,447,000</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period</b>		<b>(59,895)</b>	<b>50,497</b>
Cash and Cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	9	147,158	96,661
Cash and Cash equivalents at the end of the period	9	87,263	147,158

The notes on pages 65-78 form part of these accounts.

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAX PAYERS' EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015**

	<b>Revaluation Reserve £</b>	<b>SoCNE Reserve £</b>	<b>Total Reserves £</b>
<b>Balance at 01 April 2013</b>	15,352	82,150	97,502
<b>Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2013-14</b>			
Grant-in-Aid received from Parent	0	1,447,000	1,447,000
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year	(2,828)	(1,461,695)	(1,464,523)
<b>Movements in Reserves</b>	<u>(2,828)</u>	<u>(14,695)</u>	<u>(17,523)</u>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2014</b>	<u>12,524</u>	<u>67,455</u>	<u>79,979</u>
<b>Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2014-15</b>			
Grant-in-Aid received from Parent	0	1,351,000	1,351,000
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year	324	(1,387,292)	(1,386,968)
<b>Movements in Reserves</b>	<u>324</u>	<u>(36,292)</u>	<u>(35,968)</u>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2015</b>	<u>12,848</u>	<u>31,163</u>	<u>44,011</u>

The notes on pages 65-78 form part of these accounts.

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

### Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Schedule 2 11 (1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and in accordance with the 2014-15 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland. The accounting policies contained in the 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 which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Commissioner for Children and Young People are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

#### 1.1 Accounting Convention

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

#### 1.2 Funding

The activities of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland are fully funded by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. Income from other sources is immaterial. Permission must be sought from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister before non-grant income can be applied to the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's activities. Non-grant income for which departmental approval to use is not forthcoming is surrendered to the Consolidated Fund.

Grant-in-Aid received, used to finance activities and expenditure which support the statutory and other objective of the Commissioner for Children and Young People are treated as financing. It is credited to the General Reserve because it is regarded as contributions from a controlling party.

#### 1.3 Expenditure

All expenditure on goods and services fall within the ambit of the Grant-in-Aid and complies with the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's Financial Memorandum and government purchasing requirements.

#### **1.4 Property, Plant and Equipment**

The property, plant and equipment additions are fully funded by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The cost of all property, plant and equipment has been restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end. The revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve.

A capitalisation threshold of £1,000 was applied in the prior year, increased from £500. This is a change in accounting policy in accordance with IAS 8.

#### **1.5 Intangible Assets**

The intangible asset additions are fully funded by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The cost of all intangible assets has been restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end. The revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve.

A capitalisation threshold of £1,000 was applied in the prior year, increased from £500. This is a change in accounting policy in accordance with IAS 8.

#### **1.6 Depreciation and Amortisation**

Depreciation and Amortisation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset evenly over its expected life as follows:

- Furniture and Fittings 10 years
- Fixtures 10 years
- Office Equipment 3 years
- IT Equipment 3 - 4 years
- Intangibles 3 - 4 years

#### **1.7 Financial Instruments**

##### *Cash and cash equivalents*

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand.

##### *Trade and other receivables*

Trade receivables do not carry any interest and are recognised and carried at the lower of their original invoiced value and recoverable amount. Provision is made when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired. Balances are written off when the probability of recovery is assessed as being remote.

### *Trade and other payables*

Trade payables are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

### **1.8 Pension Costs**

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). The defined benefit scheme is unfunded and is non-contributory except in respect of dependants' benefits. The Commissioner for Children and young people for Northern Ireland 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 Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payments of future benefits is a charge on the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). In respect of the defined contribution schemes, the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland recognises the contributions payable for the year.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up-to-date actuarial valuation was carried out based on data as at 31 March 2012 and these details are available in the PCSPS (NI) resource accounts.

### **1.9 Value Added Tax**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is not registered for VAT.

### **1.10 Investments**

The Commissioner does not undertake any investment activities.

### **1.11 Inventories**

The value of inventories of consumables is immaterial and the Commissioner does not attribute a value for inventories in the accounts.

### **1.12 Operating Leases**

Operating Lease costs are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure as incurred over the period of the lease.

