

# **Victims and Survivors Service Limited**

## **Annual Report and Accounts For the year ended 31 March 2021**

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under the statutory provision for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, the Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2016,  
by The Executive Office

on

13<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**COMPANY NUMBER: NI 611922**

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Any enquiries related to this publication should be sent to us at the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, First Floor, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN, or email: [enquiries@vssni.org](mailto:enquiries@vssni.org).

This publication is also available for download from our website at [www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org).

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## **Officers and Professional Advisers**

### **Officers and Professional Advisers**

#### **Directors**

Oliver Wilkinson – Director appointed 2 December 2013, Chair appointed 1 April 2015

Bertha McDougall – Director appointed 2 December 2013

Richard Solomon – Director appointed 2 December 2013

Beverley Clarke – Director appointed 1 April 2015

Patricia Haren – Director appointed 1 April 2015

#### **Auditors**

Northern Ireland Audit Office

106 University Street

Belfast

BT7 1EU

#### **Registered Office**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Seatem House

28-32 Alfred Street

Belfast

BT2 8EN

#### **Principal Bankers**

Danske Bank

8/9 Donegall Square North

Belfast

BT1 5GJ

## Foreword

I am pleased to present the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Annual Report and Accounts for the 2020-21 financial year. There have been a number of significant challenges presented to the organisation this year, which have been overcome by our dedicated staff and Board members.

### *Our Response to the COVID-19 pandemic*

The impact of the public health response and restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic has been unprecedented, and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited recognises the significant increase in risk to both the physical and mental health of those we support, as well as our own staff. The pandemic presented a huge challenge for all involved in public service to find new and innovative ways to deliver the support and services, remaining flexible to changes in response to new and evolving needs.

Throughout the pandemic, we have sought to support victims and survivors both individually, and through our partner organisations in the community and voluntary sector. Regularly updated 'Resource Guides' were developed and shared with community partners to help identify how support could be safely delivered within restrictions, and highlighting new areas of support such as food parcels and social isolation initiatives.

### *Two year extension to Needs Based Service Delivery Model*

2020-21 was the first of a two year extension period, pending the preparation and publication of a new longer term TEO Strategy for Victims and Survivors. An initial 3-year cycle of the revised needs based service delivery model was introduced and implemented between 2017-2020. The completion of this phase allowed us to review and reflect on the approach and bring these learnings into this extension period.

### *Service launch for Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse*

On 23 October 2020, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was appointed by The Executive Office to provide health and wellbeing support and services to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA). The dedicated service launched on 1 December 2020, following a period of valuable engagement and co-design with HIA survivor groups and other stakeholders. WAVE Trauma Centre and Advice NI have been appointed as our community partners to enable survivors to access much needed local support and care.

### *Interim Support for Victims and Survivors of Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses*

In early 2021, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited worked with our colleagues in the Department of Health to establish support and assistance needed for survivors engaged in the co-design of an investigation into Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. An interim support telephone line was established in March 2021 alongside the provision of emotional support at co-design sessions. We look forward

to continuing to support our colleagues in the Department of Health in relation to the co-design of permanent support and services for victims and survivors in 2021-22.

### *Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme*

Following legislation in January 2020, the Department of Justice was designated in August 2020 to exercise the administrative functions of the Victims' Payment Board – on the Board's behalf. The Victims' Payment Board itself was established in February 2021, headed by a President appointed by the Lord Chief Justice.

I welcome the opening of the Scheme on 31 August 2021, and recognise the efforts of all those across government and the community and voluntary sector who have worked to ensure that this important milestone was reached.

### *Partnership and Collaboration*

The work we deliver is not possible without the close working relationships with our community and voluntary partners and other statutory bodies namely The Executive Office (TEO) , the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) and the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA).

We have continued to maintain relationships with a range of key stakeholders. The necessity to work across sectors and collaboratively with a range of partners is evidence that the needs of victims and survivors today are complex, wide ranging and cannot be addressed with a 'one size fits all' approach. We welcome the support, understanding and best practice from our partners to improve how we deliver services.

### *Looking ahead*

Our priority for 2021-2022 is to maintain and develop the support and services required by victims and survivors as we continue to live through the COVID-19 pandemic. We will seek to review the impact of services provided during this time and to develop insight and learning in respect of remote service provision and to address new and emerging needs as restrictions reduce. We further hope to see renewed engagement on the Regional Trauma Network with our colleagues in the Department of Health.

Finally, the significant commitment and dedication of our Staff and Board Members should be acknowledged. In the context of COVID-19, the revised delivery model, a changing political context, the staff and organisational culture of ensuring a victim-centred approach to service delivery has been of critical importance.



Oliver Wilkinson

**Chairperson**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

### **1.1 Overview**

#### **Chief Executive and Accounting Officer's Statement**

As Chief Executive of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, it is my role to support the Board in its work and to ensure the day to day operation and management of the organisation is effective and efficient.

The 2020-21 year has been challenging given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the required restrictions. In March 2020, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited undertook a review of every service, intervention and area of support we provide and worked with our community partners to put alternatives in place by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

In April 2020, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited issued self-directed assistance payments and persistent pain home heating to more than 6,000 victims and survivors who are bereaved, injured or carers. We also provided necessary resources and guidance to our 50 community partners. This enabled all local services to safely move to remote working and provided flexibility in meeting emerging needs. Most importantly, the strength of our community-led service delivery model became all the more evident during these difficult times. Our community partners provided food and essential parcels to over 4,500 individuals and more than 30,000 social support activities were delivered. In recognition of the financial vulnerabilities faced during this time by victims and survivors, more than 850 individuals were supported with utility bills alongside support with advocacy and assistance to work with utility providers to ensure continued services and more than 300 individuals were supported with telephone assistance to ensure telephone befriending and counselling could continue. More than 2,700 individuals availed of counselling and psychological therapies in this year.

With a focus on practical support and a constantly evolving and improving system for capturing, recording and analysing outcomes in key areas, we know these services have had and continue to have a very real and positive impact on the lives of victims and survivors.

Ensuring the performance of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in terms of delivery plan targets is one of my key functions. It is important that a key focus is maintained in order to achieve the best outcomes for victims and survivors alongside robust clinical and corporate governance arrangements.

Within this challenging context, I am pleased to report the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has fully achieved 25 out of 34 of its targets for the year ended 31 March 2021

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

(with partial achievement in a further 6). The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has also managed its budget within the required tolerance of 1.5% of the budget allocation.

The implementation of an outcomes based approach to service delivery is now embedded across the organisation, with data on outcomes now captured across an increasing range of activities. Along with the service delivery model, this approach is making significant improvements to the quality of services provided and to the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.

### **Formation and Status**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited was established under the direction of The Executive Office and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was incorporated on 27 March 2012 as a private company limited by guarantee.

### **Introduction**

This section of the Performance Report outlines the strategic context and operating environment of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in respect of the support and services provided to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse. This includes:

- Strategic Framework
- Key strategies and objectives
- Key programmes
- Key stakeholders and engagement



## Strategic Framework: Victims and Survivors Service Limited

In December 2015, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board carried out a strategic review of the vision, mission and values of the organisation.

The same strategic direction remained in place throughout 2020-21 for support and services to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict and survivors of HIA as follows:

### OUR VISION

*To improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors*

### OUR MISSION

*We work to ensure that victims and survivors, and the wider community, are aware of the support and services available to them*

*We work to support victims and survivors to access quality services in line with their individual needs*

*We listen to and learn from victims and survivors and others, creating and maximising opportunities to share information and knowledge*

### OUR VALUES

#### **TRUST**

*Working confidentially, impartially and respectfully with victims and survivors and others to develop and sustain an open and honest relationship*

#### **UNDERSTANDING**

*Listening to and learning from victims and survivors and others*

#### **RESPONSIVE**

*Continually developing our people and services through growth and innovation*

#### **ACCOUNTABLE**

*Applying good corporate and clinical governance to all that we do*

**Victims and Survivors Strategy 2009-19**  
**(Victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict)**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is the delivery body named in the ten-year Strategy for Victims and Survivors 2009-19 published by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, now known as The Executive Office. It is responsible for providing support and services to victims and survivors on behalf of The Executive Office.

“Victims and Survivors” has the meaning ascribed by the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Act 2008. This definition has two distinctive dimensions, as follows:

- (1) *In this Order references to “victim and survivor” are references to an individual appearing to the Commission to be any of the following:*
  - (a) *someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident;*
  - (b) *someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned in paragraph (a); or*
  - (c) *someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident.*
  
- (2) *Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), an individual may be psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of:*
  - (a) *witnessing a conflict-related incident or the consequences of such an incident;*  
*or*
  - (b) *providing medical or other emergency assistance to an individual in connection with a conflict-related incident.<sup>1</sup>*

In the absence of Ministers and a functioning Northern Ireland Executive, a new Victims and Survivors Strategy for the post 2019 period was not developed before the end of 2019. With the return of the Assembly and Executive in early 2020, work has now been completed on the evaluation of the 2009-19 strategy and the design of a new strategy is underway. In the interim, the existing strategy was extended for two years, and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited programmes also extended for a further two years (2020-21 and 2021-22). The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has continued to deliver services and support in line with the existing strategy and will continue to assist with the development of the subsequent strategy through a process of co-design with The

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<sup>1</sup> Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, available at:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/2953/contents>

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

Executive Office, The Commission for Victims and Survivors, and key stakeholders including our community partner organisations.

### **Report of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (2017) (Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse)**

In September 2011, The Northern Ireland Executive announced that it intended to set up an Inquiry into the abuse in residential homes in Northern Ireland. The terms of reference provided that that the HIA inquiry would examine the period between 1922 and 1995.

The inquiry spent three and a half years conducting its public hearings and investigations from 19 January 2013 with 493 individuals having engaged with the inquiry. The final report of the inquiry was published on 20 January 2017.

In its report<sup>2</sup>, the inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse recommended:

- an apology
- a memorial
- ***additional service provision/specialist care and help for those who were abused***
- a statutory commissioner for survivors of institutional childhood abuse (COSICA)
- financial compensation to be administered by a redress board
- annual grant funding for the Child Migrants Trust

The Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019 became an Act of Parliament on 5 November 2019. This Act provided the legal framework for establishing a Redress Board and a Statutory Commissioner.

The Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) Redress Board in Northern Ireland opened for applications on 31 March 2020. It has been set up to receive and process applications for compensation.

The First and Deputy First Ministers appointed Ms Fiona Ryan as the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) on 6 October 2020 for a five-year term from 14 December 2020.

The Executive Office appointed the Victims and Survivors Service Limited as the service delivery body for the provision of Health and Wellbeing service to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse on 23 October 2020.

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (2017), available at <https://www.hiainquiry.org/historical-institutional-abuse-inquiry-report-chapters>

## **Strategic Priorities**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has the following three priorities:

1. Delivering a needs-based approach to allocating resources and defining services;
2. Ensuring the highest standard of service provision for those in need; and
3. Measuring outcomes associated with the allocation of resources and services.

These priorities underpin the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in delivering three programmes of support for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict and two programmes of support for survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA).

### **Programmes supporting victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict**

#### ***Support for Individuals: the Individual Needs Programme***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited aims to provide support that is responsive to the particular needs of the individual and that respects the dignity and personal choices of each victim and survivor.

Assistance for individuals is delivered under both the Individual Needs and the Health & Wellbeing Programmes and is informed by advice given by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in relation to the needs of victims and survivors. It includes:

- Support for individuals living with physical and psychological injuries to access services and goods that contribute to improved wellbeing and quality of life;
- Support for primary carers and for the bereaved to access services and goods that contribute to improved wellbeing and quality of life;
- In certain circumstances: direct financial assistance for victims and survivors; and
- In certain circumstances: support for individuals to access education, training and other opportunities.

#### ***Funding for Organisations: the Victims Support Programme***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited provides support and funding to community partner organisations to provide services and support to victims and survivors on a regional basis. The work funded through the Victims Support Programme within these organisations meets the Victims and Survivors Service Limited vision and mission (outlined above) and is informed by advice given by the Commission for Victims and Survivors regarding the needs of victims and survivors.

The services and support delivered by organisations funded through the Victims Support Programme include:

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

- Talking therapies and complementary therapies that improve the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of victims and survivors and that enhance their quality of life;
- Services that support and maintain resilience and wellbeing among victims and survivors;
- Welfare advice and support for victims and survivors and opportunities/activities focused on personal and professional development; and
- Support and activities for young people affected by the impact of trauma in families and communities.

### ***PEACE IV Programme***

The PEACE IV Programme is a unique cross-border initiative, designed to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. It also contributes to the promotion of social and economic stability.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited, as Lead Partner in this project, received a Letter of Offer on 15 December 2016 for a project running initially from 1 November 2016 to 31 July 2021. A further extension was awarded in July 2020, increasing the value of the project and extending the end date to 31 December 2022.

The PEACE IV Programme has added value to the existing Victims Support Programme by investing in cross-border advocacy and health and well-being services. It has also complemented and enhanced the Individual Needs Programme by enabling the development of an engagement and outreach network of qualified and experienced Health and Wellbeing caseworkers which connects victims and survivors to services and the delivery of additional services and support.

Specifically, the PEACE IV Programme includes provision for:

- The development of a Network of Regional Health and Wellbeing Case Managers and Health and Wellbeing Case Workers based in organisations across Northern Ireland and Great Britain (1) to identify and address the needs of victims and survivors (5 Case Managers, 26 Health and Wellbeing Case Workers);
- The delivery of Advocacy Support to include practical support for victims and survivors engaging with institutions, historical process and inquiries (6 Advocacy Managers, 21.5 FTE Advocacy Support workers);
- A Resilience Programme to address existing gaps and meet the individual needs of victims and survivors based on the Take 5 Framework for Health and Wellbeing (<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/take-5-steps-wellbeing-english-and-11-translations>); and

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

- The development of the capacity of the sector through training and development to meet national and regional standards, research, and improved regulation.

### **Programmes supporting survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA)**

The service delivery model of support services for survivors of HIA is a partnership approach between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and the community and voluntary sector to build and develop a trauma informed specialised and professional workforce that ensures survivors get the services they need, where they need them and when they need them.

#### ***Support for Individuals***

Assistance for individuals is informed by research undertaken by the Interim Advocates Office. It includes:

- Support for individuals living with physical and psychological injuries to access services and goods that contribute to improved wellbeing and quality of life;
- Support for individuals to access education, training and other opportunities; and
- Resilience support to address existing gaps and meet the individual needs of survivors based on the Take 5 Framework for Health and Wellbeing (<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/take-5-steps-wellbeing-english-and-11-translations>)

#### ***Funding for Organisations***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited provides support and funding to two community partner organisations to provide services and support to survivors of HIA across Northern Ireland.

The services and support delivered by the two funded organisations include:

- Health and Wellbeing Case Workers to identify and address the needs of survivors of HIA;
- Talking therapies and complementary therapies that improve the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of victims and survivors and that enhance their quality of life.
- Services that support and maintain resilience and wellbeing among victims and survivors;
- Welfare advice and support for survivors and opportunities and activities focused on personal and professional development.

## Stakeholders and Key Relationships

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited aims to support victims and survivors as they engage with the diverse services, agencies and other parts of society that contribute to the full and healthy life of the individual.

To achieve this, the organisation needs and values a strong network of partners with whom it can communicate and work in the interests of both victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict and survivors of HIA. These key partnership level stakeholder relationships are illustrated in **Diagram 1** below.

**Diagram 1: Partnership-level Stakeholders**



In practical terms, these relationships function as follows:

### Links between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and TEO

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is an executive non-departmental public body of TEO. It was established by the then OFMDFM (now TEO) to administer funding and support to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict. In October 2020, TEO further

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

appointed the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to provide Health and Wellbeing Services to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA). The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is accountable to TEO in terms of its procedures, activities, and financial responsibilities which are managed through a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) and regular Accountability meetings.

### **A pathway of communication and reporting between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, CVS, and the Victims and Survivors Forum.**

These bodies work together to review the delivery of services for victims and survivors (as well as other matters, including the impact on victims and survivors of the thematic areas of work referred to as *Dealing with the Past, and Building for the Future*). On the basis of this analysis and insight, the Commission is responsible for developing advice for TEO on policy matters affecting victims and survivors. As part of its role the Commission also promotes the interests of victims and survivors, undertakes research and reviews the effectiveness of the services provided to victims and survivors.

### **Regional Victims and Survivors Practitioners' Working Groups**

There is a close link between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and the Victims and Survivors Practitioners' Working Groups (VSPWG). These two regional groups represent a vital strategic network of communication and collaboration between professionals who work with victims and survivors, and have developed expertise in effective treatments, good governance, and support strategies for staff and volunteers in the sector.

This structure builds strategically upon the achievements and experience to date, ensuring more coordinated, efficient and effective service delivery for victims and survivors.

During 2021-22, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited will establish working groups from the VSPWG's to input into the design of new service areas such as recording of live experience, the application of a gender lens to our services, addictions and social prescribing.

### **A pathway of communication and reporting between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, COSICA, and the Advisory Panel.**

The Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) was appointed by the First and Deputy First Minister in October 2020 and took up post on 14 December 2020. It is expected that in 2021-22, the Commissioner will appoint an Advisory Panel comprising survivors of HIA.



## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

These bodies will work together to review the delivery of services for survivors of HIA. On the basis of this analysis and insight, the Commission is responsible for developing advice for TEO on policy matters affecting survivors of HIA.

It is expected that a Co-Design Programme to continue learning and development around the support needs of survivors of HIA will commence in 2021-22. This will bring together expertise from across the TEO Historical Institutional Abuse Implementation Branch, COSICA, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and the Redress Board.

### **Strategic Developments Impacting Programmes Delivery and Stakeholder Engagement**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continues to operate within a challenging, complex and changing strategic context. Key elements of this context include:

#### **1. New Victims Strategy**

The ten year strategy published by The Executive Office in November 2009 has been extended for two years, to allow for the co-design of a new strategy. That co-design process commenced in April 2021 with initial sessions attended by representatives of partner organisations in the community & voluntary sector. The process will continue throughout 2021, to help design and develop a new strategy which builds on lessons from the previous strategy (including the formal evaluation of that strategy), identifies areas for further research, and considers structures, timeframes and delivery models.

#### **2. The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment (TPDP) scheme**

This scheme was established following the publication of [Victims Payment Regulations 2020](#) to acknowledge the harm suffered by those injured in the Troubles/conflict in Northern Ireland. This scheme opened for applications in August 2021.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited will support victims and survivors both directly (primarily through sharing of information/records held by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited), and indirectly (through a number of our community partner organisations which have now been provided with additional resources to directly support applicants and assist with applications). We have worked closely with colleagues from DoJ, TEO, CVS and community organisations to help ensure that the implementation arrangements for the scheme are developed in a victim-centred way, and to ensure that individual victims and survivors will have access to support when needed (both in terms of applications and also wider Health & Wellbeing support).

### **3. Legacy issues including delays to implementation of the Stormont House Agreement**

A wider context of political uncertainty remains due to the delay in implementing measures discussed in the Stormont House Agreement (2014). Following the Ministerial Statement of March 2020, the outcome of a number of high profile legacy cases during early 2021, and more the uncertainty around the approach to dealing with the past continues, resulting in further difficulty for victims and survivors.

In terms of devolved matters highlighted in the Agreement that have not been progressed, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is aware of frustration that exists among victims and survivors and their representatives in respect of the various elements of this as noted in previous reports.

Events during 2021 relating to legacy cases continues to highlight the absence of a structure for dealing with the past, and proposals for further talks add further uncertainty in respect of the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement.

On this basis, as part of the organisation's Risk Management Strategy (see page 67) the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has continued to monitor the lack of political agreement on the Stormont House Agreement legacy institutions as a strategic risk that dilutes the potential strategic impact of the PEACE IV funded Advocacy Support Programme and has adjusted and managed its work programme and stakeholder engagement in this area accordingly. This will continue to arise as an issue for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited as the design of an application for PEACE PLUS funding commences in late 2021

### **4. Regional Trauma Network**

The background and progression of the design of the Regional Trauma Network has been detailed in previous Annual Reports. During the 2020-21 year, there has been little progress on the implementation of RTN, primarily due to the pressures of COVID-19 on statutory health and social care services. However, during this period, a number of our community partners have been supported to and have focussed on implementing enhanced controls proposed for the RTN in addition to the existing clinical governance arrangements and standards in place.

A renewed focus on the co-design of a Regional Trauma Network is expected to commence in late 2021.

### **5. Growing demand for services and changing needs of victims and survivors**

The current service delivery model (2017-20) is based on the Commission for Victims and Survivors' *Victims and Survivors Delivery Model for 2017-2020 Policy Advice Paper* (August 2016) approved by Ministers in November 2016. Moving away from a grant-led approach towards a needs-based and outcomes-focused

model of integrated services and support, the model works in partnership with funded organisations across the region.

Using the outcomes based monitoring and evaluation data and in consultation with victims and survivors and their representative groups, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has identified gaps and required changes in service provision. In particular, the needs of the Bereaved have been highlighted. In March 2020, the Self-Directed Assistance Payments scheme reopened for applications from individuals bereaved of a parent, spouse/partner or child, who had missed this cut-off date - enabling them now to access a payment in 2021-22 and in subsequent years.

