

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

# Annual Business Plan 2015-16



**Independent, Fair and Effective**



This document is available in a range of alternative formats

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Foreword by the Director</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PPS Vision and Aim</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PPS Resources</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>First Class Prosecution Service Programme</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>PPS Strategic Priorities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Annual Business Plan 2015-16</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Key Performance Indicators and Targets</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Managing Risk</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Notes</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Annex A: PPS Organisation Chart</b>	<b>27</b>

# Foreword

## By the Director

**I am pleased to present our Annual Business Plan for the 2015-16 financial year.**

This document sets out our priorities as a Service, the milestones we will use to assess our progress and the risks we will have to manage in order to ensure that we deliver a first class prosecution service.

Over the last year a great deal of work has gone into shaping the PPS to meet future challenges. The First Class Prosecution Service Programme, implemented in Spring 2014, has been the focus for much of this work. Significant progress has already been made across a range of key issues for the PPS and our stakeholders, including our relationship with the police, the effectiveness of our structures and performance management arrangements, and our approach to internal and external communication. I would expect to see further successes in these areas during 2015-16.

Meeting the needs of victims and witnesses is a clear priority for the PPS. Implementation of the Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU), which has been taken forward with our partner agencies, has represented an important step forward in terms of the quality and range of services provided. Over the last financial year the Unit has matured, as the new procedures and processes have bedded in. During 2015-16, we will seek to introduce further enhancements to the services we offer. For example, a new online 'Victim Information Portal' will allow victims and witnesses to log on securely to obtain details of their case, such as forthcoming court dates. We will also consult on a revised Victims and Witnesses Policy, which will take on board the various lessons learned as a result of the VWCU initiative.

During 2014-15 we have sought to improve the timeliness of our decision-making, particularly in the most serious indictable cases. In the year ahead we will maintain our focus on this area. We will also continue to work collaboratively with other criminal justice agencies in tackling avoidable delay, working as part of the overall programme to deliver Faster, Fairer Justice.

Of course any improvements in timeliness must not be at the expense of the quality of our decision-making, case preparation and presentation at court. During 2015-16,



Barra McGrory QC  
*Director of Public  
Prosecutions for Northern  
Ireland*

enhanced arrangements will be implemented for the formal monitoring of the quality of our casework, based on our new Prosecution Quality Standards.

Financially, these are very difficult times for the public sector, and over the coming years the PPS will face significant pressures on its expenditure. Therefore I need the Service to be in a position to respond to whatever decisions are taken by the Executive in relation to our funding. Accordingly I have established a new committee, the Transformation Working Group (TWG), to undertake a fundamental review of the Service and its functions. Through this programme of work, we will aim to produce detailed plans to enable the PPS to operate within budget, whilst minimising the impact on front-line services and victims and witnesses.

Our people are our most valuable resource. Ultimately any programme of change which is agreed will not succeed without the dedication of PPS staff. I am confident that we will adjust to the many challenges facing us, continuing to go about our jobs with professionalism and commitment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barra McGrory', written in a cursive style.

**Barra McGrory QC**  
**Director of Public Prosecutions**  
**for Northern Ireland**

**April 2015**

# Vision and Aim

## Our Vision

**To be recognised as providing a first class prosecution service for the people of Northern Ireland.**

## Our Aim

**The aim of the Public Prosecution Service is to provide the people of Northern Ireland with an independent, fair and effective prosecution service.**

- **Independence**

The Service will be wholly independent of both police and Government; its decisions will be impartial, based on an independent and impartial assessment of the available evidence and the public interest.

- **Fairness**

All actions will be undertaken with complete impartiality, to the highest ethical and professional standards. All persons, including those accused of offences, will be treated fairly. All victims and witnesses will be treated with respect and sensitivity.

- **Effectiveness**

All prosecution decisions will be taken and every prosecution conducted in an effective and efficient manner. We will provide value for money, while delivering a timely and quality service.

# Introduction

**The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in all cases initiated or investigated by the police, it also considers cases initiated or investigated by other statutory authorities, for example, HM Revenue and Customs.**

The Service was established on 13 June 2005 by the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. The Act creates the PPS and defines its statutory duties and commitments and the legislative framework within which it must provide its services.

## **Accountability and Governance Arrangements**

Since the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly in April 2010, the PPS has been designated as a non-ministerial government department. Funding for the PPS is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly and, as Accounting Officer for the Service, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) is responsible for ensuring that the public monies provided are used efficiently and effectively. All members of staff are Northern Ireland Civil Servants.