### **1.13 Operating Segments**

The Accounting Officer considers the Commissioner for Children and Young People as one operating unit in making decisions. Management information is generated on a holistic basis for the organisation.



### 1.14 Staff Costs

Under IAS19 Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obliged to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken annual leave and flexible time owed as at the year end.

### 1.15 Provisions

The Commissioner for Children and Young People makes provision for liabilities and charges where, at the Statement of Financial Position date, a legal or constructive liability exists (that is a present obligation from past events exists), where the transfer of economic benefits is probable and a reasonable estimate can be made. Where the time value of money is material, the provision is discounted to its present value.

### 1.16 Adoption of new and revised standards

Management has reviewed new accounting standards that have been issued but are not yet effective, nor adopted early for these accounts. Management consider that these are unlikely to have a significant impact on the accounts in the period of initial application.

## 2. Staff numbers and related costs (including Commissioner)

	2014-15	2013-14
	£	£
Commissioner Fees	92,290	108,750
Staff Salaries	951,199	931,702
	<u>1,043,489</u>	<u>1,040,452</u>

### 2(a) Commissioner Fee

	2014-15	2013-14
	£	£
Commissioner Fees	68,685	80,830
Social Security Costs	7,464	8,924
Pension Costs	16,141	18,995
	<u>92,290</u>	<u>108,749</u>

## 2(b) Staff Costs including Commissioners Fees

	Total	Permanent staff	2014-15 Others (Agency & seconded)	2013-14 Total
	£	£	£	£
Wages and Salaries	819,208	819,208	0	820,940
Social Security Costs	67,882	67,882	0	68,530
Other Pension Costs	156,399	156,399	0	150,982
Total Net Costs	<u>1,043,489</u>	<u>1,043,489</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,040,452</u>

### Pension Arrangements

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS(NI)) is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme but the Commissioner for Children and young people for Northern Ireland is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2012. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the DFP Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2015. Details can be found in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation ([www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk](http://www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk)).

For 2014-15, employers' contributions of £156,399 were payable to the PCSPS(NI) (2013-14 £150,982) at one of four rates in the range 18.0 to 25 per cent of pensionable pay (2013-14: 18.0 to 25 per cent), based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A new scheme funding valuation based on data as at 31 March 2012 was completed by the Actuary during 2014-15. This valuation was used to determine employer contribution rates for the introduction of a new career average earning scheme from April 2015. From 2015-16, the rates will range from 20.8% to 26.3%. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2014-15 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. No employees of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland took up this option.

No employees retired early on ill-health grounds during 2014-15.

The Commissioner is a member of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) on the same basis as all other members of staff. At 31 March 2015 the Commissioner has served 1 month of her 4 year term.

## 2(c) Average Number of Persons Employed

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

	Total	Permanent staff	2014-15 Number Other (Agency & seconded)	2013-14 Number Total
Commissioner	0.9	0.9	0	1
General	18.9	18.9	0	18
Management	4	4	0	4
	<b>23.8</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>

### 2.1 Reporting of Civil Service and Other compensation schemes – exit packages

There were no redundancy or other departure costs paid by NICCY for the year ending 31 March 2015.

### 3. Operating Costs

	2014-15	2013-14
	£	£
Rentals under operating leases	44,000	48,720
Service Charge	3,300	2,610
Rates	27,500	29,725
Electricity	11,000	9,425
Repairs	0	144
Travel & Subsistence	10,496	7,149
Staff Recruitment	659	3,257
Staff Training	12,923	13,508
Postage	1,474	2,301
Telephones	5,787	9,963
Hospitality	696	644
Audit – external	13,500	11,249
Insurance	0	285
Miscellaneous	1,555	8,796
Office Consumables	5,360	9,661
Annual Contracts	52,324	45,202
Legal Costs	0	600
Corporate Services	37,234	34,685
	<u>227,808</u>	<u>237,924</u>
Non-cash items:		
Depreciation & Amortisation	13,188	18,255
Transfer of Assets	0	41,937
	<u>240,996</u>	<u>298,116</u>

#### 4. Programme Costs

	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Communication & Participation	44,530	50,747
Legal & Investigations	29,967	32,758
Policy & Research	28,310	39,622
	<u>102,807</u>	<u>123,127</u>