### **6. Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA)**

An extensive co-design and stakeholder engagement programme has been established with TEO and COSICA to enable and encourage continual learning and improvement. This collaborative effort will focus on and support a range of strategic development areas including (i) service development (such as the development of referral pathways between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, Wave Trauma Centre, Advice NI, COSICA and, the HIA Redress Board to ensure victims and survivors have a positive experience of the overall client journey) (ii) clinical governance (including the establishment of a Practitioners Working Group to serve as a network of communication and collaboration between professionals ensuring more coordinated, efficient and effective service delivery for victims and survivors) and, (iii) quality management (for example, further development of our current monitoring and evaluation systems and processes within the wider integrated support model across the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and community partners).

### **7. Interim support for Victims and Survivors of Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses**

In early 2021, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited worked with colleagues in the Department of Health to establish support and assistance needed for victims and survivors engaged in the co-design of an investigation into Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. A support telephone line was established in March 2021 alongside the provision of emotional support at co-design sessions.

We have continued to support our colleagues in the Department of Health in relation to the co-design of permanent support and services for victims and survivors in 2021-22.

## 8. COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and the necessary restrictions in place throughout the 2020-2021 financial year meant that support and services were dramatically impacted as is reported in the Summary Performance against Delivery Plan Strategic Outcomes below.

Our priority for 2021-2022 is to maintain and develop the support and services required by victims and survivors as we continue to live through the COVID-19 pandemic. We will seek to review the impact of services provided during this time and to develop insight and learning in respect of remote service provision and to address new and emerging needs as restrictions reduce.

### Summary Performance against Delivery Plan Strategic Outcomes

The principal activities of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in this year have been outlined above. This activity was premised on **5** Strategic Outcomes, comprising **34** Key Actions (with associated outputs and outcomes), agreed with The Executive Office

The 5 Strategic Outcomes for 2020-21 were as follows:

1. Improved health and wellbeing of Victims and Survivors;
2. Victims and Survivors, and those most in need, are helped and cared for;
3. Victims and Survivors, and their families, are supported to engage in legacy issues;
4. Improved access to opportunities for learning and development; and
5. An efficient and effective organisation.

Achievement Status		Status Description
BLUE		Completed
GREEN		Achieved or on track for delivery
GREEN/AMBER		Broadly on track and there is <i>justifiable</i> confidence of getting close to targeted outcomes
AMBER		Progress less than planned. Significant doubt around the achievement of targeted outcomes
RED		Commitments not achieved or not expected to be achieved within the current PfG period

At year end, six targets were partially achieved and three targets were not achieved specifically due to the significant impact of COVID-19. It is important to note that this has been more than offset with additional delivery in areas which became key priorities in-

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

year, including social isolation initiatives, increased psychological therapies, food and essential parcels and increasing connectivity.

Targets partially achieved or not achieved::

- Complementary Therapy provision by Victims and Survivors Service Limited funded organisations (Partially Achieved)
- 1:1 Literacy and Numeracy (Partially Achieved)
- Volunteering (Partially Achieved)
- Trauma-focused Physical Activity (Partially Achieved)
- Disability Aids (Partially Achieved)
- Psychological Supports (Partially Achieved)
- Regional Trauma Network (Not Achieved)
- Access to Welfare and health and wellbeing support for applicants to the Victims Payment Scheme (Not Achieved)
- Establishment of a Partnership Agreement between TEO and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited (Not Achieved)

The specific reasons for partial or non-achievement of these nine delivery plan targets are as follows:

- **Complementary Therapies** – the access and availability of these services to victims and survivors by VSP funded organisations has not been achieved in full due to significant government restrictions throughout 2020-21.
- The progress in respect of three PEACE IV funded **resilience targets** have not been achieved in full due to significant government restrictions throughout 2020-21. These targets are:
  - a. Access and availability of 1:1 **Literacy and Numeracy** tuition - this framework could not be delivered outside of face to face contact due to the specific learning needs of those victims and survivors requiring this support.
  - b. The delivery of a **Volunteering Programme**
  - c. Access and availability of **Trauma-focused Physical Activity**
- The access and availability of **Disability Aids** was partially achieved. This target was on track until the government restrictions of Q4 of 2020-21. This meant that Occupational Therapist assessments required ahead of award could not be undertaken.
- The access and availability of **Psychological Support** was partially achieved due to COVID-19 restrictions. This support includes close contact services such as

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Complementary and Alternative Therapies which were restricted at times during the year.

- The provision of **access to welfare and health and wellbeing support** for victims and survivors applying for the **Victims Payment Scheme** could not be delivered due to the delay in the opening of the scheme.
- The revised target in respect of the **Regional Trauma Network (RTN)** was to engage in renewed co-design with HSCB / TEO / Statutory Sector / Victims and Survivors Sector. Due to COVID-19, this area of work was temporarily put on hold due to pressures on our colleagues in the health service. Re-engagement has commenced in 2021-22.
- A target to engage with TEO with a view to the establishment of a Partnership Agreement has not been achieved. At the request of TEO for capacity reasons, this was deferred into the 2021-22 financial year.

One target was set in respect of the HIA service and this was achieved.

Further details of these summary performance indicators are outlined in the extracts of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Delivery Plan, provided in [Appendix 2](#).

### Summary Programme Performance

#### ***Victims Support Programme (2020-21)***

##### ***Support for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict***

- The Victims Support Programme provides funding to organisations to enable them to deliver services and support to victims and survivors. This Programme is delivered in four main streams (see [Table 1](#) on page 27).
- Following a call for funding that opened in November 2016, applications to the Programme were assessed against published criteria and Letters of Offer were issued to 55 successful organisations to deliver services over a three year period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020. 50 organisations provided services to victims and survivors in the course of the 2020-21 year.
- During 2020-21 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to focus on embedding and improving monitoring and evaluation of outcomes, using a number of methods including the implementation of standardised measurement tools. Through these tools the Victims and Survivors Service Limited can demonstrate

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the outcomes of the services delivered through the Victims Support Programme and measure the impact on the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.

- In March 2020, the NI Executive introduced a range of measures and restrictions on movement in a bid to curb the spread of COVID-19. As the pandemic continued into 2020-21, VSP funded organisations, in line with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited guidance, continued to adapt service provision to meet the needs of vulnerable victims and survivors. Changes in services included a move to telephone or video based talking therapies, welfare support and complementary therapies. New services to meet emerging needs were quickly established which included the provision of food parcels, online self-care courses, facebook reading groups, zoom coffee morning and travelling libraries. During 2020-21 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited made additional VSP funding available to support organisations to be innovative in how they meet the new emerging needs of victims and survivors.

### ***Individual Needs Programme (2020-21)***

#### ***Support for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict***

- The Individual Needs Programme delivers funding and funded services directly to individuals who meet the definition of a victim or survivor, as per the Victims and Survivors (NI) Order (2006) (see page 10).
- 2020-21 was the fourth year of service delivery under the needs-based service delivery model. This has required continued partnership working with Victims Support Programme funded organisations across the region, supported and enabled by the PEACE IV funded Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Network and Advocacy Support Network.
- Over 2020-21, targets for the delivery of support under the Individual Needs Programme were exceeded: a total of **6,302** individuals accessed assistance.
- Overall, this fourth year of implementation has been a success, while also being the most challenging yet given the COVID-19 restrictions. There were low numbers of complaints received and positive feedback from individuals recorded. Learning has been incorporated and reflected in improvements in processes and procedures to enhance the client experience towards achieving better health and wellbeing outcomes.
- As with the Victims Support Programme, the introduction of measures to tackle COVID-19 required a significant change in the way Health and Wellbeing services and support were delivered throughout the year. For much of the year Health and

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Wellbeing caseworker assessments had to be carried out by telephone or video calling. Framework adaptations included provisions to make awards for online fitness/relaxation classes, video/telephony based physiotherapy sessions and assessments, online learning/training courses, equipment and aids to creatively build social connection and/or improve accessibility around the house.

### ***PEACE IV Programme (2016-22)***

#### ***Support for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict***

- The PEACE IV Programme complements and enhances the existing services and support delivered under the Victims Support Programme and Individual Needs Programme. 2020-21 was the fourth full year of implementation of this Programme as an integrated and value-adding element of the revised service delivery model.
- On project initiation **18** organisations were awarded PEACE IV funding totalling **£7.5m** to deliver services under this Programme. **15** organisations were in receipt of PEACE IV funding in 2020-21.
- The structures for the implementation of the PEACE IV Programme are well embedded. Networks have been established for both the Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers and the Advocacy Support Programme. These networks provide ongoing peer support for PEACE IV funded staff as well as providing an opportunity to further develop and refine processes and procedures.
- Activity and expenditure has continued to increase during 2020-21 in line with the agreed project work plan, setting the Programme on course to meet its objectives for the remainder of the Programme period.

### ***Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA)***

- On 23 October 2020, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was appointed by The Executive Office to coordinate and deliver health and wellbeing support and services to survivors of HIA.
- The service launched on 1 December 2020, following a period of engagement and co-design with survivors and other stakeholders throughout 2020.
- Following an open call for funding, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited appointed WAVE Trauma Centre and Advice NI on 1st December 2020 as community partners to enable survivors of HIA to access local support and



## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

services. They will also ensure that survivors who are now living outside of NI have access to the support and services that they need.

- **138** survivors engaged with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited between 1 December 2020 and 31 March 2021. **64** survivors received an assessment (Individual Needs Consultation), while for **74** survivors, an assessment was not appropriate at that stage and, other support such as 'listening ear' was provided.
- An extensive co-design and stakeholder engagement programme was established with TEO and COSICA which focusses on a range of collectively identified priority areas for exploration and future development.

Further detail on each of the above areas is outlined in the Performance Analysis below and in the Corporate Governance Report.

### 1.2 Performance Analysis

As summarised above, during 2020-21 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was responsible for delivering funding and resources to support victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse.

Victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict were supported through three key programmes: the Victims Support Programme (2017-22), the Individual Needs Programme (2020-21), the PEACE IV Programme (2016-22).

Support for survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse commenced on 1 December 2020. This involved needs based awards directly to survivors as well as health and wellbeing support provided by funded organisations within the community and voluntary sector.

This section provides a detailed analysis of each of these Programmes and assesses this information in the context of the organisation's agreed Strategic Outcomes (outlined above) and Key Performance Indicators (see [Appendix 2](#)).

#### Focus on Strategic Outcomes

As noted previously, the vision of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is to 'improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors'. The organisation has worked collaboratively with the Commission for Victims and Survivors, the Executive Office and our community and voluntary partners to develop four strategic outcomes to help us achieve this for victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict. These are outlined in [Table 1](#) for the Troubles/conflict service.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has also worked collaboratively with the Interim Advocate's Office/Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse, the Executive Office and survivors of HIA to develop four strategic outcomes to help us achieve the vision of improving the health and wellbeing of survivors. These are outlined in [Table 2](#) for the HIA service.

**Table 1: Programme Delivery: Strategic Outcomes (Troubles/conflict)**

<b>Thematic Area per Comprehensive Needs Assessment</b> <i>(Commission for Victims and Survivors, 2012)</i>	<b>Strategic Outcomes</b>	
<b>Health and Wellbeing, Social Support</b>	1	We improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors and their families
<b>Financial and Welfare Support</b>	2	We care for victims and survivors and help those most in need
<b>Truth, Justice and Acknowledgement</b>	3	We support victims and survivors and their families to engage in legacy issues
<b>Personal Development</b>	4	We improve access to opportunities for learning and development for victims and survivors

**Table 2: Service Delivery: Strategic Outcomes (HIA)**

<b>Thematic Area</b>	<b>Strategic Outcomes</b>	
<b>Health and Wellbeing, Social Support</b>	1	We improve the health and wellbeing of survivors and their families
<b>Financial and Welfare Support</b>	2	We care for survivors and help those most in need
<b>Information Recovery</b>	3	We support survivors and their families to engage in information recovery and redress processes
<b>Personal Development</b>	4	We improve access to opportunities for learning and development for survivors

All of the Programmes delivered by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in 2020-21 have been modelled to reflect these key strategic outcomes. Reporting on progress against these objectives is a priority for the organisation. A detailed monitoring and evaluation framework that applies to this activity, and which specifies desired outcomes in each thematic area, is included within each Victims and Survivors Service Limited Corporate Plan and is attached at [Appendix 3 \(Troubles/conflict\)](#) and [Appendix 4](#)

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(HIA). These frameworks shape and inform the below discussion of performance and outcomes measurement.

### **VICTIMS SUPPORT PROGRAMME (2017-22)**

#### *Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict*

#### **Background**

With an indicative budget of over £6 million per annum, the Victims Support Programme 2017-2020 opened for applications in November 2016. At that time 55 organisations were successful in securing funding. The Victims Support Programme was formally extended to March 2022. This two year extension will enable the evaluation of the previous programme to be completed as well as the consultation and drafting of a new strategy for victims and survivors post 2022. In the 2020-21 year, 50 organisations delivered services to victims and survivors. These services reflect not only the vision, mission and values of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, but also the key themes and needs identified in the *Comprehensive Needs Assessment* published by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in 2012.

For a full list of organisations currently in receipt of funding, please refer to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website ([www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org)).

#### **Funding delivered under the Victims Support Programme**

The services and activities delivered under the Victims Support Programme in 2020-21 can be grouped into the following broad categories:

- Talking Therapies
- Complementary Therapies
- Befriending Services
- Personal and Professional Development
- Transgenerational Services
- Truth, Justice and Acknowledgement Activities
- Welfare Support
- Other Social Support Activities

#### **Impact of COVID-19 on the Victim Support Programme**

As noted throughout, COVID-19 and the restrictions on movement mandated by the NI Assembly required an immediate, flexible and victim centred change to the services

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delivered under the Victims Support Programme. Many of the existing services listed above continued to be delivered but in a different way e.g. face to face services replaced with telephony/video services.

Working together with colleagues in the community and voluntary organisations funded under this programme, additional services to meet the basic physiological needs of vulnerable victims and survivors were provided. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Resource Guide played a vital role in ensuring that the new emerging needs of individuals could be supported in a flexible and responsive way. It enabled funded organisations to redirect funding into new, innovative and creative initiatives. Some examples of this support are:

- Food and essential household items were provided to over 4,505 individuals;
- Mobile Phone/Device bills top ups to support over 324 individuals; and
- Electricity/Gas/Coal/Oil top ups to support over 854 individuals.

On 9 October 2020, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited issued a survey to our community partner organisations to better understand how we can continue to adapt and develop support and services for victims and survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3 priority areas for support were identified :

- Improving and Adapting Communications with Victims and Survivors;
- Support for Emerging Critical Health and Wellbeing Needs; and
- Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of Staff and volunteers.

In addition to the flexibility offered in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited COVID-19 Resource Guide, a COVID-19 call for funding to meet the needs within the above mentioned areas for support was opened on 23 November 2020 to ensure additional support could be put in place at a community level to address many of the areas identified from this survey. Total funding of £181,915 was awarded under this call.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Outcomes-based monitoring is now fully operational in all organisations funded to deliver Complementary Therapies and Talking Therapies under the Victims Support Programme. To monitor and evaluate these services, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has worked with these organisations to adopt and implement the standardised measurement tools described below.

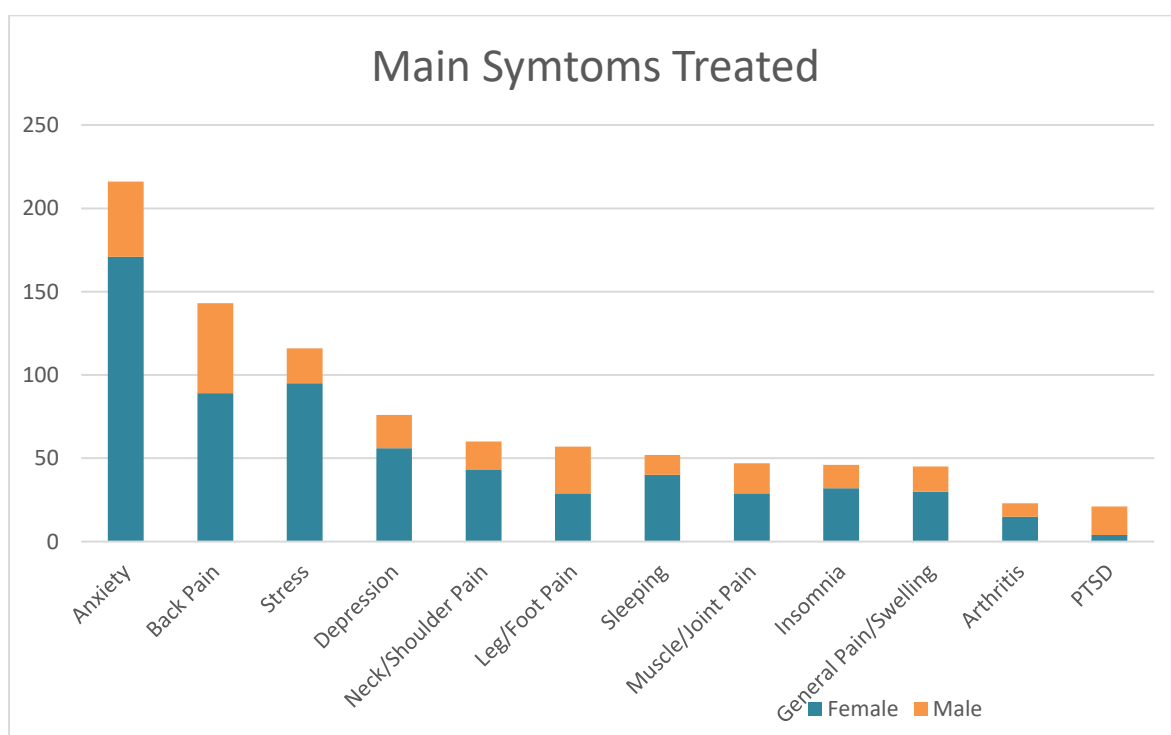
**Complementary Therapies: MYMOP (Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile)**

MYMOP is a client-generated outcome questionnaire which is problem-specific but includes measures of general wellbeing and is applicable to all clients, whether their presenting symptoms are physical, emotional or social.

The monitoring data gathered using MYMOP provides the following key insights into this area of funded service delivery:

- In 2020-21, 25 funded organisations across Northern Ireland provided Complementary Therapies to a total of 696 individuals,
- 654 of these individuals completed their course and 42 ended therapy early (6.03% comparable to 5.76% in 2019-20).
- The ratio of females to males accessing support has reduced to 2.5:1, from 3:1 in previous years.
- The most common symptoms reported by individuals accessing funded Complementary Therapies continue to be anxiety, stress, back pain and depression. This information, along with the detail of additional symptoms frequently reported, is shown in **Diagram 2** below.

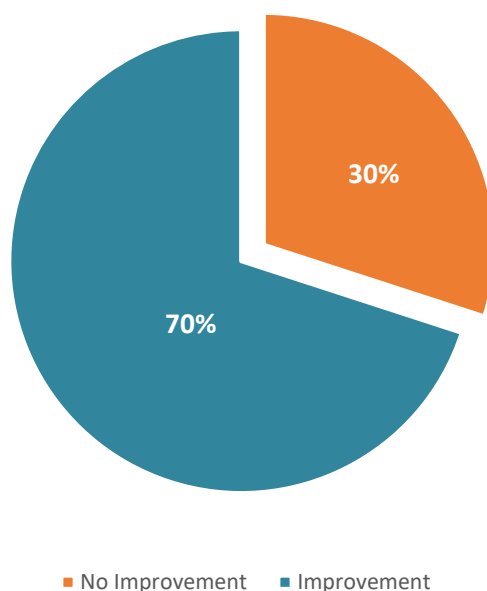
**Diagram 2: Summary Monitoring Information – MYMOP: Complementary Therapies (Client Numbers, Client Gender Breakdown and Symptoms Treated)**



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Overall, the outcomes data for individuals accessing Complementary Therapies in 2020-21 showed a reduction in improvement from the results reported in previous years. In 2021-21, 7 out of 10 individuals reported an overall improvement in symptoms, down from the established pattern of 4 out of 5. This information is shown in **Diagram 3** below.

**Diagram 3: Summary Outcomes Information – MYMOP: Complementary Therapies**



The information analysed above demonstrates that Complementary Therapies continue to deliver overwhelmingly positive outcomes, making a significant contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors. Feedback as to why a minority of individuals do not benefit from Complementary Therapies often points to external factors.