The PPS Management Board supports the Director in his leadership of the PPS and in reaching decisions on the strategic direction of the PPS, the development and implementation of appropriate strategy and in meeting his corporate governance responsibilities. The Board comprises the Director (as Chair), Deputy Director, two Senior Assistant Directors and two independent Non-Executive Directors.

In May 2010 John Larkin QC was appointed as the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, as part of the devolved justice arrangements. The Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 provides for the Director and Attorney General to consult with each other from time to time on any matter for which the Attorney General is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly. In accordance with the 2002 Act the functions of the Director shall be exercised by him independently of any other person.

## **PPS Services**

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not to prosecute and to have responsibility for the conduct of criminal proceedings. Additional services are also available which have been designed to enhance the effectiveness of the Service, including the provision of prosecutorial and pre-charge advice.

Options are available to allow prosecutors to deal with offenders other than through prosecution. These include restorative cautioning, informed warnings and youth

conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the NI Driver Improvement Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme. The purposes of diversion include dealing quickly and simply with less serious offenders, reducing the risk of re-offending and engaging the offender in a restorative process with the victim and society as a whole.

**PPS Offices**

The PPS has six regional offices, known as ‘Chambers’. An additional Belfast office, Linum Chambers, accommodates various Corporate Services functions and the Belfast office of the Victim and Witness Care Unit.

**PPS Office Locations**



Regions	Offices
<b>Belfast</b>	Belfast Chambers (HQ) Linum Chambers
<b>Eastern</b>	Lisburn Chambers
<b>Northern</b>	Ballymena Chambers Foyle Chambers (Derry)
<b>Western and Southern</b>	Omagh Chambers Newry Chambers

**Working in Partnership: Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland (CJSNI)**

The PPS works in partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), as part of the Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland. The PPS is represented on the Criminal Justice Board which comprises senior officials from each of these Services.

The Director is a member of the Criminal Justice Delivery Group which is chaired by the Minister of Justice. This was established by the Minister to improve engagement between the most senior leaders within the criminal justice system, and to provide strategic oversight to the work of the Criminal Justice Board.

## PPS Resources

The PPS's budget position continues to be challenging. In particular, the demand-led nature of the PPS workload makes budgetary management difficult as the standard measures of reducing services or discontinuing activities are not readily available.

PPS	Budget Settlement (£millions)	
	2014-15	2015-16
<b><u>RESOURCE</u></b>		
Current Expenditure	<b>34.1</b>	<b>34.1</b>
<i>% Change against 2010-11 baseline</i>	<i>-8.7%</i>	
<b><u>CAPITAL</u></b>		
Capital Investment	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.80</b>
<i>% Change against 2010-11 baseline</i>	<i>-44.4%</i>	

The final budget settlement for the four year period from 2011-12 to 2014-15 reduced PPS current expenditure by 8.7%. Taking into account estimated inflationary increases of 2.5% each year, the PPS budget reduced in real terms by 18% over the four years. The level of funding provided in 2014-15 (£34.1 million) has been used as the baseline for 2015-16. This is in recognition that further reductions would not be sustainable.

The PPS Transformation Working Group (TWG) has been established by the Director to undertake a fundamental review of the delivery of the Service's functions, in light of the proposed budget settlements for 2015-16 and the next Spending Review period. The aim of the TWG, which is chaired by the Senior Assistant Director for Resources and Change, is to produce detailed plans to enable the PPS to operate within this budget, whilst minimising the impact on front-line services and victims and witnesses.

A shortfall in funding has been identified for 2015-16 and it will not be possible to implement the required changes in time to avoid an overspend for the year. PPS has however made a high level submission to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) demonstrating plans to manage the budget over a four year period. DFP has accepted the plan and has agreed to consider funding for the PPS in the intervening period.



# First Class Prosecution Service Programme

**The PPS continues to progress its major change initiative, the ‘First Class Prosecution Service Programme’, which was implemented by the Management Board in 2014.**

In implementing the new initiative, the Board recognised that the PPS was working in a very dynamic situation, having experienced significant changes over recent years in terms of its governance and operating environment. Board members agreed that there was an opportunity for the PPS, as a relatively ‘young’ organisation, to improve and embed its change management arrangements.