#### 5. Property, Plant & Equipment

Cost or valuation	Information Technology £	Office Equipment £	Furniture £	Fixtures £	Total 2015 £
At 01 April 2014	128,503	36,102	106,203	18,608	289,416
Additions	0	0	0	0	0
Transfers	0	0	0	0	0
Revaluation	1,197	474	506	89	2,266
<b>At 31 March 2015</b>	<u>129,700</u>	<u>36,576</u>	<u>106,709</u>	<u>18,697</u>	<u>291,682</u>

#### Depreciation

At 01 April 2014	119,257	36,102	96,844	12,762	264,965
Charged in year	4,760	0	2,576	839	8,175
Transfers	0	0	0	0	0
Revaluation	1,109	474	461	61	2,105
<b>At 31 March 2015</b>	<u>125,126</u>	<u>36,576</u>	<u>99,881</u>	<u>13,662</u>	<u>275,245</u>

<b>Net Book Value at 31/03/15</b>	<u>4,574</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,828</u>	<u>5,035</u>	<u>16,437</u>
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<b>Net Book Value at 31/03/14</b>	<u>9,246</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9,359</u>	<u>5,846</u>	<u>24,451</u>
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#### Asset financing:

Owned	4,574	0	6,828	5,035	16,436
Financed Leased	0	0	0	0	0
On-balance sheet PFI contracts	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net book value at 31/03/15</b>	<u>4,574</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,828</u>	<u>5,035</u>	<u>16,436</u>

During the year ended 31 March 2015, property, plant and equipment were restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end.

During the 2013-14 financial year, certain assets located at Millennium House, were transferred to the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS). NICCY was previously located in Millennium House and the assets were transferred from NICCY to VSS at their net book value of £41,937.

	<b>Information Technology</b>	<b>Office Equipment</b>	<b>Furniture</b>	<b>Fixtures</b>	<b>Total 2014</b>
<b>Cost or valuation</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
At 01 April 2013	140,609	40,258	112,272	822,020	1,115,159
Additions	0	0	0	0	0
Transfers	0	0	0	(802,386)	(802,386)
Revaluation	(12,106)	(4,156)	(6,069)	(1,026)	(23,357)
<b>At 31 March 2014</b>	<b>128,503</b>	<b>36,102</b>	<b>106,203</b>	<b>18,608</b>	<b>289,416</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 01 April 2013	123,186	39,376	95,220	771,952	1,029,734
Charged in year	6,661	794	6,771	1,881	16,107
Transfers	0	0	0	(760,449)	(760,449)
Revaluation	(10,590)	(4,068)	(5,147)	(622)	(20,427)
<b>At 31 March 2014</b>	<b>119,257</b>	<b>36,102</b>	<b>96,844</b>	<b>12,762</b>	<b>264,965</b>
<b>Net Book Value at 31/03/14</b>	<b>9,246</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,359</b>	<b>5,846</b>	<b>24,451</b>
<b>Net Book Value at 31/03/13</b>	<b>17,423</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>17,052</b>	<b>50,068</b>	<b>85,425</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>					
Owned	9,246	0	9,359	5,846	24,451
Financed Leased	0	0	0	0	0
On-balance sheet PFI contracts	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net book value at 31/03/14</b>	<b>9,246</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,359</b>	<b>5,846</b>	<b>24,451</b>



## 6. Intangible Assets

	Information Technology Software	Software Licences	Total 2015
<b>Cost or Valuation</b>	£	£	£
At 01 April 2014	123,673	46,737	170,410
Additions	5,044	0	5,044
Disposals	0	0	0
Revaluation	1,162	422	1,584
At 31 March 2015	129,879	47,159	177,038
<b>Amortisation</b>			
At 01 April 2014	111,338	46,121	157,459
Charges in year	4,513	500	5,013
Disposals	0	0	0
Revaluations	1,005	416	1,421
At 31 March 2015	116,856	47,037	163,893
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2015</b>	13,023	122	13,145
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2014</b>	12,335	616	12,951
<b>Asset financing:</b>			
Owned	13,023	122	13,145
Financed Leased	0	0	0
Contracts	0	0	0
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2015</b>	13,023	122	13,145

During the year ended 31 March 2015, intangible assets were restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end.