### ***Talking Therapies - CORE Net (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Net)***

CORE Net is a web based system based around the CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) standard which records outcome measures that track the progress and recovery of individuals accessing Talking Therapies. It is a client self-report questionnaire administered at each therapy session to measure outcomes across the following four domains:

- Wellbeing
- Risk
- Problems
- Functioning

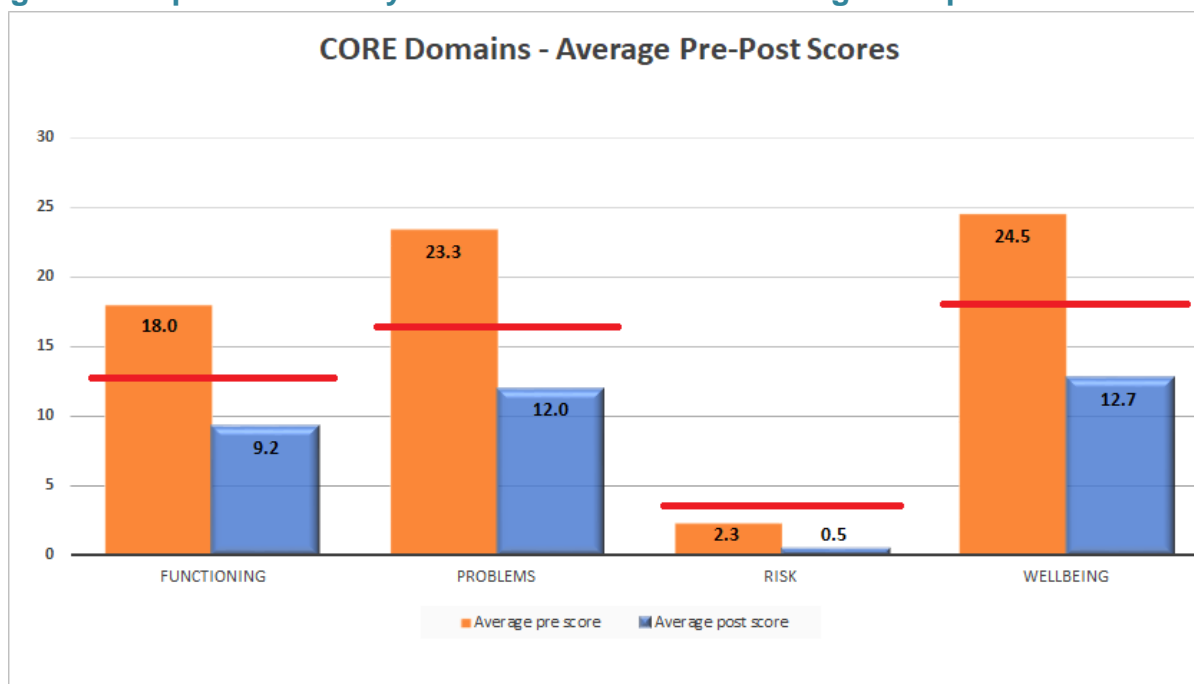
The monitoring data gathered using CORE Net provides the following key insights into this area of funded service delivery:

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- In 2020-21 21 funded organisations offered Talking Therapies to victims and survivors; and
- 2,715 individuals attended talking therapy sessions during the year, with 1,602 courses of therapy completed during the period. 1,204 (75%) of these were completed as planned while 398 (25%) ended early (unplanned).

Overall 62% of individuals accessing this service reported a positive improvement which is demonstrated across all four domains in [Diagram 4](#) below.

**Diagram 4: Improvements By Domain – CORE Net: Talking Therapies**

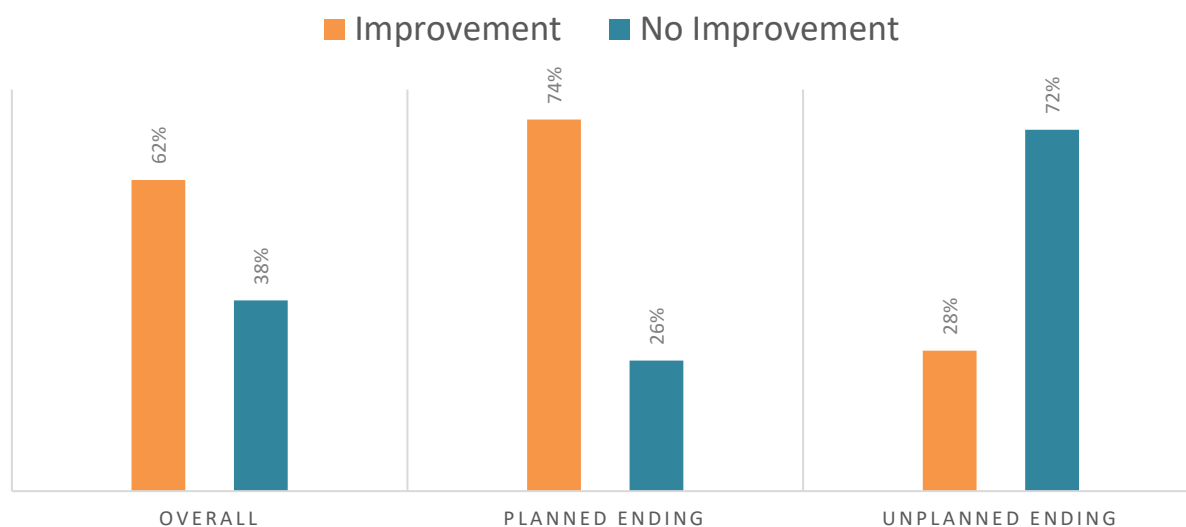


— The Clinical Cut-off Score refers to a score that is presumed to represent the boundary between "normal" and the "clinical range" on an outcome measure.

Data shows that individuals who complete therapy with their therapist, as planned, have a much greater likelihood of a positive outcome (78%). However, it is noteworthy that a significant percentage of individuals who have an unplanned ending of therapy also experience a positive outcome (28%). This information is shown in [Diagram 5](#) below.



Diagram 5: Summary Outcomes Information – CORE Net: Talking Therapies (showing variance between planned and unplanned endings)

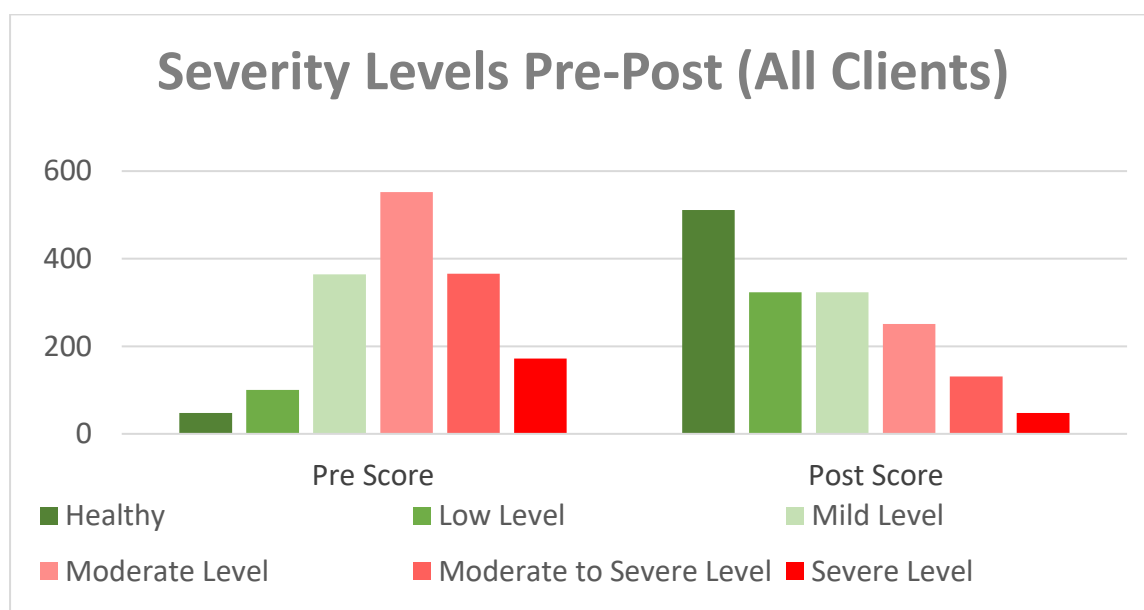


The reasons as to why 25% of Talking Therapy clients do not complete their therapy as planned have been investigated, with the most common reasons listed as:

- Too many DNAs ('Did Not Attend' session). Organisations may apply a policy to discontinue therapy based on repeated failure to attend;
- Client moved;
- Client crisis; and
- Client DNA final session.

Although there is a wide range of pre and post-scores at the individual level, 68% of client pre-therapy scores are in the **Moderate** to **Severe** ranges. The average overall pre-score is at the upper extreme of the **Moderate** range, as presented in [Diagram 6](#) below.

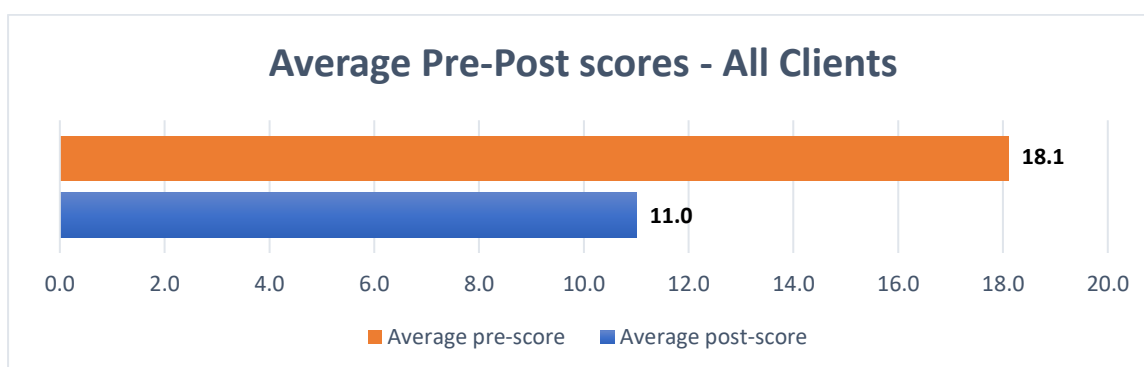
Diagram 6: Outcomes Information – CORE Net: Talking Therapies (showing severity of pre- and post-therapy scores)



(n=1857)

By contrast, post-therapy only 27% of client scores are in the **Moderate to Severe** ranges, the average score is at the lower end of the **mild** range and on average there has been a **reliable** change. This information is shown in [Diagram 7](#) below.

Diagram 7: Summary Outcomes Information – CORE Net: Talking Therapies (showing difference between average pre- and post-therapy scores)



0-4 healthy non-clinical, 5-9 mild non-clinical, 10-14 mild, 15-19 moderate, 20-24 moderate-to-severe, 25-40 severe

The information analysed above demonstrates that in 3 out of 5 cases, Talking Therapies deliver positive outcomes. This confirms that the service makes a positive contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.

### ***Additional Health and Wellbeing Activities and Services: Outcomes***

Outcomes monitoring measures for additional health and wellbeing activities and services funded under the Victims Support Programme are qualitative in nature collected through organisational Case Studies and quotes from direct beneficiaries. Feedback from service users was overwhelmingly positive.

## **INDIVIDUAL NEEDS PROGRAMME (2020-21)**

### **Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/Conflict**

#### **Background**

2020-21 is the fourth year the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has delivered our needs based model and delivery in this year has involved building on the foundation laid in the first 3 years of the Programme. Like the Victims Support Programme, the services and support provided under the Individual Needs Programme are modelled to reflect the four Strategic Outcomes in [Table 1](#) (see page 27) and monitored in line with the framework at [Appendix 3](#).

#### ***‘Existing Clients’: Self-Directed Assistance Payments***

Under the revised model, limited grant funding (now referred to as Self-Directed Assistance) is available to all individuals registered with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited as at 5pm on Friday 31 March 2017 and found to be eligible per the rules governing the Support Schemes and/or the Financial Assistance Scheme delivered in 2016-17.

Approval was given by Ministers during 2020-21 to re-open the Bereaved Self Directed Assistance Payments scheme with effect from 1 April 2021. This scheme will be open to bereaved individuals who were not registered with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited by 31 March 2017 and, therefore, are not already in receipt of this payment from the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. The scheme applies to individuals **bereaved of a parent, spouse/partner, and/or a child**. These victims and survivors will now be eligible to receive a payment within the 2021-22 Financial Year (and any subsequent years subject to the scheme remaining operational and eligibility criteria unchanged). This is a new policy direction. Payments will therefore not be made retrospectively for previous financial years (2017-2020).

***Existing and New Clients: Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks***

Further to the Self-Directed Assistance Payments, under the revised service delivery model both previously registered and new individuals coming forward all have access to needs-led assistance through a range of measures, enabled specifically by the PEACE IV-funded network of Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers and Regional Case Managers. This includes:

- Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks under the Individual Needs Programme, delivering bespoke assistance to meet individual needs. Some elements of these Frameworks benefit from PEACE IV Resilience Programme funding;
- The full range of services and support delivered by community-based organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme; and
- One-to-one Health and Wellbeing Caseworker support and Advocacy Support to engage with legacy institutions and processes, funded by PEACE IV.

The eligibility criteria for accessing this additional support is confirmation the individual meets the definition of a victim/survivor per the Victims and Survivors (NI) Order (2006).

**Table 3** on the next page summarises the support made available in 2020-21 under the Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks, along with the anticipated health and wellbeing outcomes that the support will deliver for victims and survivors and the outcomes achieved in each case.

**Table 4** on page 43 summarises the value of awards issued under each framework for the Individual Needs Programme, PEACE IV Funded Resilience Programme and to Survivors of HIA. The value of award is variable, depending on the needs and relevant support identified.

Table 3 Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks 2020-21

Framework	Description	Anticipated Outcome(s)	Outcome achieved
<p><b>1 Disability Aids</b></p>	<p>Provides a personalised approach to assessing and improving the safety and independence of victims and survivors impacted physically by troubles/ conflicted related events, by prescribing functional aids and equipment to assist with everyday activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved wellbeing, function and independence for <b>80%</b> of individuals as a result of disability aid provided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Disability Aids framework is reserved for those with severe and often irreversible life changing physical injuries as a result of troubles/conflict related events. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, restrictions were imposed on all non-emergency close contact services. This had major implications for the delivery of the framework with supports ordinarily recommended following an Occupational Therapy assessment, which is considered a close contact service. In maintaining our commitment to the continuity of care at this time we continued to support victims and survivors where possible with aids/ equipment that did not require assessment.</li> <li>Despite the challenges outlined above 74% of those supported under the Disability Aids Framework reported improvement in terms of wellbeing, function and independence.</li> <li>17% showed no improvement and 9% reported a dis-improvement, demonstrating that while a significant proportion of individuals supported have been positively impacted, there is a small percentage for whom this support has a limited benefit. This</li> </ul>

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Framework	Description	Anticipated Outcome(s)	Outcome achieved
			<p>reflects the complexity of the multifaceted issues that those with severe and enduring physical health issues present with, coupled with additional life circumstances or social factors that potentially mitigate the benefits of such support.</p>
<p><b>2 Education and Training</b> <i>(Includes 1:1 Literacy and Numeracy funded under PEACE IV Resilience Programme)</i></p>	<p>Provides a personalised approach to accessing education and training opportunities, which lead to employment, enhancement of employability and career progression for those whose education and development opportunities have been impacted by troubles/ conflict related events.</p> <p>A second strand to the framework aims to improve the confidence and functioning of those whose development in relation to numeracy and/or literacy was adversely impacted by troubles/ conflict related events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased opportunities for employment progression and/or career development.</li> <li>• Increased opportunities to develop interests and time to connect with other people.</li> <li>• Improved psychological, physical and social functioning and subjective wellbeing of <b>80%</b> of individuals who engage in numeracy and literacy tuition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst 58% of those who engaged in Education and Training opportunities reported improvement, 20% reported no improvement and 22% reported a dis-improvement.</li> <li>• When analysing the reported outcomes for the Education and Training Framework, it is important to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the educational experiences of those supported at this time. For example the majority of courses operated online in the absence of face-to-face teaching.</li> <li>• For those who have experienced limited educational opportunities in the past this would have been extremely difficult, particularly for those with limited IT skills.</li> <li>• Opportunities for social connections and peer support during this time will have also been adversely impacted and possibly viewed as a lonely and psychologically challenging experience.</li> </ul>

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Framework	Description	Anticipated Outcome(s)	Outcome achieved
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For many victims and survivors, engaging in further education was an opportunity to enhance their career prospects and employability however, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the shutdown of many industries and limited opportunities for employment.</li> <li>For those who have completed courses they may not have benefitted from their efforts yet and this may have influenced the outcome.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Persistent Pain</b></p> <p>Provides a personalised approach to assessing and improving the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors impacted by troubles/ conflict related events and living with persistent pain issues by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interventions tailored to meet individual needs and circumstances e.g. physiotherapy</li> <li>Alternative/ complementary treatment to manage pain symptoms or promote</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved wellbeing, function and independence for <b>60%</b> of individuals as a result of persistent pain interventions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>65% of those supported with Persistent Pain interventions reported improvement, with 18% reporting no improvement and 16% reported a dis-improvement in their condition.</li> <li>Again, it is important to consider the impact of the Covid19 pandemic in analysing the reported outcomes under the Persistent Pain Framework. The pandemic prompted the shutdown of all non-emergency health interventions for an extensive period time. Whilst as a service we did make efforts to support survivors to engage in treatments at home with equipment, aids and online consultations, this for some will not have substituted the benefits of hands on treatment, particularly for those with severe physical injuries.</li> </ul>

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Framework	Description	Anticipated Outcome(s)	Outcome achieved
	<p>relaxation and stress reduction e.g. reflexology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Heat assistance</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4 Volunteering</b> <i>(Funded under PEACE IV Resilience Programme)</i></p>	<p>Provides a personalised approach to supporting and encouraging victims and survivors impacted by troubles/conflict related events to take up a new role in volunteering or overcome any practical barriers associated with their current volunteering roles to enhance and/or maintain improved health and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved psychological, physical and social functioning and subjective wellbeing for <b>80%</b> of individuals engaged in Volunteering Programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the sample size remains too low for a meaningful analysis, 100% of the responses have reported an improvement</li> </ul>
<p><b>5 Trauma-Focused Physical Activity</b> <i>(Funded under PEACE IV Resilience Programme)</i></p>	<p>Offers a personalised approach to addressing the needs of victim and survivors impacted by troubles/conflict events in relation to managing their traumatic experiences and supporting recommended trauma-focused physical activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved wellbeing, function and independence for <b>80%</b> of individuals as a result of trauma focused-physical activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54% of individuals supported to engage in physical activity reported an improvement in their circumstances, with 20% reporting no improvement and 26% reporting a dis-improvement.</li> <li>• It is considered that the achievement of this outcome has been hindered by COVID-19 and the associated restrictions, which impacted the availability/accessibility of these physical activity services (both indoor and outdoor) and the opportunity for enhancing positive health and wellbeing outcomes.</li> </ul>



Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

Framework	Description	Anticipated Outcome(s)	Outcome achieved
<p><b>6 Psychological Support</b></p>	<p>Aims to enhance and/or maintain the psychological and psychosocial functioning and wellbeing of individual's psychologically injured by troubles/ conflict related events in unique cases where psychological supports are not available within statutory, voluntary or community provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved wellbeing, function and independence for <b>60%</b> of individuals as a result of psychological support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic forced the shutdown of all close contact services including therapeutic supports such as complementary and alternative psychological interventions such as reflexology, acupuncture and massage therapies.</li> <li>In addition, psychological talking therapies were forced to operate remotely via telephone or internet.</li> <li>Despite these challenges, 57% of the individuals accessing psychological supports reported an improvement, with 18% reporting no improvement and 25% reporting a dis-improvement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7 Social Isolation Framework</b></p>	<p>Aims to address the needs of victims and survivors impacted by troubles/ conflict related events in supporting activity and / or aids to facilitate social engagement and interaction to improve and/or maintain health and wellbeing and reduce the barriers that restrict individuals from participating fully in society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved psychological, physical and social functioning and subjective wellbeing for <b>80%</b> of individuals engaged in Social Isolation activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social isolation became a major public health concern throughout the Covid19 pandemic, with individuals advised to avoid social activities, non-essential travel, and unnecessary visits to relatives or friends, and warranted a shift in our approach to continue to support individuals with the resources to remain connected.</li> <li>Whilst 71% of those supported under the Social Isolation Framework during this time reported an improvement, 8% reported no</li> </ul>

**Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

Framework	Description	Anticipated Outcome(s)	Outcome achieved
			improvement and 21% reported a dis-improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of contributing factors including wider social / life circumstances and socio economic factors could have influenced these results.</li> </ul>

*Client reports are from The Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS) which is a gentle, client-centred self-report scale of functional impairment attributable to an identified problem. It is typically completed twice: before and after an intervention, to measure the impact of the intervention on the client's self-reported impairment. The outcomes above are indicative and based on responses recorded from clients in receipt of the frameworks named above.*

**Table 4: Awards and Payments made under the Individual Needs Programme, and PEACE IV Resilience Programme in 2020-21**

Award Description	Value of Individual Awards	Number of Awards Issued	Payments Made
<b>Self-Directed Assistance Payments</b>			
Self-Directed Assistance – 20-21 Bereaved	£500	2,827	£1,405,680
Self-Directed Assistance – 20-21 Carer	£500	539	£268,680
Self-Directed Assistance – 20-21 FA Only	£500	440	£218,500
Self-Directed Assistance – 20-21 Injured (HRC)	£500	860	£429,000
Self-Directed Assistance – 20-21 Injured (MRC)	£500	1,076	£535,000
Self-Directed Assistance – Additional Needs Based Payments – 20-21 (Severely Injured)	£500	860	£429,500
Self-Directed Assistance – Additional Needs Based Payments – 20-21 (Bereaved)	£500	597	£296,500
<b>Individual Needs Programme Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks</b>			
Disability Aids 20-21	variable	117	£229,274
Education and Training 20-21	variable	205	£295,904
Persistent Pain - Complementary Therapies 20-21	variable	39	£13,911
Persistent Pain - Home Heating Support 20-21	£500	764	£378,750
Persistent Pain - Pain Relief 20-21	variable	6	£688
Persistent Pain - Physiotherapy 20-21	variable	149	£57,572
Psychological Support 20-21	variable	117	£49,986
COVID-19 Emergency Support	variable	6	£3,629
<b>PEACE IV Resilience Programme</b>			
PIV Resilience (1-1 Literacy and Numeracy) 20-21	variable	2	£25,320

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

PIV Resilience (Trauma-Focused Physical Activity) 20-21	variable	157	£49,132
PIV Resilience (Volunteering) 20-21	variable	16	£4,592
PIV - Resilience (Social Isolation) 20-21	variable	85	£40,356
<b>Historical Institutional Abuse</b>			
HIA - Disability Aids 20-21	variable	27	£ 36,026
HIA - Social Isolation 20-21	variable	4	£3,206
HIA - Persistent Pain – Physiotherapy 20-21	variable	1	£160
HIA - Persistent Pain - Comp/ Alternative Therapies 20-21	variable	1	£1,072
HIA - Trauma Focused Physical Activity 20-21	variable	5	£1,989
HIA - Education & Training 20-21	variable	1	£435
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>8,901</b>	<b>£4,774,862</b>

There were a number of awards with unspent balances during 2020-21, which explains the variance between the awards issued and the actual payments made.