As part of the programme, the Management Board has identified a number of priority change issues which are being taken forward via four projects, as follows:

- Project 1: Faster, Fairer Justice (see objective 1.2, page 13)
- Project 2: Interface with Police (see objective 1.2, page 14)
- Project 3: Communication (see objective 2.2, page 17)
- Project 4: Service Effectiveness (see objective 4.1, page 20)

All change projects report directly into a Change Programme Board, with each having a dedicated Project Manager and Deputy.

It is anticipated that the work of the change projects will not extend beyond March 2016.

# PPS Strategic Priorities

**The PPS Corporate Plan is based around four strategic priorities which act as a framework to drive our planning outcomes and our approach to managing performance and risk. Within each priority area a number of objectives have been set out as the focus of our work programme and which will progress the delivery of our vision for the Service.**

The strategic priorities and objectives were originally agreed as the focus for the Service's Corporate Plan over the period 2011-2014. The PPS had intended to produce a new Corporate Plan for the three year period from 1 April 2015. However the Management Board decided to extend the Corporate Plan for a further year; that is, for 2015-16 the Service would publish an annual business plan only, based around the existing strategic priorities and objectives, with a new Corporate Plan taking effect from 1 April 2016.

This decision was taken in light of the fact that 2015-16 was to be a standalone year in budget terms. Commencement of the next corporate planning cycle in April 2016 will allow the Service to align its plans with the next Spending Review period (Budget 2015). It will also allow the PPS to align its future planning arrangements with CJSNI partners, including the DOJ. This recognises that, as an organisation, we do not work alone and that our strategic objectives need to be aligned with the approaches our partners are taking to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system as a whole.

## **Strategic Priority 1:**

### **Delivering an efficient and effective prosecution service**

- 1.1 To promote the highest standard of prosecutorial decision-making and case preparation and prosecute in the most effective manner.
- 1.2 To work with partners to improve our service delivery and reduce avoidable delay.
- 1.3 To develop and embed our advocacy strategy.

## **Strategic Priority 2:**

### **Building the confidence and trust of the community we serve**

- 2.1 To provide an enhanced service to victims and witnesses.
- 2.2 To engage effectively with stakeholders and the wider community.

**Strategic Priority 3:  
Strengthening our capability to deliver**

- 3.1 To provide greater value for money through the improved management of resources and develop our resource planning in the context of the NICS Reform Programme.
- 3.2 To strengthen our accountability as a non-ministerial department by developing and maintaining a transparent and effective governance framework.

**Strategic Priority 4:  
Building the Capability of our People**

- 4.1 To develop our staff and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

# What We Plan to Achieve in 2015-16

This Annual Business Plan describes how we intend to take forward our strategic objectives, building on the achievements of previous years.

## Strategic Priority 1: Efficiency and Effectiveness

**Objective 1.1: To promote the highest standard of prosecutorial decision-making and case preparation and prosecute in the most effective manner**

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p><b>We will continue to build on our existing quality assurance arrangements to ensure that quality standards are met consistently across our business areas.</b></p> <p>In developing our Quality Assurance Team’s review programme we will have regard to the inspections carried out by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) and will review compliance with recommendations made by inspectors. We will respond to any issues identified via quality assurance by providing the necessary training and guidance to staff.</p> <p>We will set out clearly the standards and levels of service which all stakeholders can expect. During the year we will publish a number of new or updated policy statements, which will be subject to public consultation. We will implement new PPS Prosecution Quality Standards with a view to strengthening our existing quality assurance and monitoring framework.</p> <p>Certain classes of crime, such as serious sexual offences, are of particular concern to the public. We will review all such cases in which there has been an unsuccessful outcome, including ‘No Bills’, to ensure that any lessons learned are used to deliver improvements.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete quality assurance reviews to agreed schedules.</li> <li>• Develop appropriate responses to quality assurance and CJINI recommendations and provide legal guidance / training to staff as required.</li> <li>• Release policy statements for consultation including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code for Prosecutors.</li> <li>- Cases involving Youth Offenders.</li> <li>- Guidelines for Diversion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Implement a new quality monitoring framework in support of the Prosecution Quality Standards.</li> <li>• Review unsuccessful outcomes in classes of crime of concern to the public.</li> </ul>

**Objective 1.1: To promote the highest standard of prosecutorial decision-making and case preparation and prosecute in the most effective manner  
(Continued)**