	Information Technology Software	Software Licences	Total 2014
<b>Cost or Valuation</b>	£	£	£
At 01 April 2013	110,172	45,618	155,790
Additions	10,799	0	10,799
Disposals	0	0	0
Revaluation	2,702	1,119	3,821
At 31 March 2014	123,673	46,737	170,410
<b>Amortisation</b>			
At 01 April 2013	107,501	44,091	151,592
Charges in year	1,200	948	2,148
Disposals	0	0	0
Revaluations	2,637	1,082	3,719
At 31 March 2014	111,338	46,121	157,459
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2014</b>	12,335	616	12,951
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2013</b>	2,671	1,527	4,198
<b>Asset financing:</b>			
Owned	12,335	616	12,951
Financed Leased	0	0	0
Contracts	0	0	0
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2014</b>	12,335	616	12,951

## 7. Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, 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 NICCY's expected purchase and usage requirements and NICCY is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

## 8. Trade receivables and other current assets

### a. Analysis by Type

	2014-15	2013-14
Amounts falling due within one year	£	£
Trade receivables	0	0
Other receivables	44	2,056
Prepayments	11,808	12,641
	<u>11,852</u>	<u>14,697</u>

### Intra-Government Balances

	2014-15	2013-14
Amounts falling due within one year	£	£
Balances with other central government bodies	0	0
Balances with bodies external to government	11,852	14,697
	<u>11,852</u>	<u>14,697</u>

## 9. Cash and cash equivalents

	2014-15	2013-14
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	147,158	96,661
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	<u>(59,895)</u>	<u>50,497</u>
Balance at 31 March	<u>87,263</u>	<u>147,158</u>

### The following balances at 31 March were held at:

Commercial banks and cash in hand	<u>87,263</u>	<u>147,158</u>
Balance at 31 March	<u>87,263</u>	<u>147,158</u>

## 10. Trade payables and other current liabilities

### a. Analysis by Type

	2014-15	2013-14
Amounts falling due within one year	£	£
Taxation and social security	20,076	21,701
Trade payables	1,234	22,141
Accruals	63,376	75,436
	<u>84,686</u>	<u>119,278</u>

## b. Intra-Government Balances

	2014-15	2013-14
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Balances with other central government agencies	12,489	11,345
Balances bodies external to government	72,197	107,933
	<u>84,686</u>	<u>119,278</u>

### 11. Prior Year Adjustments

There were no prior year adjustments for year 2014-15.

### 12. Provisions for liabilities and charges

There were no provisions for liabilities and charges as at 31 March 2015 or as at 31 March 2014.

### 13. Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments as at 31 March 2015 or as at 31 March 2014.

#### 14.1 Commitments under Leases

There were no commitments under leases as at 31 March 2015 or as at 31 March 2014.

#### 14.2 Finance Leases

There were no Finance Lease commitments as at 31 March 2015. Similarly, at 31 March 2014 there were no Finance Lease commitments.

### 15. Commitments under PFI Contracts

There were no PFI contracts as at 31 March 2015 or as at 31 March 2014.

### 16 Other financial commitments

There were no other financial commitments as at 31 March 2015 or as at 31 March 2014.

### 17. Contingent liabilities disclosed under IAS 37

NICCY has entered into the following unquantifiable contingent liabilities.

#### Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES)

The Northern Ireland Civil Service launched a Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) across all departments on 2 March 2015. The closing date for applications was 27 March 2015. At the balance sheet date, there was a possible obligation on NICCY which has subsequently given rise to a liability as two of NICCY's employees have applied and have been successful post 31 March 2015.

In relation to the VES the estimate for the contingent liability as defined under IAS 37 as at 31 March 2015 is £52k.

## **18. Related Party Transactions**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). OFMDFM is regarded as a related party. During the year the Commissioner had various material transactions with OFMDFM (£1,351,000) and one other body for which OFMDFM is regarded as the parent body, the Equality Commission (£131,150).

In addition, the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland has had a small number of transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies.

During the year neither the Commissioner, members of the Audit and Risk Committee, Senior Management nor other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

## **19. Events after the Statement of Financial Position Date**

There were no events after the Statement of Financial Position date up to the date of approval of these accounts impacting upon the commission.

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

**NOTES**





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