Payments of **£4,504** were made in 2020-21 for awards related to closed frameworks from prior years. These bring total payments under the Individual Needs Programme and Peace IV resilience programme in 2020-21 to £4,779,366.

### **Case Examples**

Included below are two condensed case examples that illustrate the types of outcomes achieved for clients through Additional Needs Based Framework support.

*Client presented with symptoms of PTSD including intrusive memories, flashbacks, stress and difficulty with interpersonal relationships, which would cause him to be socially isolated. He was bereaved of a close family member and four colleagues as a result of several troubles related incidents. His job served as a constant reminder and trigger of past traumatic events, which exacerbated his psychological difficulties.*

*Following consultation with a Health and Wellbeing caseworker to determine his needs, he explored his options and thought about changing his career. After a few meetings with his caseworker, he received an education award, which supported him to participate in a training course and learn new skills and knowledge in a new vocation.*

*The caseworker supported him with a number of voluntary opportunities to develop his practical skills and craft with a number of local community groups. The learning and practical experience empowered him to leave his long-term place of work, gain financial independence through self-employment and alleviate his feelings of social isolation through his interaction with the groups.*

***“I am very thankful and humbled to receive the support I have. My caseworker has really understood my situation. I thoroughly enjoyed attending the course, I learned so much that I have already began to use. The connections the caseworker has helped me make has been unbelievable. He has put me in touch with so many people that I have been able to visit and share ideas and provide services to. I just want to say a big thank you to VSS for helping me with support to attend that course. I really appreciate it”.***

**VSS Education and Training Framework**

*Client was physically injured in a troubles related incident. He presented with significant physical pain which restricted his mobility, caused difficulty sleeping and had a negative impact on his day to day functioning and psychological wellbeing.*

*Following consultation with a caseworker he was supported to engage in physiotherapy which helped him increase his physical functioning and manage his pain. His motivation and confidence improved, and he engaged in social leisure activities. Client reported to be able to function more independently and safely in his own home having a positive effect on his wellbeing.*

*“I find the physiotherapy very beneficial as without it I couldn’t continue carrying out my normal daily activities”.*

*VSS Persistent Pain Framework*

## PEACE IV PROGRAMME (2016-2022)

### Background

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited was named as lead partner for the victims and survivors element of the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE IV).

The original total value of the project was **£13,372,518** to be delivered from 1 November 2016 until 31 July 2021. An **additional bid** was submitted to SEUPB and **approved in January 2020**, with a revised Letter of Offer issued in July 2020. As a result an **additional £1.57 million** has been made available for project delivery and the **timeframe extended to 31 December 2022**.

Through the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and its Project Partners, the PEACE IV project provides funding for cross-border Health and Wellbeing services by increasing the quality of care in the sector for victims and survivors and their families.

The project aims to enhance the capacity for the delivery of comprehensive shared services for victims and survivors in Northern Ireland and the border region, for the first time, in an inclusive and co-ordinated way. This includes a primary focus on improving the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors through the development, implementation and co-ordination of a number of new and innovative initiatives.

In April 2017, 18 organisations were awarded PEACE IV funding totalling £7.5m to deliver the following range of activities:

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

- The delivery of **Advocacy Support** by 6 Advocacy Managers and 21.5 FTE Advocacy Support Workers, whose focus is to assist victims and survivors to engage with legacy institutions and processes. All of these posts are hosted within funded organisations.
- The establishment of a **Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Network** including 5 Regional Case Managers employed by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, and 26 Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers employed within funded organisations.
- The delivery of a **Resilience Programme** including One-to-One Literacy and Numeracy support, Trauma-Focussed Physical Activity, Volunteering activities, and steps to address Social Isolation.

At 31 March 2021, **15** organisations remained in receipt of PEACE IV funding. The funding allocated to organisations in receipt of a Letter of Offer, during the period 2017- 2022, totals £9.8m.

Further to the above, the following activities are also being funded under PEACE IV:

- Professional Training and Capacity Building (referred to as the **Workforce Training and Development Plan**): to build capacity to ensure all service providers are able to attain minimum standards set by the Commission for Victims and Survivors and in line with current National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has established a Partner arrangement with **WAVE Trauma Centre** in relation to the delivery of Trauma Training as part of the wider training plan.
- **Research**: The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has established a Partner arrangement with the **Commission for Victims and Survivors** with regard to this element. The Commission is responsible for commissioning and delivering three key research projects:
  - A review of the impact/effectiveness of Trauma Services;
  - A review of the effects of the Trans-Generational Legacy of the Troubles/Conflict on Children and Young People; and
  - A review of the impact/effectiveness of Advocacy Support Services.

As a result of the additional bid approved in January 2020, additional resilience activities which involve victims and survivors in storytelling projects, gender specific interventions and community peace building and dialogue will be delivered. There will also be an increased focus on the transgenerational impact of the Troubles/conflict with training opportunities in family therapy and the establishment of best practice in this area.

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

Additional research is also being delivered by our Project Partner with The Commission for Victims and Survivors in relation to analysing the needs of victims and survivors in the border region of NI and ROI and GB as well as updating the 2012 Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

**Table 5** below outlines the key targets that underpin each activity.

**Table 5: PEACE IV Delivery Targets 2016-2022**

Activity	Targets
<b>Advocacy support</b> to include practical support for victims and survivors engaging with institutions, historical process and enquiries	27.5 FTE workers 6,300 beneficiaries
Development of <b>qualified assessors, health and well-being case workers</b> to identify and address the needs of victims and survivors (Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Network)	31 workers 11,500 beneficiaries
A <b>resilience programme</b> to address the individual needs of victims and survivors, including level one and level two mental health interventions	2,500 interventions
Development of the capacity of the sector through <b>training and development</b> (to meet national and regional standards), research and improved regulation	3 major research projects  Needs Analysis of the Border Region.  Update of the CVS <i>Comprehensive Needs Assessment (2012)</i>

### Health and wellbeing service provision to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (2020-21)

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited was appointed by The Executive Office to coordinate and deliver health and wellbeing support and services to survivors of HIA on 23 October 2020. As detailed in the performance summary section above, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited appointed WAVE Trauma Centre and Advice NI on 1 December 2020.

Together in partnership with WAVE Trauma Centre and Advice NI, services have been delivered to survivors of HIA to meet both complex and non-complex needs. An assessment of needs is sensitive two-way conversation between the victim and a Health



## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

and Wellbeing Caseworker based within a community setting. This is referred to as an 'Individual Needs Consultation'. Where the needs are more complex, such as exceptional cases, persistent pain or medical equipment and aids, a more in depth assessment may need to be arranged by a qualified HWB Case Manager.

**138** survivors engaged with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited between 1 December 2020 and 31 March 2021. **64** survivors received an assessment (Individual Needs Consultation) with **39** needs based awards being made for the period (see **Table 4** above), while for **74** survivors, an assessment was not appropriate at that stage and, other support such as listening ear were in place.

### **Case Example**

Included below is a condensed case examples that illustrate the types of outcomes achieved for clients through the Needs Based service delivery to survivors of HIA.

Ms M made contact with the newly launched services for Historical Institutional Abuse in December 2020. Ms M is a victim of historical institutional Abuse having resided in an institution as a child for a ten-year period where she suffered physical, emotional abuse and neglect. Ms M is a 70-year-old lady and is a permanent wheelchair user following a spinal injury in her fifties. She lives alone and has no children.

Ms M made contact with the service whilst she was being treated as an inpatient at her local hospital during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms M had spent eight weeks in hospital at this stage and whilst medically fit was unable to be discharged as an appropriate care package could not be sourced to accommodate her needs. At this time Ms M's distress was understandably heightened by the prospect of occupying a hospital bed at a time when they were in significant demand due to the impact of COVID-19.

In an effort to support Ms M arrangements were made to liaise with the hospital social worker to advocate and negotiate possible supportive solutions. Following consultation the main risks and concerns identified centred on the fact that Ms M lived alone in a rural area with no family support. To mitigate these risks a solution was found in supporting Ms M to obtain a lifeline pendent alarm with built fall detection technology that would alert services in the event of an emergency.

The benefits of the solution identified in this instance were twofold, Ms M was successfully discharged home where she felt safe and secure and pressure was alleviated on the NHS at an extremely challenging time.

***"I will be forever grateful for the support I received at a time where help seemed impossible. Efforts where made beyond the call the duty and for that I am truly thankful."***

**VSS HIA Social Isolation Framework**

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

Outcomes based monitoring has been implemented in respect of the service provision for survivors of HIA. Use of the standardised tools of **MYMOP** (Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile) for survivors receiving Complementary Therapies, **CORE Net** (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Net) for survivors accessing Talking Therapies and **WSAS** scores (Work and Social Adjustment Scale) for needs based framework supports such as Disability Aids, Education and Training are in place alongside qualitative outcomes monitoring collected through organisational case studies and quotes from direct beneficiaries. Feedback from service users will also be captured and monitored.

Given the service delivery in this area commenced in late 2020-21, reliable outcomes data is not available for reporting. It is expected that data will be available later in the 2021-22 year and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited will seek to gain key insights into these areas of funded service delivery.

## **OTHER KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

### **Financial Performance**

#### **Summary Financial Performance**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is sponsored by The Executive Office. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had a grant in aid budget allocation of £13.568m.

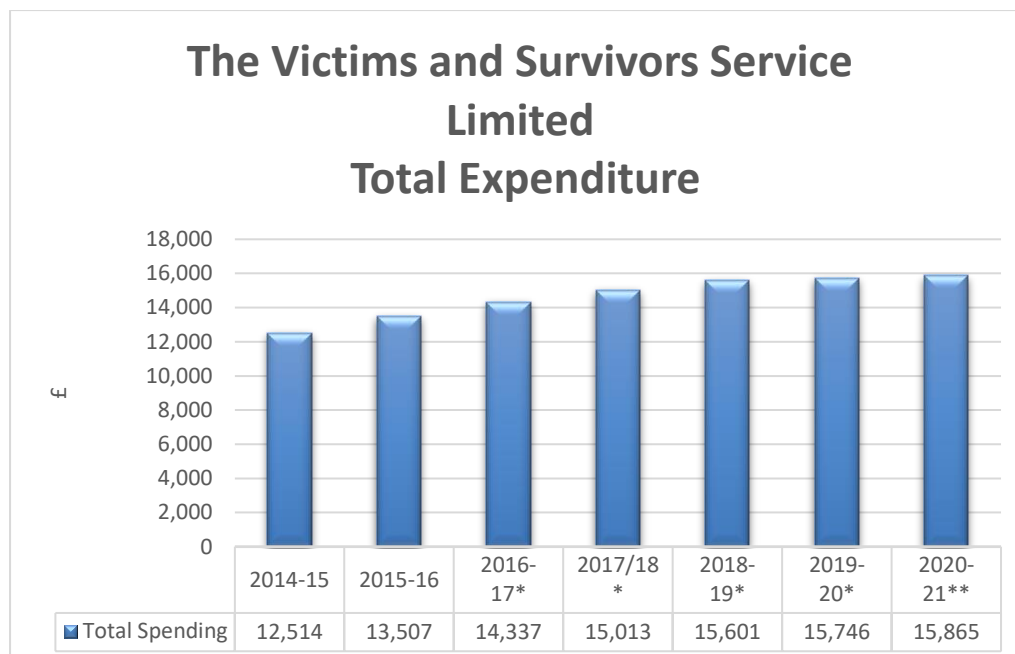
As at year end 31 March 2021, there was an underspend of £77,327 representing 0.57% of the budget allocated. This is within the tolerance target of 1.5%. The underspend is based on the core budget allocation of £13,568,000 and core expenditure within the accounts. In calculating this underspend it should be noted that there was a small underspend (£485) within the core capital budget, and that the HIA Grant in Aid includes a reimbursement for capital expenditure (£3,900), but excludes depreciation (£358) as this is a non-cash item. The Statement of Financial Position on page 95 shows the company had net assets of £120,449 as at 31 March 2021 and cash at bank of £1,392,653.

#### **Long Term Expenditure Trends**

During the year, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has provided the Department with a financial analysis of budget versus expenditure and cash on a month end basis, to identify any significant variances and take management action to address.

The budget was utilised within the tolerance level of 1.5% as outlined in the summary financial performance section above. General Financial Management arrangements in addition to those outlined as part of the Departmental oversight are outlined in further detail below.

Diagram 8: Long term expenditure trends of VSS



\*2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 out-turn figures include PEACE IV funded expenditure.

\*\*2020-21 out-turn figures include PEACE IV funded expenditure and expenditure related to support for survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA).

### ***Payments to Suppliers***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the British Standard for Achieving Good Payment Performance in Commercial Transactions (BS 7890) and with the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 as amended. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited follows the 2008 instruction to support businesses through every effort to make payments to suppliers within ten working days.

Given the unique circumstances created by COVID-19, the NI Executive implemented measures, with effect from 25 March 2020, to ensure that Departments and NDPBs paid their suppliers as quickly as possible in order to maintain cash flow and protect jobs. It suggested making payments, in some circumstances, to at risk suppliers even if goods and services were paused. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the list of suppliers and were content that outside of CPD framework contracts with which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited were engaged no such payments were necessary.

Overall for 2020-21, 81% of invoices were paid within 10 working days and 100% within 30 working days. On average 7 working days were taken to pay invoices during 2020-21.

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

In comparison, during 2019-20 91% of invoices were paid within 10 working days and 100% within 30 working days with an average payment time of 6 working days.

### **Financial Position and Resources**

#### ***Core Funding***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is primarily funded by its sponsor Department, The Executive Office. This is financed by resources voted for annually by the Northern Ireland Assembly and is, therefore, not exposed to significant liquidity risks. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited does not access funds from commercial sources and so is not exposed to significant interest rate risks.

The Executive Office has indicated that it intends to continue to fund the organisation for the foreseeable future and has provided a budget to the end of the financial year 2021-22. The organisation has the staff resources required to achieve its current strategic outcomes and the staffing structure has been aligned to facilitate the effective management of resources in the achievement of these outcomes.

#### ***PEACE IV Funding***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is also in receipt of PEACE IV funding during 2019-20 from the Special EU Programmes Body. An initial grant of £13.373m was awarded under Promoting Peace and Reconciliation (Action 3.3: Victims and Survivors) for the period 1 November 2016 to 31 July 2021.

In addition, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has received advance funding totalling £2.15m from SEUPB to facilitate cash flow for the project. The majority of this funding is used to ensure that funded organisations can operate during the period from incurring expenditure, through to reimbursement from SEUPB (a process that will take 4 months from the end of each 3-month claim period).

In November 2018, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited submitted a bid to SEUPB, seeking additional funding, to facilitate the following:

- Extension of project activity (including Health and Wellbeing and Advocacy Networks) to 30 June 2022 (with revised project end date of 31 December 2022);
- Engagement in new areas of Resilience activity, including Storytelling, Gender and Peacebuilding; and
- Pilot in family therapy (transgenerational).

Approval was granted by SEUPB in January 2020 for £1.57m of additional funding for these purposes.

## ***HIA Funding***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is funded by The Executive Office to provide Health and Wellbeing services to survivors of HIA. Funding for this service is ring-fenced and reported to the Executive Office separately to core funding. Annual funding in 2021-22 is expected to be circa £750k.

The organisation has employed additional dedicated staff resources to ensure the achievement of its key strategic outcomes in this area.

## **Service Delivery Performance**

### ***Complaints Handling***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has a complaints procedure in place to ensure that individual victims and survivors, funded organisations and all other stakeholders can express any dissatisfaction that may arise and to make improvements and changes to services based on such feedback. The Complaints Policy and Procedure is available in a user-friendly leaflet format (available on request) as well as in a downloadable format on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website.

**Table 6** below provides a summary of the complaints handled in 2020-21.

**Table 6: Summary of Complaints 2020-21**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Complaints Received 2020-21</b>	<b>13</b>	Key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Provision of funding</i></li><li>• <i>VSS processes</i></li><li>• <i>VSS staff</i></li></ul>
<b>Complaints Upheld / Partially Upheld</b>	<b>0</b>	No complaints were upheld in year
<b>Complaints not Upheld</b>	<b>11</b>	Key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Provision of funding</i></li><li>• <i>VSS processes</i></li></ul>
<b>Complaints Open 2020-21</b>	<b>2</b>	Key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Provision of funding</i></li><li>• <i>VSS Staff</i></li></ul>

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

<b>Total Complaints handled in year</b>	<b>13</b>	
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### ***Positive feedback and messages of thanks received during 2020-21***

In 2020-21 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to record positive feedback and messages of thanks received from individuals. These included emails, cards and telephone calls made specifically to express thanks for the support offered under the Individual Needs Programme and the Individual Needs Programme/PEACE IV Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks. Recording this positive feedback provides a qualitative insight into the impact of the support provided for individuals who are injured, bereaved or who care for others living with injuries. In 2020-21, the organisation recorded **34** such messages compared to **88** in the previous year. This reduction is not considered a reflection on impact of support, instead it is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of the Belfast and Dungannon offices in line with COVID-19 regulations.

### ***Anti-Bribery and Corruption***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Anti-fraud policy sets out how it complies with the Bribery Act 2010 and DAO (DOF) 09/11 Bribery Act which clarifies how the Bribery Act 2010 applies to public servants in Northern Ireland. The standards of conduct required of all the Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff are set out in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff code of conduct. This code requires all staff to conduct themselves with honesty and impartiality at all times. It is not acceptable for any staff member to receive any benefit that may be perceived as having the potential to compromise personal judgement on work related issues.

### ***Sustainability Report***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to The Executive Office's Sustainable Development Strategy. Policies and practices have been introduced within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to encourage efficiency in the use of resources.

The Seatem House office is located within Belfast City Centre close to public transport links, allowing staff and victims and survivors to travel to and from the office in a sustainable manner.

The use of an outreach office (Dungannon) facilitates the minimisation of travel for individuals and organisations located outside of the greater Belfast area.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has also, in order to reduce its carbon footprint, pursued a policy of the facilitation, where possible, of staff flexibility in start and finish times allowing staff to travel to and from work at non-peak traffic times.

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

COVID-19 restrictions have resulted in all Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff working at home for the majority of their working hours. Whilst restrictions are expected to continue to be relaxed throughout 2021-22, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited expect to continue with a hybrid model of office and home based working where service delivery for victims and survivors permits. It is expected that this will further add to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Strategy.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is aware of its responsibility to progress its work associated with sustainable development targets within the Implementation Plan emanating from the first Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy.

### **Social**

While the Victims and Survivors Service Limited does not have a dedicated policy, the principles of corporate and social responsibility are embedded within its key activities, demonstrating a commitment to social equality and human rights. A staff Health and Wellbeing Programme is in place which incorporates aspects of corporate and social responsibility.

### **Going Concern**

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis as it is assumed that the parent Department, The Executive Office, will continue to fund the organisation's activities. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited three year Corporate Plan 2021-24 (including 2021-22 Delivery Plan) was presented to The Executive Office Departmental Board for approval at the December 2021 Meeting.



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**Oliver Wilkinson**  
**Chairman**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022**



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**Margaret Bateson**  
**Chief Executive and**  
**Accounting Officer**

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

### Overview

The Accountability Report for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited comprises three key elements:

- Corporate Governance Report
  - *Director's Report*
  - *Statement of Accounting Officer's and Director's Responsibilities*
  - *Governance Statement*
- Remuneration Report
- Assembly Accountability Report

These are outlined below.