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p>A new Policy on Case Management has been progressed and will be launched in mid-2015. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that risks to a successful outcome in difficult and complex cases are identified at an early stage. The policy also outlines a number of measures to improve strategic planning in such cases, for example through the introduction of Prosecution Strategy Documents which will outline all actions to be taken by police, prosecutors and external counsel. The roles and responsibilities of the prosecutor / decision-maker, their Regional Prosecutor and Prosecuting Counsel are clearly defined within the new policy.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement our new Policy on Case Management, ensuring that training and guidance is provided regarding its requirements.</li> </ul>

**Objective 1.2: To work with partners to improve our service delivery and reduce avoidable delay**

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p><b>The improvement of service delivery, particularly a reduction in avoidable delay, is a priority for the PPS and its criminal justice partners.</b></p> <p>We will contribute to improving the efficiency of the criminal justice system. This will include working as part of the overall programme agreed by the Criminal Justice Board to deliver Faster, Fairer Justice. Internally a project team is working to scope the impact of the various Faster, Fairer Justice initiatives, including the direct transfer of cases to the Crown Court and the implementation of Prosecutorial Fines. The Project Team is also working to ensure that relevant preparations are made for the introduction of new statutory time limits (STLs) in the youth court, the aim of which is to help speed up processing times for criminal proceedings against young people.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the CJSNI's Faster, Fairer Justice programme objectives for 2015-16.</li> <li>• Meet agreed objectives of the PPS Faster, Fairer Justice Project (<i>First Class Prosecution Service Programme</i>).</li> </ul>

**Objective 1.2: To work with partners to improve our service delivery and reduce avoidable delay (*Continued*)**

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p>We are working with partner agencies in the operation of a new Indictable Cases Pilot. This judicially-led initiative, which commenced in Newtownards Crown Court in January 2015, is intended to provide all participants in the process with a clear and defined method of enabling early guilty pleas to be taken by the court in appropriate cases. It is anticipated that the Pilot will run to the end of June 2015.</p> <p>The Interface with Police Project is tackling a number of key issues for the PPS and PSNI, including the development of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and the improvement of police file quality. The progress of this initiative will be monitored jointly over the year.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Indictable Cases Pilot and contribute to its evaluation as required.</li>   <li>• Meet agreed objectives of the PPS Interface with Police Project (<i>First Class Prosecution Service Programme</i>).</li> </ul>

**Objective 1.3: To develop and embed our advocacy strategy**

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p><b>During the year we will continue to build on our advocacy strategy, developing the advocacy skills of PPS prosecutors.</b></p> <p>Advocacy Standards, modelled on those in place in England and Wales, have been adopted by the PPS and form the basis for the assessment of advocacy.</p> <p>We recognise the need to have formal quality review systems in place in respect of advocacy. We will consider how best to address this need, given the current financial pressures.</p> <p>In 2009, the Service established a Panel Scheme for the instruction of external counsel. A refresh of the scheme, last carried out in 2012, will be taken forward in autumn 2015. All appointments will be made by open competition.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and implement advocacy training in response to identified needs.</li>   <li>• Agree arrangements for the monitoring and assessment of in-house advocacy.</li>   <li>• Refresh the Panel of Independent Counsel via open competition.</li> </ul>

## Strategic Priority 2: Building Confidence and Trust

### Objective 2.1: To provide an enhanced service to victims and witnesses

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p><b>Improving services and support is recognised as being vital to building effective relationships between victims and witnesses, the PPS and the criminal justice system.</b></p> <p>The purpose of the Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU), operated in conjunction with police and other partners, is to improve the experience of victims and witnesses by, for example, identifying particular needs at an early stage. During 2014-15, the remit of the VWCU was extended to cover cases in the Crown Court. A key objective for 2015-16 will be to examine the operation of the new Crown Court processes, with a view to refining procedures in the light of operational experience. This review will include consultation with VWCU stakeholders and users of the service.</p> <p>Information will be made available to victims and witnesses via a new online 'Victim Information Portal' (VIP). Victims and witnesses will be able to log on securely to the VIP to obtain details of their case, such as forthcoming court dates.</p> <p>During 2015 we will consult on a revised Victims and Witnesses Policy, which will take on board the requirements of the Victim Charter, recommendations made by CJINI and lessons learned as a result of the VWCU initiative.</p> <p>PPS is a member of the CJSNI's Victim and Witness Task Force and will contribute to the new five year 'Making a Difference' Strategy.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a review of the VWCU (PPS Belfast and Foyle offices).</li>   <li>• Implement the Victim Information Portal.</li>   <li>• Review our Victims and Witnesses Policy and publish for consultation.</li>   <li>• Contribute to 2015-16 CJSNI Victim and Witness Strategy objectives.</li> </ul>