### 2.1 Corporate Governance Report

This section of the report outlines the compositions and organisation of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's governance structures and how they support the achievement of the organisation's objectives.

#### 2.1.1 Directors' Report

##### Introduction and Background

The Directors during 2020-21 were as follows:

Oliver Wilkinson – Chair appointed 1 April 2015 (previously Director appointed 2 December 2013, Interim Chair appointed 30 June 2014)

Bertha McDougall – Director appointed 2 December 2013

Richard Solomon – Director appointed 2 December 2013

Beverley Clarke – Director appointed 1 April 2015

Patricia Haren – Director appointed 1 April 2015

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited drafted its Corporate Plan 2021-24 in February 2021. It was submitted to The Executive Office in June 2021 and was due to be considered by The Executive Office Departmental Board in December 2021.

The Corporate Plan 2021-24 outlines the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's approach to Outcomes Based Accountability and grows upon the progress which has been made as part of the Co-Design Programme and the outcomes-led approach outlined in the Performance Analysis section above.



## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

This approach is consistent with the draft Programme for Government 2016-21 and the NI Civil Service Outcomes Delivery Plan for all citizens in Northern Ireland.

In developing these priorities the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has also listened closely to our stakeholders, who have emphasised the need for a victim and survivor led service that is responsive to need, easy to understand and access, and that enables the development of networks of support.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited *Delivery Plan 2021-22* details the measurable actions and outputs that will be taken / monitored over the next financial year to work towards these outcomes. Progress against this Plan is monitored on an ongoing basis and reported on regularly to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board.

### **Share Capital**

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital.

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

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is required to report on personal data related incidents and accordingly has a control system to meet these responsibilities under the recent General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the subsequent Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The GDPR came into force on 25 May 2018 and consequently the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has established internal and external working processes to comply with and implement the introduction of this legislation. In addition, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has acted upon a GDPR compliance review carried out by its Internal Audit provider, Ernst & Young. An Information Asset Register has been maintained detailing all data sources held and all policies and procedures were reviewed in light of the new regulation.

All staff and Board members have completed basic GDPR awareness training and undertake annual refresher training. The Data Protection Officer receives regular training keeping them abreast of developments regarding data legislation.

There were no instances of personal data loss requiring a report to the Information Commissioner's Office during the year under review.

A working group within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has been established to review and act in instances when a potential data breach occurs. For any non-reportable breach arising, the working groups will take the appropriate actions to inform other parties as necessary (for example our sponsor team within TEO).

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

During the year staff were advised by the Data Protection Officer on controls and improvements to reduce the likelihood of data breaches.

The control system established to ensure the appropriate handling of personal data and information used for operational and reporting purposes is the Publication Scheme, which is available on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website at [www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org).

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited further strengthened internal controls by investing in GDPR email software to further reduce the risk of data loss.

In 2020-21 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited received seventeen Freedom of Information requests. Responses were provided to sixteen of these requests in 2020-21, with one request outstanding at the end of the financial year.

### **Related Parties**

Details of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited related parties are set out in Note 19 to the financial statements.

### **Register of Interests**

The Chair, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board, the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and all staff are required to register all interests, direct or indirect, which members of the public might reasonably think could influence their judgment.

The register of interests is available for public inspection by contacting the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN.

### **Charitable Donations**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited made no charitable or political donations during this period.

### **Important Events occurring after the year-end**

There have been a number of important events occurring after year end which are listed below with further details of these events having been covered under the Strategic Developments section on page 17.

- The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS)
- Support for the Bereaved

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Interim support provided for Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses in Northern Ireland

### 2.1.2 Statement of Accounting Officer's and Directors' Responsibilities

Under the Companies Act 2006 the Directors are required to prepare, for each financial period, a statement of accounts detailing the resources acquired, held, or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited during the year. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and of its Net Comprehensive Expenditure, application of resources, changes in taxpayer's equity and cash flows for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- Observe the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer and Directors are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Accounting Officer has a general responsibility for taking steps as are reasonably available to safeguard the assets of the company and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Accounting Officer and Directors are required to confirm that, as far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the entity's auditors are unaware, that the Accounting Officer and Directors have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the entity's auditors are aware of that information.

The Accounting Officer and Directors' are required to confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable. The Accounting Officer is also required to confirm that she takes personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

The Executive Office has appointed the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer include the 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited assets and are set out in full in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

### **2.1.3 Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2021**

#### **Introduction**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is a company limited by guarantee, owned by The Executive Office and functioning as an Arm's Length Body. It is financed through The Executive Office's Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL). The Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited reports directly to The Executive Office.

This statement is given in respect of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's accounts for 2020-21. The Governance Statement comprises two broad elements. First, the Statement describes the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's governance framework, identifying responsibilities and explaining the functions of its constituent elements. Second, the Statement reports my assessment as Accounting Officer of the effectiveness of the framework during the reporting period. The report identifies any significant governance issues and concludes with a review of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited conformance with the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013.

#### **The Purpose of the Governance Statement**

The purpose of the Governance Statement is to report publicly on the extent to which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited complies with the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013. The process of preparing the Governance Statement itself adds value to the effectiveness of the corporate governance and internal control framework.

#### **Overview of the Governance Framework**

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values, by which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is directed and controlled.

The system of internal control is a significant part of this framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve the organisation's aims and objectives and can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

The corporate governance framework within which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited operated for the year ended 31 March 2021 comprises:

- The Accounting Officer;
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board;
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Audit and Risk Committee; and
- The Internal Audit function.

These structures, together with an overview of their responsibilities and performance in year, are set out in the relevant sections below.

The corporate governance framework also includes a number of additional elements that contribute to the effective governance of the organisation. These comprise:

- The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum;
- The Executive Office Oversight Arrangements;
- The Corporate Plan 2020-23 and Delivery Plan 2020-21 (accepted by TEO in 28 October 2020);
- The Performance Appraisal Framework;
- The Risk Management Framework;
- Financial Policies and Procedures;
- Whistle-blowing Policy; and
- Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

Clinical governance arrangements are also in place, with oversight by a Health and Wellbeing Committee.

These elements, together with an assessment of their effectiveness in the period, are described in the relevant sections below.

### **Review of Effectiveness**

#### ***The Accounting Officer***

I was appointed Accounting Officer on 11 July 2016.

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. I also have responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances allocated to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and for safeguarding public funds and assets, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013 and Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

In my role as Accounting Officer, I function with the support of the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited (the Board). This includes highlighting to the Board specific business risks and, where appropriate, the measures that could be employed to manage these risks.

### ***The Board***

The Board is chaired by a non-executive Director. It supports the delivery of effective Corporate Governance in keeping with the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013.

The Board takes an objective long-term view of the business of the organisation, leading its strategic planning process and assisting the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in setting and meeting its corporate aims and objectives.

Under the general guidance and direction of the Ministers of The Executive Office, key aspects of the Board's role include:

- Setting the strategic direction for the organisation, including its vision, values, and strategic objectives;
- Overseeing the implementation of its corporate and business plans, monitoring performance against objectives, and supervising its budget;
- Leading and overseeing the process of change and encouraging innovation, to enhance the organisation's capability to deliver;
- Overseeing the strategic management of staff, finance, information, and physical resources, including setting training and health and safety priorities;
- Establishing and overseeing the implementation of the corporate and clinical governance arrangements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, including risk management; and
- Overseeing and monitoring progress against all of its equality of opportunity and good relations obligations.

The Board membership is detailed in **Table 7** below.

**Table 7: Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board Membership**

Name	Position
Oliver Wilkinson	Director appointed 2 December 2013 Appointed Interim Chair 30 June 2014; appointed Chair 1 April 2015
Bertha McDougall	Director appointed 2 December 2013
Richard Solomon	Director appointed 2 December 2013 (resigned 31 March 2022)
Beverley Clarke	Director appointed 1 April 2015 (resigned 23 November 2021)
Patricia Haren	Director appointed 1 April 2015

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Northern Ireland Executive returned to office on 11 January 2020. In its absence no new appointments to the Board could be made. The Board had asked that The Executive Office seek to address this issue as a matter of urgency, given that the ongoing position of Chair plus four members, is well below the normal complement of Chair plus seven members. In July 2021, ministerial approval was given to the opening of the public appointment competition to fill the three vacant positions on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board.

Despite this the Board was able to maintain quorum throughout 2020-21.

The Board met 11 times in 2020-21. **Table 8** below details the attendance of Board members at meetings held during the year.

**Table 8: Board Meeting Attendance**

Date	Oliver Wilkinson	Bertha McDougall	Richard Solomon	Beverley Clarke	Patricia Haren
<b>22 April 2020</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>12 May 2020</b>	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
<b>9 June 2020</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>30 July 2020</b>	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
<b>9 Sept 2020</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>21 Oct 2020</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>10 Nov 2020</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>9 Dec 2020</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>20 Jan 2021</b>	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
<b>9 Feb 2021</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>9 Mar 2021</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

On a quarterly basis, the Board considers a range of issues, including the following standing items:

- Minutes of Previous Meeting;
- Chairman's Update;
- Chief Executive and Accounting Officer Update;
- Reports from Sub Committees (Audit and Risk and Health and Wellbeing);
- Progress against Budget;
- Progress against Corporate and Delivery Plans and risks to achieving stated outcomes;

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

- Compliance and Data Protection Updates; and
- Client Risk Update.

In addition to the quarterly meetings, the remaining Board meetings follow a strategic format, devoting time to the consideration of key strategic issues. Such issues considered in 2020-21 included:

- NIO update on Legacy
- Historical Institutional Abuse
- Needs of Bereaved and Carers
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited approach to Peace Plus
- Review of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Programmes
- COVID-19 impact on services
- Review of the RSM evaluation of the victims strategy 2009-2019

The Board operates as a collegiate forum under the leadership of the Chair. It ensures that the appropriate strategic planning processes are in place and that there is effective operational management of their implementation. Day-to-day operational matters are my responsibility and that of senior staff.

Each Non-Executive Board Member participates in the high-level corporate decision-making process as a member of the Board, contributes to the operation of corporate governance arrangements within the organisation and supports me in my role of Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

As Chief Executive, I am responsible for organising the agenda for monthly Board meetings and ensuring the Chair and Board members are provided with timely information to support full discussion at each meeting.

I report to the Board by exception, drawing attention and focus to any areas of concern, including significant strategic risks and areas of delivery against planned outcomes which are at risk.

I provide reports which include areas such as the status of delivery against delivery plan outcomes; expenditure against budget; requests made under the Freedom of Information Act; press reporting of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited; Assembly Questions relevant to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited; and absence management.

The Board maintains a Register of Interests. This lists, for each Director, all commercial and other relevant interests. A similar register is maintained by senior management and staff within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. Significant changes are reported as they occur. Each Board and committee meeting begins with those present declaring any conflicts of interest that may arise from agenda items. In the event of a conflict of



## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

interest arising, the Director or committee member concerned is required to withdraw from any discussion of the relevant matter and to abstain from any associated vote.

The Board reviewed its own effectiveness by carrying out a self-assessment in July 2021. The overall conclusion was that the Board performed well in 2020-21, and that a range of actions identified at the 2019-20 review had been implemented. The action areas identified within the 2020-21 review will be taken forward in 2021-22 and include:

- Strategic communications between TEO as the Sponsor Department and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board; and
- Co-option of a new member to the Health and Wellbeing Committee.

### ***The Health and Wellbeing Committee***

The Health and Wellbeing Committee are appointed by the Board. The Committee nominates one member to the position of Chair.

The Health and Wellbeing Committee's terms of reference sets out its role, including:

- Consideration of strategies in relation to the implementation and evaluation of a Clinical Governance Framework;
- Consideration of strategies in relation to the implementation and evaluation of Health and Wellbeing Services delivered by and on behalf of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited;
- Consideration of strategies concerning the Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff health and wellbeing, employee engagement and development; and
- Providing assurances relating to the management of clinical risk and clinical governance requirements for the organisation.

**Table 9** below details the Health and Wellbeing Committee members.

**Table 9: Health and Wellbeing Committee Membership**

Name	Position
<b>Beverley Clarke</b>	Committee Member from April 2017 (Chair)
<b>Patricia Haren</b>	Committee Member from April 2017

In addition to its members, the following officers normally attend the Committee:

- The Chief Executive Officer;
- The Head of Health and Wellbeing;
- The Health and Wellbeing Programme Manager;
- A Health and Wellbeing Case Manager; and

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

- The VSP Programme Manager.

The Health and Wellbeing Committee met four times during 2020-21. The Committee completed an annual report of their activities within the 2020-21 year and this has been taken into account in preparation of this Annual Report.

### ***The Audit and Risk Committee***

The Audit and Risk Committee and its Chair are appointed by the Board. The Chair is appointed from the NICS and is not a member of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Board.

The Audit and Risk Committee's terms of reference (updated in October 2020) sets out its purpose as being to support me, as Accounting Officer, in monitoring risk, control and governance systems, including financial reporting. Additionally the Committee will advise the Board and the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of internal and external audit arrangements and on the implications of assurances provided in respect of risk and control. The Audit and Risk Committee does not have executive powers.

**Table 10** below details the Audit and Risk Committee members.

**Table 10: Audit and Risk Committee Membership**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Colm Doran</b>	Committee Member - Chair from October 2013 (appointed from Department of Finance)
<b>Bertha McDougall</b>	Committee Member from 13 December 2013
<b>Richard Solomon</b>	Committee Member from 13 December 2013
<b>Briege Lafferty</b>	Committee member from 6 August 2019 (Appointed from DAERA)

In addition to its members, the following officers normally attend the Committee:

- The Accounting Officer;
- The Head of Corporate Services;
- The Finance and Governance Manager;
- The Business Support Officer (Secretary of the Committee);
- Representative(s) from the Northern Ireland Audit Office;
- Representative(s) from the Victims Unit in The Executive Office; and
- Representative(s) from the Internal Audit service provider.

The Audit and Risk Committee met five times in 2020-21.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

In line with best practice set out in the Department of Finance's Audit and Risk Assurance Handbook, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee has approved an agreed agenda of work for its meetings, which include the following standing and annual agenda items:

- The review of the strategic risk register;
- Scrutiny of the annual accounts;
- Consideration of internal and external audit strategy;
- Review of internal and external audit findings;
- Consideration of compliance / fraud;
- Consideration of any Directly Awarded Contracts;
- The annual self-assessment of the Audit and Risk Committee; and
- The monitoring of residual audit recommendations.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed its own effectiveness by carrying out a self-assessment in May 2021. The overall conclusion was that the Audit and Risk Committee was performing well.

### **Risk Management Strategy**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Risk Management Strategy has been approved by the Board with the most recent update made in November 2020. This strategy sets out the process whereby the Victims and Survivors Service Limited methodically identifies, assesses and responds to the risks attaching to its activities. It assigns responsibility and accountability for risk management; defines the processes for risk review and reporting; describes a format for the organisation's corporate risk register; and explains the organisation's approach to training in risk management.

A risk register has been in operation and updated on a quarterly basis throughout 2020-21. Key risks identified and managed during the reporting period included:

- Risk of non-delivery of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited element of the Regional Trauma Network due to lack of effective partnership working;
- Lack of political agreement on the Stormont House Agreement legacy institutions, diluting the strategic impact of the Advocacy Support Programme;
- Risks associated with maintenance of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and Committees;
- Risk that comprehensive and victim-centred approach to provision of support to victims and survivors considering application for Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme is not in place ahead of launch of scheme;
- Risks associated with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff health and wellbeing;
- PEACE-IV Project cashflow risks in respect of the repayment of advanced monies;

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

- Risk that appropriate Health and Wellbeing services are not in place for victims of Historical Institutional Abuse within an appropriate timeframe; and
- Risk that the needs of the bereaved are not being met within current schemes.

The board have agreed an approach to the monitoring and escalation of risks in line with the risk appetite which is reviewed on an annual basis. All risks are assessed and escalated as appropriate.

It should be further noted that no 'ministerial directions' have been issued to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and there have been no reported lapses of protective security.

The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed all instances of suspected fraud and irregularities. Further details are outlined in the Fraud and Counter-Fraud Section on page 73.

### Internal Audit

The primary role of Internal Audit is to provide the Accounting Officer and the Board with an independent and objective opinion on risk management, control and governance by measuring and evaluating their effectiveness in achieving the organisation's agreed objectives.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited appointed an independent Internal Audit Service, Capita Consulting in February 2016, for a 1-year period, with the option to extend for 4 years (2016-17 to 2020-21).

The internal audit contract had been procured by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) within the Department of Finance. CPD managed a novation of the contract from Capita to Ernst & Young in November 2017.

**Table 11** below outlines the internal audit programme that was carried out relating to 2020-21.

**Table 11: Internal Audit 2020-21**

Report Date	Scope	Audit Rating	Status
Feb-21	Review of VSP Verifications	Satisfactory	Final Report
Feb-21	Review of PEACE IV	Satisfactory	Final Report
Apr-21	Review of Business Continuity Planning	Satisfactory	Final Report
Apr-21	Review of Monitoring and Evaluation	Satisfactory	Final Report

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

The internal auditor's overall assurance rating for 2020-21 was Satisfactory, in line with the previous financial year.

A Satisfactory assurance level denotes that overall there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control. While there may be some residual risk identified, this should not significantly impact on the achievement of system objectives.

During 2020-21 a total of 13 recommendations were made across four areas. There were no Priority One recommendations, eight were identified as Priority Two and five as Priority Three.

In addition, the Follow-Up Report confirmed that of the twenty nine recommendations reviewed, twenty five were fully implemented and the remaining four were unable to be completed within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **External Audit**

The Comptroller and Auditor General has statutory responsibility for the audit of Victims and Survivors Service Limited under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office is independent of Government and is tasked by the Assembly to hold the Northern Ireland Departments and their Agencies to account for their use of public money.

The Comptroller and Auditor General works closely with the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee which can require Accounting Officers and senior officials to account for their actions in relation to the management of public funds.

A representative from the Northern Ireland Audit Office attends the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

### **The Executive Office Oversight Arrangements**

Within The Executive Office, the Victims and Survivors Unit is the Sponsoring Division for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. The Victims and Survivors Unit, in consultation as necessary with the Accounting Officer of The Executive Office, is the primary source of advice to Ministers on the discharge of their responsibilities in respect of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and the primary point of contact for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in dealing with the Department.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

In order to discharge its duties on behalf of the Sponsor Department, the Victims and Survivors Unit administers the following oversight controls:

- Regular Tri-Lateral Meetings between the Commission for Victims and Survivors Limited, the Department and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited (attended by Victims and Survivors Service Limited management staff members);
- Accountability and Oversight Meetings (attended by the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and Head of Corporate Services);
- Quarterly Assurance Statements;
- The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, updated April 2018; and
- Ongoing Performance Monitoring against the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Delivery Plan and preparation of its Corporate Plan.

During 2019-20, further guidance on a revised approach to partnership working between Sponsor Departments and Arm's Length Bodies was issued. A draft Partnership Agreement template (to replace the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum) has been issued to all ALBs and Sponsor Departments. I welcome the opportunity to improve the mechanisms for partnership between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and TEO in this regard. Work had been due to commence on the partnership agreement in 2020-21 but at the request of the department this will now take place in 2021-22. It is envisaged that this Partnership Agreement will enable co-operation and collaboration in delivering positive outcome for victims and survivors.

### ***Accountability Meetings***

The Accounting Officer and senior staff attended Accountability Meetings during the year with senior staff from the Department. These meetings took place on four occasions during 2020-21.

Senior Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff and the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer have operated a 'no surprises' policy in respect of ensuring that officials in the Department are aware of all material events, transactions and other issues that could be considered contentious or attract public comment, whether positive or negative. Quarter-end management reporting is shared as standard, in addition to further reporting outlined below.

### ***Assurance Statements***

The Quarterly Assurance statement, prepared under the direction of and signed by the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, provides information and assurance in the following areas:

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

- Risk management;
- Business Planning;
- Legislative authorities;
- Budget cover, business cases and post project evaluations;
- Monitoring of expenditure;
- Procurement;
- Consultancy;
- Information assurance and Data Protection;
- Staff management;
- Internal and external audit and Public Accounts Committee reports / recommendations; and
- Other significant issues.

The Accounting Officer submitted four Assurance Statements to The Executive Office during 2020-21.

### ***The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum***

The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum is a key control document setting out the broad framework within which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited will operate. This document defines:

- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited's overall aims, objectives and targets;
- The rules and guidelines relevant to the exercise of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited functions, duties and powers;
- The conditions under which any public funds are paid to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited; and
- How the organisation is to be held to account for its performance.

The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum was reviewed and updated in March 2018 and is available on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website.

### ***Corporate Plan 2020-23 and Delivery Plan 2020-21***

The 2020-23 Corporate Plan (and 2020-21 Delivery Plan) was accepted by The Executive Office Departmental Board on 28 October 2020.

The Chief Executive has monitored the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's performance against the targets set out in its 2020-21 Delivery Plan, included at [Appendix 2](#).

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

Key achievements and emerging activities carried out in 2020-21 are further outlined under Summary Performance against Delivery Plan Strategic Outcomes on page 21.

The Board is satisfied as to the quality of data and information provided by the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, who gained assurance through detailed reporting provided by senior staff in 2020-21.

### **Financial Management**

Responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated rests with the Accounting Officer. The systems of internal financial control provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or will be detected within a timely period. Internal financial control is based on a framework of management information, financial regulations and administrative procedures, which include the segregation of duties, management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability.

The implementation of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited financial management process in 2020-21 included:

- The setting of annual Grant in Aid;
- Monitoring of actual income and expenditure against the annual budget;
- Setting and management of expenditure profiles;
- Monthly reporting of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited financial position to the Board;
- A clearly defined system of expenditure authority delegations;
- Clear processes for the authorisation of expenditure and the payment of invoices; and
- Participation in the in-year monitoring rounds via The Executive Office.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has established Financial Policies and Procedures that address areas of risk as well as operational efficiency and effectiveness. These documents act as a reference point detailing all Financial Policies and Procedures that have been approved by the Board.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited operates a suite of other policies, processes and procedures that cover the full range of its activities. All staff are briefed on these policies during their induction and at regular staff meetings. Any needs identified are addressed through the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's annual training and development plan.



## **Fraud and Counter-Fraud**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Policy and Procedures on fraud sets out the responsibilities of staff with regard to fraud prevention, what staff should do if they suspect fraud and the action that will be taken by management in such circumstances in line with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to work with the Group Internal Audit and Fraud Investigation Services unit within the Department of Finance and, where appropriate, with the PSNI to fully investigate a number of cases – which primarily relate to earlier years. Three new cases were opened in 2020-21; two of which were closed by 31 March 2021 with the third remained open. Four additional cases, relating to a prior year, also remained open at 31 March 2021.

## **Whistleblowing**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Whistleblowing Policy provides staff with a procedure for reporting concerns about unlawful conduct, fraud, dangers to the public or the environment, or other malpractice. The aim of this policy is to reassure staff that they can feel confident in exposing wrongdoing without any risk to themselves. This policy is also applicable to members of the public who contact the Victims and Survivors Service Limited with concerns about our Funded Organisations.

There were four instances of whistleblowing by members of the public to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in the year to 31 March 2021. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has investigated these cases and taken the appropriate action in each case.

## **Training**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Training and Development policy is set in the context of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited recognising the need for well-motivated and highly skilled staff. This is reinforced through the implementation of the Victim and Survivors Service Limited competency framework.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to learning, development and training opportunities which enable them to be suitably knowledgeable and skilled to carry out their role and to develop in ways that fit with the strategic framework.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has made a significant investment in staff training and development through commissioning training in line with employee Personal Development Plans.

The wide range of training delivered to the sector through the PEACE IV funded Workforce Training and Development Plan has also resulted in significant additional training opportunities for Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff to engage in skills and capacity development in a range of relevant areas.

### **Significant Governance Issues**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continues to embed processes and procedures through the timely implementation of Internal and External Audit Recommendations. The overall Internal Audit assurance rating was Satisfactory.

The Comptroller and Auditor General has provided a report (included at the end of this document) on two matters: eligibility and equality of access to the Education and Training Framework, and governance arrangements relating to Board and Committee complement/membership. There are no other reportable governance issues which emerged throughout the year, or after the year end.

### ***Direct Award Contracts***

During 2020-21 no Direct Award Contracts were awarded.

### ***Governance Checks for Existing Clients***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited *Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020* provided detail of a 5% spot check (n=294) of existing clients carried out prior to opening the new Programme for 2020-21, specifically with regard to issuing Self Directed Assistance Payments to individuals previously deemed eligible to receive assistance under a *Support Scheme*.

Once the spot check was fully completed the maximum extrapolated error identified in the pre-2020-21 spot check was 1.02% with a maximum potential error value of £29,719.

Victims and Survivors Service Limited conducted sensitive checks on a further 2.5% (n=147) of client records to verify their eligibility for payments prior to opening the 2021-22 scheme. This spot check has been fully completed with the maximum extrapolate error rate of 0.68% and a maximum potential extrapolated error value of £19,902.

### ***Conformance with Code of Conduct***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited, like other public bodies, has a duty to conduct affairs in a responsible and transparent way and to take into account the standards in public life set out by the Nolan Committee and the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013. Where appropriate, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has taken account of additional good practice documented in the 2013 edition of the Code.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is not a Central Government Department and cannot, therefore, comply with those parts of the code that are only applicable to such Departments. However, the corporate governance arrangements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited have been established in such a way as to conform broadly to these standards. In doing so, these arrangements reflect the Code's recommendation that for bodies such as the Victims and Survivors Service Limited "*the code should be applied with adjustments to suit their scale, responsibilities and accountability chains*".

Throughout the year to 31 March 2021, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has complied with all relevant 2013 Code provision.

### ***Conclusion***

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors and senior staff within the organisation who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

I also consider the comments made by the Northern Ireland Audit Office in its Report to Those Charged with Governance and other reports.

I understand the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance.

The system of accountability on which I rely as Accounting Officer to form an opinion on the probity and use of public funds, as detailed in Managing Public Money NI, is now well embedded within the organisation. The structure of the organisation is appropriate to meet the organisation's corporate and delivery plans. Monitoring and evaluation systems have matured, allowing the capture and analysis of timely and accurate information to support internal decision making, resulting in well evidenced, outcomes-based accountability.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

Internal and external audit activity in respect of 2020-21 has reflected the sound system of internal control in place within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, with only a small number of broadly low priority recommendations arising. Any weaknesses identified internally by management, the Board, the Audit and Risk Committee and Internal and External Audit have been considered with immediate action undertaken on priority findings and an implementation plan in place for longer term developments.

## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

### 2.2 Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

#### ***Remuneration Policy***

Remuneration of all staff members, including the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and senior staff, is set out in their contracts of employment and is subject to review under Northern Ireland Civil Service pay remit guidelines. Such a review requires the approval of the Department of Finance.

The appointment and remuneration of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Board is determined by The Executive Office.

#### ***Service Contracts***

Victims and Survivors Service Limited appointments are made in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, which requires appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition but also includes the circumstances when appointments may otherwise be made. Further information can be found in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Recruitment and Selection Policy.

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

#### ***Salary and Pension Entitlements***

The following sections provide details of remuneration and pension interests of the Directors and the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

### Remuneration (including salary) and Pension Entitlements (Audited Information)

Officials	2020-21				2019-20			
	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)	Total £'000	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to the nearest £100)	Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)	Total £'000
Ms Margaret Bateson, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer  (01.04.19 – 15.12.19 and then 13.03.20 – 31.03.20)	75-80		36	110-115	60-65 (70-75 FTE)		22	80-85
Mr Andrew Walker, Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer ***  (16.12.20 – 12.03.20)	n/a		n/a	n/a	55-60		19	75-80
Mr Oliver Wilkinson, Board Member and Chair	5-10			5-10	5-10			5-10
Mrs Bertha McDougall, Board Member	0-5			0-5	0-5			0-5
Mr Richard Solomon, Board Member	0-5			0-5	0-5			0-5
Ms Patricia Haren, Board Member	0-5			0-5	0-5			0-5
Ms Beverley Clarke, Board Member	0-5			0-5	0-5			0-5
Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Remuneration	75-80			75-80	70-75 (FTE)			70-75
Median Total Remuneration	28,730**			28,730**	30,526			30,526
Range of Staff Remuneration	20-25 - 75-80			20-25 - 75-80	20-25 – 70-75 (FTE)			20-25 – 70-75 (FTE)
Ratio	2.70**			2.70**	2.38			2.38

\* 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 and any increase or decrease due to a transfer of pension rights.

\*\* Agency workers who were covering substantive posts at 31 March 2021 have been included in these calculations at the first point of the applicable scale.

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

## **Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in Victims and Survivors Service Limited in the financial year 2020-21 was £75-80k (2019-20, £70-75k (FTE)). This was 2.70 times (2019-20, 2.38) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £28,730 (2019-20, £30,526).

In 2020-21, 0 (2019-20, 0) employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director. Remuneration ranged from £20k - £80k (2019-20 £20k - £75k). Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

### ***Salary***

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

### ***Exit Packages (Audited Information)***

There were no redundancies or ill health retirements costs in the year to 31 March 2021.

### ***Benefits in Kind***

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

No benefits in kind were paid during the year.

### ***Bonuses***

Bonuses are not payable to Victims and Survivors Service Limited Directors or employees. There were no ex-gratia payments made to current Directors or employees.

## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

### ***Pension Benefits (Audited Information)***

Officials	Accrued Pension and related lump sum at pension age as at 31 March 2021	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31 March 2021	CETV at 31 March 2020	Real increase in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Mrs Margaret Bateson, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer	10-15	0-2.5	129	104	15

### ***Victims and Survivors Service Limited Pension Arrangements***

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

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

Discrimination identified by the courts in the way that the 2015 pension reforms were introduced must be removed by the Department of Finance. It is expected that, in due course, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period. The different pension benefits relates to the different schemes eg classic, alpha etc and is not the monetary benefits received. This is known as the 'McCloud Remedy' and will impact many aspects of the Civil Service Pensions schemes including the scheme valuation outcomes. Further information on this will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which are available at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/dof-resource-accounts>.



## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

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

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

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

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2020 was 0.5% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2021.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 are as follows:

### ***Scheme Year April 2021 to 31 March 2022***

<b>Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands)</b>		<b>Contribution rates – All members</b>
<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>From 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</b>
£0	£24,199.99	4.6%
£24,200.00	£55,799.99	5.45%
£55,800.00	£153,299.99	7.35%
£153,300.00 and above		8.05%

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

## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

plus is essentially a variation of premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic.

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

Active members of the pension scheme will receive an Annual Benefit Statement. The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Scheme Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**. The normal scheme pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website [www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni](http://www.finance-ni.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 NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 and do not take account of any actual or potential benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

### Real increase in CETV

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

### Compensation on early retirement or for Loss of Office (Audited)

No Directors or Officers were compensated for early retirement or loss of office in 2020-21.

### Fees to Third Parties

Only remuneration and expenses were paid to Directors of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in 2020-21. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board of Directors remuneration details are on page 78.

Expenses reimbursed to/incurred in respect of Non-Executive Directors were as follows:

	Year end 31 March 2021 (£)	Year end 31 March 2020 (£)
O. Wilkinson, Board Chair	0	0
B. McDougall, Board Member	0	142
R. Solomon, Board Member	78	0
P. Haren, Board Member	18	0
B. Clarke, Board Member	92	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>258</b>

No further remuneration or expenses were paid to Non-Executive Directors in 2020-21.

### Senior Civil Service Staff (Audited)

In 2020-21 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had one senior civil service (or equivalent) staff member (the Chief Executive Officer).

## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

### **Staff Composition – breakdown of employees by gender (Audited)**

Table 12 below illustrates the breakdown of employed staff by gender and grade.

**Table 12: Breakdown of Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and staff by gender and grade as at 31 March 2021**

Board		Grade 5		Grade 7		DP		SO		EO1, EO2 and AO	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2	3	0	1	2	1	4	4	0	11	8	6

Overall breakdown: Staff - 23 female and 14 male; Board – 3 female and 2 male.

At 31 March 2021, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had 37 employees in post (35.65 full time equivalent). An additional 4 agency staff were in place on 31 March 2021, filling key vacancies within the organisational structure. The average permanent staff number was 34.60 during this period as outlined in the Note 2 staff numbers and related costs on page 105.

### **Off-Payroll Engagements**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no 'off-payroll' engagement costs in 2020-21.

### **Expenditure on External Consultancy**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited spent £0 on external consultancy in 2020-21.

### **Absence Data**

Table 13 below shows the sickness absence results for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Table 13: Sickness Absence

	Working days lost 2020-21	Average days lost per FTE member of staff
Including long-term absence	187.49	5.42*
Excluding long-term absence	68.49	1.98*

\* Based on an average FTE of 34.60 permanent employees over the full year.

By comparison there were 240.27 days absence (including long term absence) in 2019-20, an average of 7.0 working days lost per member of staff during that period.

Excluding long term absence, there were 121.46 days of absence in 2019-20, an average of 3.54 working days lost per member of staff during that period. Whilst the figures for 2020-21 have shown a decrease from the previous year it is worth noting that as a small organisation, any long term sickness absences has a disproportionate impact upon these metrics. There was no long term sickness absence ongoing as at 31 March 2021.

### **Employee Policies**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to the development of its staff and to policies that enable them to contribute to the performance and long-term effectiveness of the organisation.

In particular the Victims and Survivors Service Limited:

- Follows the Northern Ireland Civil Service policy that all eligible persons have equal opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their ability, qualification and aptitude for work;
- Gives equality of opportunity when considering applications from disabled persons, in compliance with all existing legislation in regard to disabled employees;
- Recognises the benefit of keeping employees informed of the progress of the business and of involving them in the company's performance through regular Staff Planning days and briefings; and
- Regularly provides employees, through meetings and notices, with information regarding the external factors affecting the performance of the company and other matters of concern to them.

Specific staff policies which are in place include:

- **Disabled Persons:** The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Equal Opportunities policy applies to the employment of people with a disability. The

## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

- **Equal Opportunities:** As an equal opportunity employer the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is fully committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It has an obligation under fair employment legislation to ensure that it carries out its various functions having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.
- **Employee Involvement:** The Victims and Survivors Service Limited places considerable reliance on engagement and involvement of its employees. It makes every effort to ensure that staff are kept informed of plans and developments through a formal team briefing process, staff briefings, circulars and involvement in the design and implementation of corporate and business plans.
- **Learning and Development:** During 2020-21 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to provide significant learning and development opportunities to staff throughout the organisation. This process is structured through the completion of personal development plans within the performance appraisal system.
- **Health and Safety:** The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to applying all existing health and safety at work legislation and regulations to ensure that staff and visitors enjoy the benefits of a safe environment.
- **Staff Health and Wellbeing Programme:** During 2020-21 the programme continued to be offered to enhance staff health and wellbeing. Linked to the Take 5 methodology, the programme seeks to provide opportunity for staff to engage in activities which will benefit their health and wellbeing. The programme also includes a series of actions to enhance the working environment for staff.

### ***Staff Turnover***

Staff Turnover percentage for the year was 8.67% (2019-20: Not disclosed)

### **Staff Engagement Survey**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited issued a staff survey in October 2020 which focused on the impact of COVID-19 on staff, their satisfaction in respect of remote working, how they felt they had been supported and what further support they may require.

## Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

In total there were 31 responses, a response rate of 76%.

- When asked how they felt about working from home 81% responded that they were very satisfied or satisfied.
- 74% of respondents have established a good daily work routine.
- 94% of staff responding confirmed they have all the equipment they need to work from home, with 71% having a dedicated workspace at which they can work at home.

**2.3 Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

**Fees and Charges (Audited)**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited incurred no fees or charges during 2020-21.

**Remote Contingent Liabilities (Audited)**

There are no remote contingent liabilities.

**Losses and Special Payments (Audited)**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited did not make any requests (to The Executive Office) for write-offs / special payments during 2020-21.

A small number of low value payment recoveries remain open in respect of cases relating to individuals. Recovery is progressing via offset against annual payments in the majority of these cases.

**Gifts and Hospitality**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited did not receive any gifts or hospitality during 2020-21.



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**Oliver Wilkinson**  
Chairman



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**Margaret Bateson**  
Chief Executive and  
Accounting Officer

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022**



## **The Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the members of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited**

### **Victims and Survivors Service Limited**

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

### **Opinion on financial statements**

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows and Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union.

I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the net expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

### **Opinion on regularity**

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

### **Basis for opinions**

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs)(UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate. My staff and I are independent of Victims and Survivors Service Limited in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

## **The Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the members of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited**

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited work I have performed, I have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified any material uncertainties that relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt about on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors and Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### **Other Information**

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

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

## **The Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the members of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited**

### **Opinion on other matters**

In my opinion:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Director's Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements
- the Performance Report and Director's Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### **Matters on which I report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Director's Report. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

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

### **Responsibilities of the directors and Accounting Officer for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' and Accounting Officer Responsibilities, the directors and the Accounting Officer are responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.
- such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
- assessing the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the will not continue to be provided in the future.

## **The Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the members of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited**

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013.

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

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included governing legislation and any other relevant laws and regulations identified;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: posting of unusual journals and grant funding;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the

## The Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the members of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited

financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate.

- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
  - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
  - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
  - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
  - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business; and

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I have reported separately on my observations with regards the Education and Training Scheme in operation and the governance arrangements within VSS.



*KJ Donnelly*  
*Comptroller and Auditor General*  
*Northern Ireland Audit Office*  
*1 Bradford Court, Galwally*  
*BELFAST, BT8 6RB*  
*6 May 2022*

## Financial Statements

### Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

## Financial Statements

### 3.1 Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 £
<b>Income</b>			
Grant from EU	4	2,235,427	2,375,879
HIA	4	145,055	-
		<b>2,380,482</b>	<b>2,375,879</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Staff Costs	2	1,917,225	1,742,345
Programme Costs	3.1	13,307,510	13,426,734
Operating Costs	3.3	558,348	483,912
Depreciation	3.3	82,016	92,961
Provision provided for in period	3.3	-	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>15,865,099</b>	<b>15,745,952</b>
<b>Net Operating Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021</b>		<b>(13,484,617)</b>	<b>(13,370,073)</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure</b>		<b>(13,484,617)</b>	<b>(13,370,073)</b>
<b>Amount Transferred to General Fund</b>		<b>(13,484,617)</b>	<b>(13,370,073)</b>

Notes 1 to 22 on pages 99 - 115 form part of these financial statements.

## Financial Statements

### 3.2 Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2021

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 £
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, Plant and Equipment	5	15,508	19,516
Intangible Assets	6	45,268	116,861
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>60,776</b>	<b>136,377</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Trade and Other Receivables	10	1,920,636	1,944,672
Cash and Cash Equivalents	11	1,392,653	1,301,285
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>3,313,289</b>	<b>3,245,957</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>3,374,065</b>	<b>3,382,334</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	12	1,018,716	640,368
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>1,018,716</b>	<b>640,368</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>		<b>2,355,349</b>	<b>2,741,966</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Other Payables	12	2,222,000	2,200,000
Provision for Liabilities and Charges	13	12,900	12,900
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>2,234,900</b>	<b>2,212,900</b>
<b>Total Assets less Total Liabilities</b>		<b>120,449</b>	<b>529,066</b>
<b>Taxpayers Equity</b>			
General fund		<b>120,449</b>	<b>529,066</b>

Notes 1 to 22 on pages 99 - 115 form part of these financial statements

## Financial Statements

In the view of the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited an exemption from the audit requirements of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 is available under section 482 of that Act, since the company is a non-profit making company and is subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland which is performed under Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited therefore claims this exemption.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and the Accounting Officer acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and preparation of accounts.

The financial statements were reviewed by the Accounting Officer on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022.



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**Margaret Bateson**  
**Chief Executive and Accounting Officer**

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and were signed on its behalf by:



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**Oliver Wilkinson**  
**Chairman**

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022



## Financial Statements

### 3.3 Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
(Deficit) / Surplus for the year		(13,484,617)	(13,370,073)
<b>Adjustments for non-cash transactions</b>			
Depreciation	3.3	4,008	2,325
Amortisation	3.3	78,008	90,636
Provision written back	3.3	-	-
(Increase) / Decrease in trade receivables and other current assets	10	24,036	204,308
Increase / (Decrease) in trade payables and other current liabilities	12	400,348	197,825
Provision utilised	13	-	-
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(12,978,217)</b>	<b>(12,874,979)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	-	(8,520)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	(6,415)	(16,080)
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>(6,415)</b>	<b>(24,600)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department		13,076,000	13,440,000
<b>Increase / (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>91,368</b>	<b>540,421</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	11	1,301,285	760,864
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		<b>1,392,653</b>	<b>1,301,285</b>

Notes 1 to 22 on pages 99 - 115 form part of these financial statements

## Financial Statements

### 3.4 Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	<b>General Fund £</b>	<b>Taxpayers' Equity £</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2019</b>	<b>459,139</b>	<b>459,139</b>
<b>Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for 2019-20</b>		
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year	(13,370,073)	(13,370,073)
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department	13,440,000	13,440,000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>529,066</b>	<b>529,066</b>
<b>Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for 2020-21</b>		
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year	(13,484,617)	(13,484,617)
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department	13,076,000	13,076,000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>120,449</b>	<b>120,449</b>

Notes 1 to 22 on pages 99 - 115 form part of these financial statements.

## **Notes to the Financial Statements**

### **3.5 Notes to the Financial Statements**

#### **1. Statement of Accounting Policies**

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting and disclosure requirements of Companies Act 2006, the 2020-21 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) and the Accounts Direction issued by The Executive Office. Where FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited are described below. These have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

##### **1.1 Accounting Convention**

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention. The Directors do not consider the current costs of any of the transactions or closing balances to be materially different from the historical cost.