**Objective 2.1: To provide an enhanced service to victims and witnesses  
(Continued)**

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p>Greater support is being provided to vulnerable witnesses via a Registered Intermediaries Scheme which aims to help PPS and other agencies work better with witnesses who have communication difficulties. While the scheme has been operating on a pilot basis, an extension has been agreed for a further 12 months, commencing in April 2015. The scope of the pilot has also been extended to cover all 'hybrid' offences tried in the Crown Court; previously the scheme had applied to indictable offences only.</p> <p>The PPS pays expenses incurred by witnesses arising out of their attendance at court on behalf of the prosecution. A review of these arrangements is being conducted, and a new payment scheme will be implemented by the end of 2015.</p> <p>In October 2014, the Director announced that a leading human rights lawyer, Sir Keir Starmer QC, was to conduct an independent review of three interlinked cases involving sex abuse and terror-related charges. The review, which encompassed all aspects of the prosecution of these cases by the PPS, is expected to be completed by May 2015.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support the Registered Intermediaries Pilot Scheme and contribute to evaluation as required.</li>   <li>• Review arrangements for the payment of witness expenses and implement a revised payment scheme.</li>   <li>• Respond to all recommendations arising from the Starmer Review.</li> </ul>



**Objective 2.2: To engage effectively with stakeholders and the wider community**

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p><b>We will seek to improve our approach to communicating with stakeholders and the public in order to increase understanding of what we do and the actions we take.</b></p> <p>A number of initiatives are being progressed as part of the PPS Communications Project, the overall aim of which is to improve internal and external communication, as well as our approach to community outreach. Key milestones for the year ahead will include the publication of a new communication strategy.</p> <p>We will consider the findings of the annual PPS Omnibus Survey with respect to public perception of the PPS, and in particular our fairness, effectiveness and impartiality, and take action accordingly.</p> <p>As part of our community outreach programme we will ensure that senior staff are increasingly visible as they attend meetings and other events, including those organised by the voluntary sector and community groups. We will publish details of our outreach activity on a regular basis via the PPS website.</p> <p>We will continue to develop our links with partner agencies and to agree SLAs and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), clearly setting out the working arrangements, roles and responsibilities of each agency. This will include SLAs with partner agencies involved in combating organised crime.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet agreed objectives of the PPS Communication Project, including the development of a new Communication Strategy (<i>First Class Prosecution Service Programme</i>).</li> <li>• Publish the findings of the PPS Omnibus Survey.</li> <li>• Carry out community outreach activity in accordance with our outreach programme.</li> <li>• Agree SLAs and MoUs with relevant Departments and Agencies.</li> </ul>

### Strategic Priority 3: Our Capability to Deliver

#### Objective 3.1: To provide value for money through the improved management of resources and the development of our resource planning

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p><b>The budget settlement for 2015-16 represents a challenge for the Service. We will continue to review our expenditure and operational processes in order to enhance value for money.</b></p> <p>We will ensure that all agreed savings delivery / transformation objectives identified for 2015-16 are met. We will work with DFP to manage any funding gaps during the year and will carry out relevant preparations for Budget 2015.</p> <p>A revised fees payment scheme will be implemented for Independent Counsel instructed by the PPS. The defence remuneration scheme is also being reviewed and there have been detailed discussions between PPS, NICTS and DoJ officials to ensure the schemes progress in tandem to deliver fair remuneration to Counsel, while delivering the required savings in overall costs. We will also implement revised Terms of Engagement for counsel.</p> <p>Where possible, efficiencies from the use of information technology will be taken forward, allowing us to explore and exploit the benefits offered by digital working. An example is the use of tablet computers to prosecute cases at court, reducing the need for hard copy files which have to be transported to each court venue.</p> <p>We will meet the objectives set out in our Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy, confirming our commitment to being responsible and sustainable, managing our policies and practices in order to balance environmental, social, ethical and economic considerations.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet agreed savings delivery / transformation objectives for 2015-16.</li> <li>• Engage with DFP in funding 2015-16 adequately and in making relevant preparations for Budget 2015.</li> <li>• Implement revised arrangements for the payment of Counsel Fees.</li> <li>• Implement revised Terms of Engagement for counsel instructed by the PPS.</li> <li>• Deliver our 2015-16 ICT Strategy objectives, including the rollout of tablet PCs for use by prosecutors at court.</li> <li>• Deliver our Corporate Social Responsibility objectives for 2015-16.</li> </ul>