Modifications to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets and inventories are not considered to be material.

##### **1.2 Basis of Accounting**

Income and expenditure are treated on the accruals basis of accounting. Without limiting the information given, the accounts meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting Standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board and accounting and disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance.

##### **1.3 Income and Financing**

Income comprises grants receivable from the Special EU Programmes Body in respect of funding for the PEACE IV Programme, and from The Executive Office in respect of funding for the recently launched Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) service. The latter is an interim measure only with funding for the HIA service to be transacted through Grant in Aid going forward rather than on a reimbursement basis, and hence will not be recognised as income in future reporting periods.

FReM requires Arms-Length Bodies to regard Grant in Aid received as contributions from controlling parties giving rise to a financial interest in the residual interest of the body and

## Notes to the Financial Statements

hence accounted for as financing. Grant in Aid from the Sponsor Department (The Executive Office) is credited to the General Reserve in line with the FReM requirement.

### 1.4 Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are capitalised if they are capable of being used for a period which exceeds one year and they:

- Individually have a cost of at least £1,000; or
- Satisfy the criteria of a grouped asset, i.e. collectively they have a cost of at least £1,000, are functionally interdependent, have broadly simultaneous purchase dates and are anticipated to have simultaneous disposal dates.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at historical cost and are not re-valued under IAS 16 because of the immateriality of the balances involved.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as:

- Furniture and Fittings            10 years
- IT Equipment                        4 years

A full month's depreciation is charged in the month of acquisition and in the month of disposal.

### 1.5 Foreign Currency

The accounts are maintained and reported in Sterling. There are no foreign currency transactions in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

### 1.6 Intangible Assets

Intangible non-current assets are capitalised when they are capable of being used in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited activities for more than one year, they can be valued and they have a cost of at least £1,000 (either individually or as a grouped asset).

Intangible assets are amortised at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as:

- HR system software            4 years
- Website Development        4 years
- IT Software/Licences         4 years

## Notes to the Financial Statements

Purchased computer software licences will be capitalised as an intangible non-current asset where expenditure of at least £1,000 is incurred (either individually or as a grouped asset). They will be amortised over the shorter of the term of the licence and their useful economic life, typically 4 years.

### 1.7 Impairment

Non-current assets held for operational use will be valued at historical cost and are amortised over the estimated life of the asset on a straight-line basis. Where there is an indication that the carrying value of items of property, plant and equipment or intangibles may have been impaired through events or changes in circumstances, a review will be undertaken of the recoverable amount of that asset.

### 1.8 Taxation

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is a registered company limited by guarantee and is engaged in non-profit making activities in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding with The Executive Office and the memorandum and articles of association and accordingly its activities are not liable to Income and Corporation Taxes.

All of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's incoming resources are through grant in aid and grant funding which is outside the scope of taxation. Accordingly the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is not VAT registered and amounts in these accounts are inclusive of Value Added Tax where charged.

### 1.9 Pension Arrangements

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited participates in a pension scheme administered by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (PCSPS [NI]) is for all permanent and fixed term members of staff. The defined benefit schemes are unfunded.

The company makes pension contributions at 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay based on salary bands to the approved pension scheme. The cost of contributions for providing pensions for employees is charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure account as they are earned, in accordance with IAS 19 *Employee Benefits*. Seconded staff members remain members of their respective pension schemes.

### 1.10 Provisions

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited makes provisions for liabilities and charges where, at the date of the Statement of Financial Position, a legal or constructive liability exists (i.e., 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

## **Notes to the Financial Statements**

money is material, Victims and Survivors Service Limited discounts the provision to its present value using a standard Government discount rate.

### **1.11 Grants Payable**

Grants are treated as paid if they have been authorised for payment by officers at the appropriate level. Grants payable include amounts paid in the period and amounts accrued and still to be paid at the Statement of Financial Position date.

### **1.12 Employee Benefits**

Under the requirements of IAS 19: *Employee Benefits*, 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 leave at the year end. This cost has been calculated using the untaken leave per staff member and applying this to their annual salary to calculate the leave balance as at 31 March 2021.

### **1.13 Resources Expended**

Support costs include all expenditure directly relating to the objectives of the company. Administration and Management costs comprise the costs involved in complying with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Costs incurred for meetings, seminars and other specific expenditure relating to the individual programmes are classified as Programme Costs.

### **1.14 Operating Leases**

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis in the period in which they arise.

### **1.15 Funds**

All income received by the company must be used for specific purposes which are within the overall aims of the company.

### **1.16 Segmental Reporting**

The principal aim of Victims and Survivors Service Limited has previously involved provision of services solely to victims and survivors as defined in the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. In the 2020-21 year Victims and Survivors Service Limited launched a new service, with provision of services extended to victims and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse. Victims and Survivors Service is therefore considered to now have two operating segments. In preparing the accounts Victims and

## Notes to the Financial Statements

Survivors Service considered the implications of IFRS8 and concluded that the thresholds for segmental reporting had not been met. Expenditure and income for the new Historical Institutional Abuse service have been clearly distinguished throughout, and Victims and Survivors Service recognise the need to assess the applicability of IFRS8 in future accounting periods.

### 1.17 Changes in Accounting Policy and Disclosure

None in year.

### 1.18 Changes in Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has reviewed additional or revised accounting standards and new (or amendments to) interpretations contained within FReM 2020-21 and management consider that these have not had any impact on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Management have reviewed new accounting standards that have been issued but are not yet effective, nor adopted early for these accounts. Management consider that only IFRS 16 Leases<sup>3</sup> (with a revised FReM application in 2022-23) will impact the Accounts. It is the expectation of The Victims and Survivors Service Limited that the adoption of IFRS 16 will result in an increase in reported assets (in the form of right of use assets) and reported liabilities (representing the obligation to make future lease payments). Early engagement will be undertaken with The Executive Office to ensure that adequate Depreciation budget is made available as IFRS 16 dictates that the SOCNE will now be impacted by additional depreciation as opposed to operational expenditure as it currently is transacted.

### 1.19 Contingent Liabilities

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the accounting statements; they are disclosed by way of a note if:

- There is a possible obligation arising from past events, the existence of which will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one of more uncertain events not wholly within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's control; or
- A present obligation arises from past events but is not recognised because it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation or because the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

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<sup>3</sup> IRFS 16 replaces IAS 17 Leases and related interpretations

## Notes to the Financial Statements

For each class of contingent liability, the nature of the contingency, a brief description, an estimate of its financial effect, an indication of the uncertainties relating to the amount or timing of any outflow and the possibility of any reimbursement has, if applicable, been disclosed. If there is a present obligation and the transfer of economic benefit in respect of a contingent liability has become probable and a reliable estimate is available, a provision will be recognised in the financial statements.

### 1.20 Going Concern

The Financial Statements have been prepared on the assumption that Victims and Survivors Service Limited is a going concern and will continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

## 2. Staff Numbers and Related costs (Audited)

Staff costs comprise:

	Permanently Employed Staff	Others (Agency and Seconded)	Year ended 31-Mar-21 Total	Year ended 31- Mar-20 Total
	£	£	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,301,989	201,709	1,503,698	1,384,890
Social security costs	131,354	-	131,354	117,263
Pension costs	385,414	-	385,414	347,762
Board costs	25,028	-	25,028	20,253
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,843,785</b>	<b>201,709</b>	<b>2,045,494</b>	<b>1,870,168</b>
Less: Recoveries in respect to outward secondments	128,269	-	128,269	127,823
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,715,516</b>	<b>201,709</b>	<b>1,917,225</b>	<b>1,742,345</b>
<b>Funded through:</b>				
Core Funds	1,207,166	156,093	1,363,259	1,216,112
HIA Funds	38,842	-	38,842	-
PEACE IV Funds	469,508	45,616	515,124	526,233
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,715,516</b>	<b>201,709</b>	<b>1,917,225</b>	<b>1,742,345</b>

\* Of the total, £0 has been charged to capital.



## Notes to the Financial Statements

### Pension

The Northern Ireland Civil Service pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.

The Public Service Pensions Act (NI) 2014 provides the legal framework for regular actuarial valuations of the public service pension schemes to measure the costs of the benefits being provided. These valuations inform the future contribution rates to be paid into the schemes by employers every four years following the scheme valuation. The Act also provides for the establishment of an employer cost cap mechanism to ensure that the costs of the pension schemes remain sustainable in future.

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is responsible for carrying out scheme valuations. The Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following the scheme valuation. The 2016 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in March 2019. The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023.

The 2016 Scheme Valuation requires adjustment as a result of the 'McCloud remedy'. The Department of Finance have also commissioned a consultation in relation to the Cost Cap Valuation which will close on 25 June 2021. By taking into account the increased value of public service pensions, as a result of the 'McCloud remedy', scheme cost control valuation outcomes will show greater costs than otherwise would have been expected. On completion of the consultation the 2016 Valuation will be completed and the final cost cap results will be determined.

For 2020-21, employers' contributions of £358,688 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2019-20 £321,305) at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. The most recent valuation has been completed with rates set for another four year period from 1 April 2019. will apply the employer rates set from 1 April 2021 for the remaining two years of the valuation period.

Employees who do not wish to join or remain in the main NICS pension schemes can opt to open a partnership pension account. The partnership pension account is a defined contribution scheme where the employee does not have to make any payments and where the employer continues to make contributions. Employers' contributions of £3,633.14 (2019-20: £3,485.31) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2019-20: 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay. Employers also match employee contributions up to a further 3% of pensionable pay. In addition, employers are required to pay a mini ASLEC to the NICS Pension scheme in relation to staff who have

## Notes to the Financial Statements

opted to open a partnership account, to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees. Mini ASLEC contributions of £165.19, 0.5% (2019-20: £101.65, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were made during the 2020-21 year.

Contributions due to the **partnership** pension providers at the reporting period date were £0. Contributions prepaid at that date were £0.

No persons (2019-20: 0 persons) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £0 (2019-20: £0).

### Average Number of Persons Employed (Audited)

The average number of full time equivalent persons employed was as follows:

	<b>Permanently Employed Staff</b>	<b>Others (Agency and Seconded)</b>	<b>Year ended 31 March 21 Total</b>	<b>Year ended 31 March 20 Total</b>
<b>Administrators</b>	23.07	3.74	26.81	25.79
<b>Management</b>	7.86	-	7.86	8.70
<b>Senior Management</b>	3.67	-	3.67	2.75
<b>Total</b>	<u>34.60</u>	<u>3.74</u>	<u>38.34</u>	<u>37.24</u>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 3 Expenditure

#### 3.1 Programme Expenditure

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-21 Core Funding £	Year ended 31-Mar-21 PIV Funding £	Year ended 31-Mar-21 HIA Funding £	Year ended 31-Mar-21 Total £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 Total £
Grants to Funded Organisations and Individuals	3.2	11,470,605	1,651,697	67,990	13,190,292	13,231,675
Provision of Client Support Services		33,867	14,401	9,755	58,023	65,280
Workforce Training Plan		-	42,983	-	42,983	86,603
Monitoring and Evaluation		15,912	-	-	15,912	14,183
Seminars and events		300	-	-	300	19,984
Increase in Bad Debt Provision		-	-	-	-	9,009
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,520,684</b>	<b>1,709,081</b>	<b>77,745</b>	<b>13,307,510</b>	<b>13,426,734</b>

#### 3.2 Grants to Funded Organisations and Individuals

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-21 Core Funding £	Year ended 31-Mar-21 PIV Funding £	Year ended 31-Mar-21 HIA Funding £	Year ended 31-Mar-21 Total £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 Total £
Grants to Groups		6,853,682	1,532,142	25,102	8,410,926	8,178,020
Grants to Individuals		4,616,923	119,555	42,888	4,779,366	5,053,655
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,470,605</b>	<b>1,651,697</b>	<b>67,990</b>	<b>13,190,292</b>	<b>13,231,675</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 3.3 Operating Costs

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-21	Year ended 31-Mar-21	Year ended 31-Mar-21	Year ended 31-Mar-21	Period ended 31-Mar-20
		Core Funding £	PIV Funding £	HIA Funding £	Total £	£
Rents and Service Charges		155,489	-	6,498	161,987	78,904
Rates		34,920	-	1,691	36,611	22,417
IT Services		134,441	-	-	134,441	115,984
Telephones		12,365	-	314	12,679	17,508
Communications		23,938	-	12,044	35,982	25,488
Recruitment		14,929	10,647	1,445	27,021	25,286
Heat, Light and Power		1,368	-	-	1,368	4,745
Office Expenses		19,042	-	-	19,042	23,611
NIAO Audit*		35,825	-	-	35,825	30,880
Premises Expenses		10,292	-	575	10,867	14,693
Professional Fees		43,329	-	-	43,329	60,655
Staff Training		16,376	-	2,000	18,376	28,384
Travel and Expenses		6,431	574	-	7,005	19,147
Hospitality		-	-	-	-	2,416
Postage and Carriage		5,262	-	-	5,262	10,581
Bad Debt Write Off		-	-	-	-	-
Managed Services		6,804	-	-	6,804	2,490
Board Expenses		1,749	-	-	1,749	723
<b>Total Operating Costs</b>		<b>522,560</b>	<b>11,221</b>	<b>24,567</b>	<b>558,348</b>	<b>483,912</b>
<b>Non-Cash Items</b>						
Depreciation	5	4,008	-	-	4,008	2,325
Amortisation	6	77,651	-	357	78,008	90,636
Provision provided for in year	13	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Non-Cash Items</b>		<b>81,659</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>82,016</b>	<b>92,961</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>604,219</b>	<b>11,221</b>	<b>24,924</b>	<b>640,364</b>	<b>576,873</b>

\* External audit fee includes fee in relation to the 2020-21 NFI Exercise of £1,250.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 4. Income

	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 £
Grant from EU - PEACE IV	2,235,427	2,375,879
Grant from TEO - HIA	145,055	-
	<u>2,380,482</u>	<u>2,375,879</u>

Income is receivable as a grant from:

- The Special EU Programmes Body – Funding for the PEACE IV Programme.
- The Executive Office - Funding for the Historical Institutional Abuse service (2020-21 only).

The Special EU Programme Body resource budget for the project led by The Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the period 1 November 2016 to 31 December 2022 is £14.944m.

There was no other operating income in 2020-21.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 5. Property, Plant and Equipment

	Fixtures and Fittings	IT Equipment	Year ended 31-Mar-21 Total
	£	£	£
<b>Cost:</b>			
At 1 April 2020	19,394	15,681	35,075
Additions in year	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	<b>19,394</b>	<b>15,681</b>	<b>35,075</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation:</b>			
At 1 April 2020	8,141	7,418	15,559
Charge in year	1,878	2,130	4,008
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	<b>10,019</b>	<b>9,548</b>	<b>19,567</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>9,375</b>	<b>6,133</b>	<b>15,508</b>
<b>Asset Financing:</b>			
Owned:	9,375	6,133	15,508
Financed Leased:			
On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>9,375</b>	<b>6,133</b>	<b>15,508</b>
	<b>Fixtures and Fittings</b>	<b>IT Equipment</b>	<b>Year ended 31-Mar-20 Total</b>
	£	£	£
<b>Cost:</b>			
At 1 April 2019	19,394	7,161	26,555
Additions in year	0	8,520	8,520
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 March 2020	<b>19,394</b>	<b>15,681</b>	<b>35,075</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation:</b>			
At 1 April 2019	6,253	6,981	13,234
Charge in year	1,888	437	2,325
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 March 2020	<b>8,141</b>	<b>7,418</b>	<b>15,559</b>
<b>Carrying Value at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>11,253</b>	<b>8,263</b>	<b>19,516</b>
<b>Asset Financing:</b>			
Owned:	11,253	8,263	19,516
Financed Leased:			
On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>11,253</b>	<b>8,263</b>	<b>19,516</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 6. Intangible Assets

	Website Dev.	HIA - Website Dev	MIS – License/ Software	HR System	Year ended 31-Mar-21 Total
<b>Cost:</b>					
At 1 April 2020	13,140	-	360,230	6,000	379,370
Additions in year		3,900	2,515	-	6,415
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	<b>13,140</b>	<b>3,900</b>	<b>362,745</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>385,785</b>
<b>Amortisation:</b>					
At 1 April 2020	10,078	-	252,306	125	262,509
Charge in year	1,050	357	75,101	1,500	78,008
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	<b>11,128</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>327,407</b>	<b>1,625</b>	<b>340,517</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>2,012</b>	<b>3,543</b>	<b>35,338</b>	<b>4,375</b>	<b>45,268</b>
<b>Asset Financing:</b>					
Owned:	2,012	3,543	35,338	4,375	45,268
Financed Leased:					
On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>2,012</b>	<b>3,543</b>	<b>35,338</b>	<b>4,375</b>	<b>45,268</b>
	<b>Website Dev.</b>	<b>HIA - Website Dev.</b>	<b>MIS - License/ Software</b>	<b>HR System</b>	<b>Year ended 31-Mar-20 Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cost:</b>					
At 1 April 2019	13,140	-	350,150	-	363,290
Additions during year	-	-	10,080	6,000	16,080
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	<b>13,140</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>360,230</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>379,370</b>
<b>Amortisation:</b>					
At 1 April 2019	7,315	-	164,558	-	171,873
Charge in year	2,763	-	87,748	125	90,636
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	<b>10,078</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>252,306</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>262,509</b>
<b>Carrying Value at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>3,062</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>107,924</b>	<b>5,875</b>	<b>116,861</b>
<b>Asset Financing:</b>					
Owned:	3,062	-	107,924	5,875	116,861
Financed Leased:					
On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>3,062</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>107,924</b>	<b>5,875</b>	<b>116,861</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 7. Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by The Executive Office, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited expected purchase and usage requirements and the Non Departmental Public Body is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

### 8. Impairments

There have been no impairment charges for the year.

### 9. Inventories

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has no inventories.

### 10. Trade Receivables, Financial and Other Assets

	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 £
<b>Amounts falling due within one year from VSS operations</b>		
Programme receivables	305,754	170,243
Prepayments and accrued income	87,122	38,248
Income Accrued in respect of EU funds	1,383,739	1,713,922
Other Debtors	192,812	71,050
Bad debt provision	(48,791)	(48,791)
	<u>1,920,636</u>	<u>1,944,672</u>

### 11. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 £
Balance at 1 April 2020	1,301,285	760,864
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	91,368	540,421
Balance at 31 March 2021	<u>1,392,653</u>	<u>1,301,285</u>

The above balance comprises £553,256 within the TEO account Danske Bank Belfast in a non-interest bearing current account, £841,879 within the PEACE IV account, a debit balance of £2,540 on the credit card account and £58 in petty cash held on-site.



## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 12. Trade Payables and Other Current Liabilities

	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 £
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Programme Payables	682,892	443,862
Trade Payables	39,310	23,158
Accruals and Deferred Income	296,514	173,348
	<u>1,018,716</u>	<u>640,368</u>
<b>Amounts falling due after more than one year</b>		
Advanced Monies received from EU Funds	2,222,000	2,200,000
	<u>2,222,000</u>	<u>2,200,000</u>

### 13. Provisions for Liabilities and Charges

	The Disappeared £	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 £
Balance at 1 April 20	12,900	12,900	12,900
Provided for in the year	-	-	-
Utilisation in year	-	-	-
Provisions written back	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 21</b>	<u>12,900</u>	<u>12,900</u>	<u>12,900</u>

The provision for liabilities and charges relates to Victims and Survivors Service Limited estimate for:

- *The Disappeared Funeral Costs*

At 31 March 2021, the remains of three of the Disappeared were still to be located. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited have provided for a contribution in respect of funeral costs for three Disappeared.

The provision is not discounted as the Victims and Survivors Service Limited do not, at this time, expect the provision to be held for more than three years.

### 14. Capital Commitments

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no capital commitments in the financial year (2019-20: Nil).

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 15. Commitments under Leases

Total future minimum lease payments under operating leases are set out below for each of the following periods.

	Year ended 31-Mar-21 £	Year ended 31-Mar-20 (Restated) £
<b>Buildings:</b>		
Not later than one year	93,500	93,500
Greater than one year, and less than five years	93,500	187,000
Greater than five years	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<u>187,000</u>	<u>280,500</u>
<b>Other:</b>		
Not later than one year	-	-
Greater than one year, and less than five years	-	-
Greater than five years	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

### 16. Commitments under PFI Contracts and Other Services Concession Arrangements Contracts

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no commitments under PFI Contracts and Other Services Concession Arrangements Contracts in 2020-21. There similarly were no such commitments in the 2019-20 year.

### 17. Other Financial Commitments

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had other no Financial Commitments in 2020-21. There similarly no such commitments in the 2019-20 year.

### 18. Contingent Liabilities

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is preparing for a potential tribunal, initiated in February 2021, for which legal costs may be incurred.

### 19. Related-Party Transactions

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is an Arm's Length Body sponsored by The Executive Office. The Executive Office is regarded as a Related Party. During the year the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had various material transactions with The Executive Office (Grant in Aid - £13,076,000, CPD Recharges - £5,046, HIA invoicing -

## **Notes to the Financial Statements**

£98,955 – outstanding at 31.03.21). It should be noted that CPD Recharges are invoiced through The Executive Office rather than CPD directly.