**Objective 3.2: To strengthen our accountability by developing and maintaining a transparent and effective governance framework**

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p><b>We are committed to ensuring that corporate governance arrangements are effective and developed in accordance with DFP’s Code of Good Practice NI.</b></p> <p>We will continue to improve our information assurance capability, ensuring that arrangements are driven by the Cabinet Office Security Policy Framework.</p> <p>During the year we will continue to meet our objectives under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p> <p>Efforts will continue to embed a number of the changes made in our performance management arrangements, both at a strategic and operational level. This will include the use of improved performance data and the conduct of quarterly performance and accountability reviews for each of the regions and sections.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with the mandatory requirements of the Security Policy Framework.</li> <li>• Complete all actions identified through Information Assurance and Risk Policy / Information Asset and Risk Registers.</li> <li>• Meet our DDA / Equality Scheme Action Plan objectives for 2015-16.</li> <li>• Maintain our focus on performance and accountability via quarterly reviews.</li> </ul>

# Strategic Priority 4: Our People

## Objective 4.1: To develop our staff and promote a culture of continuous improvement

What we plan to achieve	How we plan to make it happen
<p><b>Our people are central to the achievement of our objectives and this requires a working environment in which staff can develop and contribute to their full potential.</b></p> <p>We need to make sure that all staff have the skills and support they require and will achieve this through training and the promotion of coaching, mentoring and peer review.</p> <p>We also need to ensure that performance is well managed and individual objectives are clearly set out so that we can consistently offer a high level of service to the public. A range of initiatives, focusing in particular on performance management and the delineation of structures and roles, are being taken forward by the Service Effectiveness Project.</p> <p>The NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme was launched by the Minister for Finance and Personnel on 2 March 2015. The purpose of the scheme is to deliver pay bill reductions for departments in line with the 2015-16 budget allocations agreed by the NI Executive. We will liaise closely with DFP’s Corporate HR in operating the Scheme. A priority will be to maintain effective employee relations, engaging with trade unions and providing staff with the information they need. We will also implement robust workforce planning arrangements, with a view to protecting PPS business delivery.</p> <p>During the year we will also seek to maintain an effective absence management framework and promote health and well-being as part of the NICS WELL Programme.</p> <p>We will continue to promote Business in the Community’s Employee Volunteering Scheme.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify corporate training needs and meet agreed corporate training priorities.</li> <li>• Meet agreed objectives of the Service Effectiveness Project (<i>First Class Prosecution Service Programme</i>).</li> <li>• We will liaise closely with DFP in the operation of the Voluntary Exit Scheme.</li> <li>• We will maintain effective workforce planning arrangements, engaging with staff and trade unions.</li> <li>• We will maintain an effective absence management framework and promote health and well-being.</li> <li>• We will carry out our employee volunteering programme for 2015-16.</li> </ul>

# Key Performance Indicators and Targets

The following are the key delivery targets for 2015-16 against which the performance of the PPS will be assessed. Performance against the targets will be accounted for in our Annual Report for the coming financial year.

## Strategic Priority 1: Efficiency and Effectiveness

Objective	Key Performance Indicator(s)	2015-16 Target
1.1	<b>Quality Assurance</b> <sup>1</sup>  Percentage of decisions as to prosecution taken in accordance with the Code for Prosecutors	Establish Baseline
	<b>No Bills / Acquittals by Direction</b> <sup>2</sup>  Number of No Bills (All charges) granted in the Crown Court  Number of Acquittals by Direction (All charges) in the Crown Court	Not to exceed 2013-2014 average
1.2	<b>Review of Charges</b>  Percentage of 28 day charge cases where charge sheets are reviewed within at least 3 working days of first appearance.	90%
	<b>Decisions Issued (Timeliness)</b> <sup>3</sup>  Percentage of indictable decisions issued within: (a) 100 days (b) 180 days Percentage of summary decisions issued within: (a) 15 days (b) 40 days Percentage of diversionary decisions issued within: (a) 15 days (b) 30 days Percentage of no prosecution (indictable) decisions issued within: (a) 50 days (b) 150 days Percentage of no prosecution (summary / hybrid) decisions issued within: (a) 30 days (b) 75 days	(a) 50% (b) 80%  (a) 65% (b) 80%  (a) 65% (b) 80%  (a) 65% (b) 80%  (a) 65% (b) 80%

Notes 1–3: See page 26.

## Key Performance Indicators and Targets (Continued)

### Strategic Priority 2: Building Confidence and Trust

Objective	Key Performance Indicator(s)	2015-16 Target
2.2	<p><b>Public Confidence</b> <sup>4</sup></p> <p>Percentage public confidence in the provision of a fair and impartial prosecution service</p> <p>Percentage of respondents who feel that the PPS is effective at prosecuting people who are accused of committing a crime</p>	Improvement on 2015 Survey

### Strategic Priority 3: Our Capability to Deliver

Objective	Key Performance Indicator(s)	2015-16 Target
3.1	<p><b>Better Payments</b></p> <p>Percentage of invoices paid within 10 working days</p> <p>Percentage of Purchase Orders compliant with Account NI procurement guidance <sup>5</sup></p>	<p>95%</p> <p>80%</p>
3.2	<p><b>Freedom of Information</b> <sup>6</sup></p> <p>Percentage of requests answered within agreed time limits</p> <p><b>Complaints</b> <sup>6</sup></p> <p>Percentage of complaints (a) acknowledged within 5 working days (b) dealt with within 20 working days</p>	<p>100%</p> <p>(a) 95% (b) 95%</p>

Notes 4-6: See page 26.

# Key Performance Indicators and Targets (Continued)

## Strategic Priority 4: Our People

Objective	Key Performance Indicator(s)	2015-16 Target
4.1	<p><b>Sickness and Absenteeism</b> <sup>7</sup></p> <p>Average working days lost</p> <p>Long-term absence – frequency rate</p>	<p>7.5 days</p> <p>7.6%</p>

Note 7: See page 26.

# Managing Risk

The Public Prosecution Service faces a range of risks and uncertainties in delivering its strategic priorities over the next year.

The Service will address these through its risk management strategy, thereby enhancing its ability to anticipate and deal with risks to the successful delivery of its strategic priorities and objectives.

The corporate risks identified at the beginning of the 2015-16 financial year include the following:

No.	Risk Description	Risk Owner
<b>Efficiency and Effectiveness</b>		
1.	<b>Speeding Up Justice</b> The Service does not influence / respond effectively to criminal justice policy initiatives aimed at speeding up justice, with the result that the desired improvements in timeliness and service delivery are not produced.	Senior Assistant Director, Regional Prosecutions
2.	<b>Quality Assurance</b> The legal quality assurance framework does not provide the assurances required in respect of prosecutorial decision making, case presentation and advocacy.	Deputy Director
<b>Building Confidence and Trust</b>		
3.	<b>Provision of Services for Victims and Witnesses</b> The services delivered for victims and witnesses do not meet their needs, resulting in a loss of victim and witness confidence.	Senior Assistant Directors
4.	<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b> The Service does not seize opportunities to engage and influence its stakeholders and the public, resulting in a failure to maintain and build political and public confidence in the organisation.	Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change



# Managing Risk (Continued)

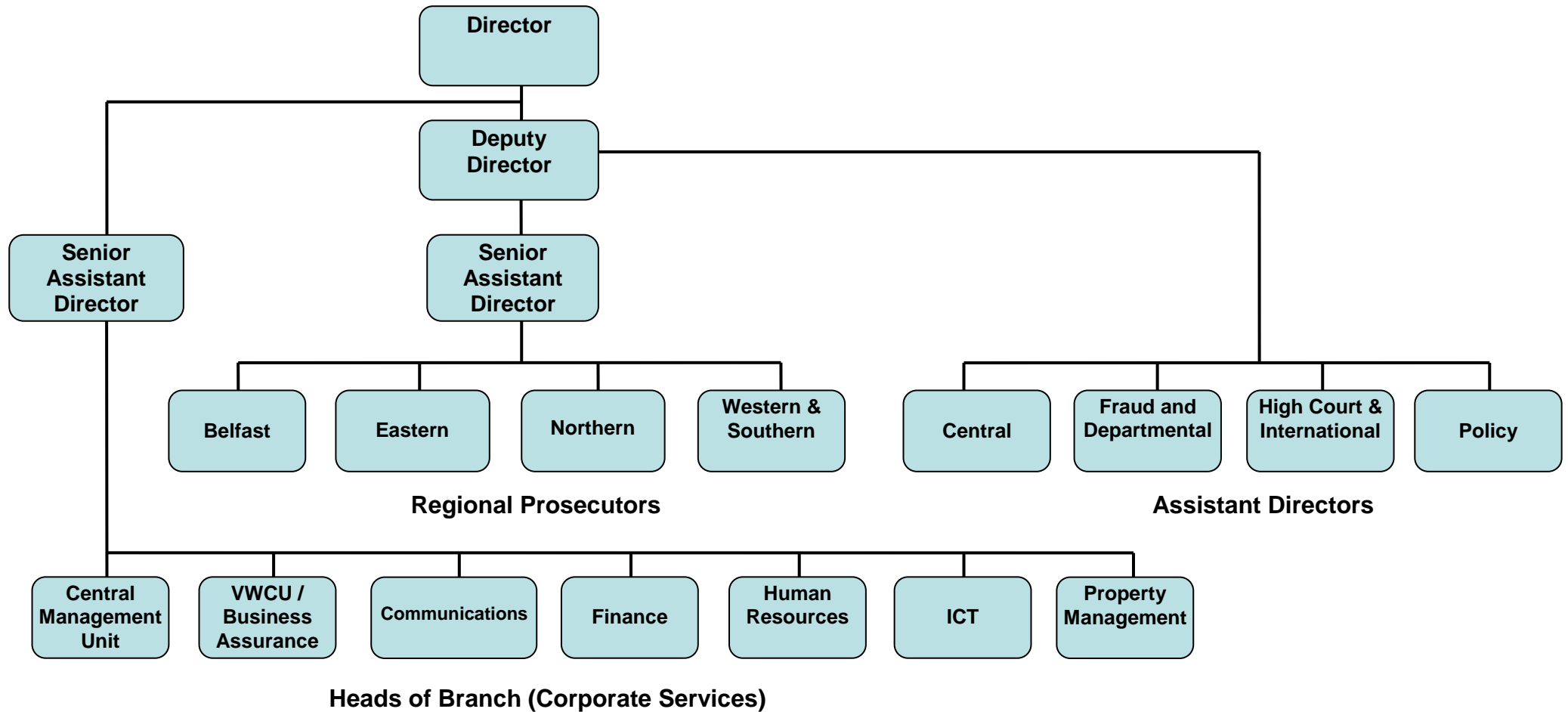
No.	Risk Description	Risk Owner
	<p><b>Our Capability to Deliver</b></p>	
5.	<p><b>Transformation Programme</b>                      The management and implementation of the Transformation Programme does not deliver the required business benefits and outcomes, thereby damaging staff morale and the quality of service delivery.</p>	Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change
6.	<p><b>Funding</b>                      The Service does not respond effectively to changes in funding and emerging financial pressures, and therefore cannot live within agreed budgets.</p>	Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change
	<p><b>Our People</b></p>	
7.	<p><b>Succession Planning</b>                      There are potential deficiencies in the Service’s capacity and capability due to the loss of experienced staff, arising from the implementation of the Voluntary Exit Scheme.</p>	Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change

The identification and review of corporate risks is the responsibility of the Management Board. All corporate risks are owned by a member of the Management Board and will be actively managed by the Board over the course of the financial year.

## Notes

1. To be assessed via dip sampling of PPS cases by Regional Prosecutors / Assistant Directors, based on the new PPS Prosecution Quality Standards Framework. All cases for dip sampling are selected independently by statisticians from the NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).
2. A 'No Bill' occurs in cases before the Crown Court where the Judge, prior to commencement of trial, determines that there is insufficient evidence to proceed on any count or charge. During trial, and on completion of the prosecution case, a defendant may be 'acquitted by direction' where the Judge determines that there is insufficient evidence to proceed.
3. Monitoring covers the period (in calendar days) from the date initial papers (charge cases only) or files are received by the PPS to the date when the prosecutorial decision issues. Time required for response to Decision Information Requests (DIRs) by police is excluded.
4. To be assessed via the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey, conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Satisfaction rates will be based on respondents who are either 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'. In the January 2015 survey, 74% of respondents were very or fairly confident that the PPS provides a fair and impartial prosecution service. Sixty-seven percent of respondents were very or fairly confident that the PPS is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime.
5. Excludes non-procurement spend.
6. Except where an extension is applicable, subject to agreement.
7. Reflect sickness absence targets agreed with DFP.

## Annex A: PPS Organisation Chart



## Contact Us

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