During 2020-21 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was also in receipt of PEACE IV grant funding from the Special EU Programmes Body. During the year the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had various material transactions with the Special EU Programmes Body (£3,025,780).

During the year no members of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board, Audit and Risk Committee, Senior Management Team nor other related parties have directly undertaken any material transactions with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has had a small number of transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies.

Compensation for Directors and Chief Executive and Accounting Officer has been disclosed in the Remuneration Report.

### **20. Third Party Assets**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no Third Party Assets in 2020-21. There similarly no such assets in the 2019-20 year.

### **21. Guarantee**

The Executive Office, undertake to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of the same being wound up while such party is a member, or within one year after such party ceases to be a member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before such party ceases to be a member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of the rights of its contributories among themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding one pound.

### **22. Events after the Reporting Period**

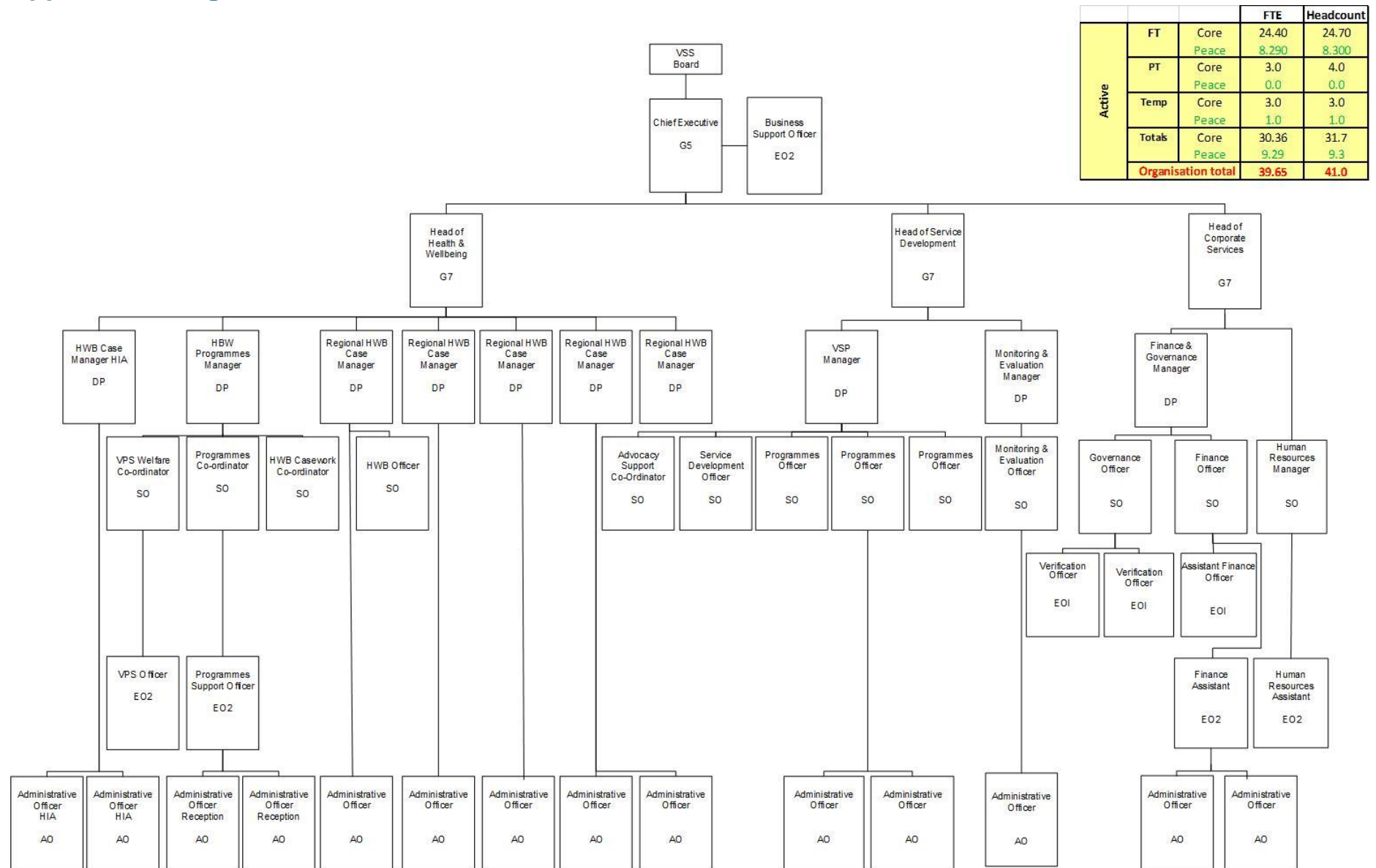
There were no events after the reporting period.

### **Date for authorisation for issue**

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

# APPENDIX 1

## Appendix 1: Organisation Chart as at 31 March 2021



			FTE	Headcount
Active	FT	Core	24.40	24.70
		Peace	8.290	8.300
	PT	Core	3.0	4.0
		Peace	0.0	0.0
	Temp	Core	3.0	3.0
	Peace	1.0	1.0	
	Totals	Core	30.36	31.7
		Peace	9.29	9.3
		<b>Organisation total</b>	<b>39.65</b>	<b>41.0</b>

## APPENDIX 2

### Appendix 2: Delivery Plan Extract 2020-21

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 – IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
1	Ensure access and availability of <b>Psychological Therapies</b> to <b>2,700</b> individuals <b>delivered by VSS-funded organisations</b>	- 21 organisations deliver talking therapies that assist victims and survivors in improving their health and wellbeing.	- <b>60%</b> of individuals report positive outcomes and this improvement is across all 4 domains.	<b>Achieved</b>
2	Ensure access and availability of <b>Complementary Therapies</b> to <b>1,000</b> individuals in line with best practise and minimum standards.	- 24 organisations deliver complementary therapies that assist victims and survivors in improving their health and wellbeing.	- <b>80%</b> of individuals report an improvement in their health and wellbeing.	<b>Partially achieved</b>
3	Ensure access and availability of <b>Disability Aids</b> to <b>100</b> individuals physically injured as a result of the Conflict / Troubles.	- Continuous review of framework and operational guidance.  - Conduct a review of physically injured individuals in receipt of high rate care to identify individuals who have not availed of the framework.	- Improved wellbeing, function and independence for <b>65%</b> of individuals as a result of disability aid provided.	<b>Partially achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

<p><b>4</b></p>	<p>Ensure access and availability of <b>Trauma-focused Physical Activity</b> that supports <b>150</b> individuals engage in a therapeutic process to address Troubles/conflict-related trauma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuous review of framework and operational guidance.</li> <li>- Continued development and training of HWB Caseworker Network to embed the stepped care approach in holistically meeting the needs of Victims and Survivors.</li> <li>- Attendance and engagement at Statutory, Community Voluntary health and physical activity initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved wellbeing, function and independence for <b>65%</b> of individuals as a result of trauma focused-physical activity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partially achieved</b></p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p>Continued access to <b>home heating support</b> for <b>750+</b> individuals who have received this award in 17-18, 18-19 &amp; 19-20.</p> <p>Continued support for <b>100</b> individuals to access <b>physiotherapy</b> to manage their <b>persistent pain</b>.</p> <p>Continued support for <b>70</b> individuals to access <b>complementary therapy</b> in instances whereby the therapy cannot be offered within a VSS funded organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuous review of framework and operational guidance.</li> <li>- Maintain continued cross-organisational relationships and referral pathways developed and formalised between statutory and community services.</li> <li>- Facilitate the delivery of educational workshops to the HWB Caseworker Network to promote best practice interventions in managing persistent pain.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved wellbeing, function and independence for <b>65%</b> of individuals as a result of persistent pain interventions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p>

## APPENDIX 2

<p><b>6</b></p>	<p>Ensure access and availability of <b>Psychological Support: Talking Therapies</b> to <b>80</b> individuals with Troubles/conflict-related trauma (outside of talking therapies provided via VSP-funded organisations).</p> <p>Ensure access and availability of <b>Psychological Support: Alternative Therapies</b> to <b>30</b> individuals.</p> <p>Ensure access and availability of <b>Psychological Support: Complementary Therapies</b> to <b>70</b> individuals who are unable to access complementary therapies through VSS funded organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuous review of framework and operational guidance.</li> <li>- Continued development and training of HWB Caseworker Network to embed the stepped care approach in holistically meeting the needs of Victims and Survivors.</li> <li>- Maintain continued cross-organisational relationships and referral pathways with GPs, private providers and statutory services for those who require psychological support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved wellbeing, function and independence for <b>70%</b> of individuals as a result of psychological support interventions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partially achieved</b></p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p>Provision of <b>Social Support</b> activities to <b>9,800</b> individuals through VSS funded organisations including befriending, respite, and other activities in line with the Take 5 framework.</p> <p><a href="http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com">www.makinglifebettertogether.com</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The delivery of social support activities that improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors in line with the Take 5 Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved mental health</li> <li>- Improved physical and social function</li> <li>-Reduction of symptoms</li> <li>-Positive Attitude</li> <li>-Improved Integration</li> <li>-Improved quality of life</li> <li>-Reduced Isolation and improved social networks</li> <li>-Improved family relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p>Develop a strong regional network of up to <b>26</b> HWB Caseworkers and <b>5</b> HWB Case Managers with agreed <b>processes, procedures</b> and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued development of HWB Caseworker Network with regular schedule of meetings/engagement.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing improvement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communication across victims/survivors sector.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p>

## APPENDIX 2

	<p><b>referral pathways</b>, ensuring appropriate geographical spread and equity of access.</p> <p>Identify and agree KPIs in relation to client pathway and completion of INCs.</p> <p>Develop a stakeholder engagement plan to enable outreach to wider Health and Wellbeing-oriented networks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased engagement by Caseworkers with local organisations with potential to benefit victims and survivors.</li> <li>- HWB Case Manager team to progress outreach to wider Health and Wellbeing-oriented networks – including development of stakeholder engagement plan.</li> <li>- Caseworker coverage for border regions.</li> <li>- Review of Clinical Governance arrangements, compliance with standards and policies/procedures within the Network.</li> <li>- Review equality of access for Victims and Survivors in current model and produce recommendations for development of the network.</li> <li>- Finalised pathway with timescales in relation to contact with Caseworkers to issue of awards in VSS.</li> <li>- Review of training and development needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- responsiveness to individual needs.</li> <li>- pathways of referral and communication with statutory sector.</li> <li>- clinical governance compliance.</li> <li>- equity of access.</li> </ul> <p>Consistent, timely pathway for access to support and interventions.</p> <p>Increased contact and support with Hard to Reach individuals.</p> <p><b>60%</b> of individuals engaged with a Health and Wellbeing Caseworker report an improvement in functioning.</p>	
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## APPENDIX 2

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Client Pathway KPIs to provide baseline expectations in 20-21.</li> <li>- Develop a definition of “hard to reach” victims and survivors.</li> <li>- Identify through engagement strategy and caseworker network. Assess needs through INC process. Identify any specific needs relating to this group to inform development of Frameworks.</li> </ul>		
<b>9</b>	Support communication and engagement through the <b>Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Groups (VSPWG)</b> meetings, including sub committees and <b>Co-Design Programme</b> engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 meetings per year covering the North East and South West areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased engagement between agencies and organisations involved in delivery services to victims and survivors.</li> <li>-Partnership and collaboration between organisations.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>10</b>	Engage in renewed co-design with HSCB / TEO / Statutory Sector / Victims and Survivors Sector in respect of the Regional Trauma Network (RTN)  Preparatory work in respect of process for assessment and referrals by VSS HWB Case Managers and VSS Community Partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Contribution to all aspects of RTN development</li> <li>-Attendance at meetings / sub-groups</li> <li>-Comments/amendments to documentation</li> <li>-Methodology to identify initial clients to access RTN</li> <li>-Agreed pathway from initial contact with VSS to referral</li> </ul>	Provision for increased access to step 4 interventions for victims and survivors requiring this level of support.	<b>Not achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

		-Data-base developed to monitor and collate information on referrals to RTN and outcomes		
11	Engage with TEO, Interim Advocate/Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA), and other stakeholders to assist in the design and development of support and services for victims and survivors of Historic Institutional Abuse.	Contribution to model/options for consideration in respect of the delivery of services & support to victims and survivors.  Provision of interim support pending introduction of longer term arrangements.	Access to interim support for those in need.  Long term service delivery model designed.	<b>Achieved</b>

APPENDIX 2

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 – IMPROVED ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
12	Ensure access and availability of <b>Personal and Professional Development</b> : Supporting <b>1,200</b> interventions through the VSP.	- 23 organisations deliver a broad range of personal and professional development (PPD) activities.	- Increased opportunities to develop interests and time to connect with other people.	<b>Achieved</b>
13	Ensure access and availability of <b>Education and Training</b> through the INP Framework to meet specific needs for <b>90</b> individuals in addition to those already accessing Framework.	-Continuous review of framework and operational guidance.  -Continued development and training of HWB Caseworker Network to embed the stepped care approach in holistically meeting the needs of Victims and Survivors.	-Number of clients benefitting.  -Work & Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS) monitoring individual outcomes across 5 functional areas.  - Number of clients accessing multiple frameworks framework as per caseworker engagement.  -Qualitative feedback (case studies)	<b>Achieved</b>
14	Ensure access and availability of 1:1 <b>Literacy and Numeracy</b> tuition for <b>25</b> individuals whose educational attainment has been significantly impacted by Conflict/Trouble-related trauma or events.  This is in addition to those already accessing Framework.	-Continuous review of framework and operational guidance.  -Increased promotion of the framework through the stakeholder engagement plan.	- Improved psychological, physical and social functioning and subjective wellbeing of <b>60%</b> of individuals who engage in numeracy and literacy tuition.  - <b>80%</b> of individuals who engage in numeracy and literacy tuition demonstrate improved numeracy and literacy skills.	<b>Partially achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
15	Delivery of a <b>Social Isolation Programme</b> to support <b>100</b> individuals who have been affected by the Troubles/conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Continuous review of framework and operational guidance.</li> <li>-Continued development and training of HWB Caseworker Network to embed the stepped care approach in holistically meeting the needs of Victims and Survivors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved psychological, physical and social functioning and subjective wellbeing for <b>65%</b> of individuals engaged in Social Isolation programme.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
16	Delivery of a <b>Volunteering Programme</b> to support <b>35</b> individuals who have been affected by the Troubles/conflict.  Support <b>15</b> VSS organisations to engage with Volunteer Now.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Continuous review of framework and operational guidance.</li> <li>-Continued development and training of HWB Caseworker Network to embed the stepped care approach in holistically meeting the needs of Victims and Survivors.</li> <li>-Increased promotion of the individual element of the framework through the stakeholder engagement plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved psychological, physical and social functioning and subjective wellbeing for <b>80%</b> of individuals engaged in Volunteering Programme.</li> </ul>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>
17	Design, develop and implement <b>Workforce Training and Development Plan -2020-21</b> in line with the CVS Minimum Standards published in November 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Suite of high quality vocational and non-vocational training and development opportunities for staff /volunteers and committee members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased capacity and confidence within VSS funded organisations leading to a higher quality of service delivery for victims and survivors.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Align training provision with outcome of 2018-19 Skills Audit exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consistent high standards of delivery in line with the CVS Minimum Standards.</li> <li>- Capacity plan in line with the changing service delivery model.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased capacity and confidence within VSS leading to a higher quality of service delivery for victims and survivors.</li> </ul>	

APPENDIX 2

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 – VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS, AND THOSE MOST IN NEED, ARE HELPED AND CARED FOR**

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
18	<p>Ensure access and availability of <b>Welfare Advice</b>: Facilitate <b>2,400</b> interventions, and monitor the impact of <b>Welfare Reform</b> on victims and survivors.</p> <p>Engagement with the <b>Department for Communities (DfC)</b> to support and advocate for individual victims and survivors transitioning to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Universal Credit (UC) and those trying to access support under the Victims Payments Scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 organisations directly delivering services to assist victims and survivors make sense of what they are entitled to as well as provide support and guidance during changes implemented through welfare reform.</li> <li>-Establishment of monitoring processes, and a baseline for measurement of positive outcomes</li> <li>- Prompt provision of welfare advice/support to victims and survivors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased access to welfare support for victims and survivors</li> <li>- Financial maximisation for clients (receiving benefits entitled to, appealing where appropriate and justified)</li> <li>- Clients successfully moving from DLA to PIP, following VSS provision of information to DfC/Capita</li> <li>-Victims and survivors satisfied with the support they received from VSS &amp; supported organisations to access a Victim's Payment</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
19	<p>Provide access to Welfare and Health &amp; Wellbeing Support for Victims and Survivors applying for the Victims Payment Scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Up to 5 VSS funded organisations increasing welfare support capacity.</li> <li>-VSS will provide co-ordination of welfare support activity for clients being assisted with applications to Victims Payment Scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Victims and survivors satisfied with the support they received from VSS &amp; funded organisations to make an application for the Victim's Payment</li> <li>-VSS Staff and Welfare Officers in post and prepared to support eligible clients in making applications for the Victims</li> </ul>	<b>Not Achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

		-Fully trained staff at VSS and funded organisations who are capable of assisting Victims and Survivors to make applications to the Victims Payment Scheme in line with the governing legislation.	Payment scheme within an efficient timescale  -VSS Staff and Welfare Officers support ineligible clients by signposting to other VSS and funded organisations Health and Wellbeing Support	
<b>19</b>	Provide <b>Self Directed Assistance Payments</b> to up to <b>5,850</b> individuals.	- Payments delivered by 31 May 2020	- improved financial position for clients in receipt of support	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>20</b>	Provide <b>Additional Needs Payments</b> to up to <b>1,470</b> individuals.		- recognition of victimhood	

APPENDIX 2

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4 – VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS, AND THEIR FAMILIES, ARE SUPPORTED TO ENGAGE IN LEGACY ISSUES**

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
22	<p>Maintain a strong <b>Advocacy Support Network</b> with agreed <b>processes, procedures</b> and <b>referral pathways</b> to provide support and assistance to <b>1,500</b> individuals.</p> <p><b>Advocacy Support Network</b> to engage with Stormont House institutions to be established under the New Decade New Approach agreement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A regional network of 21.5 Advocacy Support Caseworkers and 6 Case Managers established with regular schedule of meetings/engagement and agreed Terms of Reference</li> <li>-Increased access to Truth Justice and Acknowledgment for victims and survivors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased confidence and reduced isolation due to being acknowledged and supported.</li> <li>- Renewed relationships and trust within families and communities.</li> <li>- Improved mental health and social networks.</li> <li>- Agreed narrative with families and agencies around the incident.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p>



APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5 – AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
23	Maintain robust corporate governance arrangements within VSS (including Board, Committees, Policies, MSFM etc).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly Board meeting and minutes published on website and forwarded to TEO within 5 working days.</li> <li>- Quarterly ARC and HWB Committee meetings and minutes published on website.</li> <li>- Compliance with legal, statutory and departmental requirements.</li> <li>- Quarterly reporting to TEO and engagement in Accountability Meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintenance of a high degree of transparency on the accountability arrangements with VSS.</li> <li>- Transparency over governance arrangements.</li> <li>- Assurance over VSS activities and use of public funds.</li> </ul>	Achieved
24	Ensure a robust risk management process is in place and followed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly Strategic Risk Register.</li> <li>- Monthly Operational Risk Logs.</li> <li>- Quarterly Assurance Statements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assurance over VSS management of risk</li> <li>- Appropriate mitigating strategies applied to identified risks.</li> </ul>	Achieved
25	Ensure robust financial processes and procedures are being developed and followed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular review of Financial Policies and Procedures.</li> <li>- Draft financial statements 2019-2020: JUNE 2020.</li> <li>- Final financial statements 2019-2020: SEPT 2020.</li> <li>- Implementation of Internal Audit Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Unqualified accounts for 2019-20</li> <li>-Satisfactory Internal Audit Assurance</li> </ul>	Achieved

## APPENDIX 2

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
		- Implementation of NIAO recommendations.		
26	Engage with TEO with view to establishment of a Partnership Agreement.	-Signed Partnership agreement between VSS and TEO (including Agreed Engagement Plan). -Annual review of Partnership agreement by VSS Board.	- Maintenance of a high degree of transparency on the accountability arrangements with VSS	Not achieved
27	By year end operate within allocated budget avoiding overspend and managing underspend within a tolerance of 1.5%.	- Monthly monitoring or expenditure and cash - Month end closure within 3 working days of month end.	-98.5% of the budget utilised -95% of INP and Corporate invoices paid within the statutory time frame of 30 days - 90% of Corporate invoices paid within 10 days	Achieved
28	Ensure eligibility of expenditure across all programmes.	-100% vouching and verification of PEACE IV and VSP Expenditure - Debt recovery in line with VSS Debt Recovery Procedure - Review approach to verification of VSP expenditure, following outcome of most recent Verification Reviews and a 2020-21 internal audit review.	- No increase in sample size issued by SEUPB due to errors found  - Consistency in implementation of Programme rules.	Achieved
29	Continue to manage and develop the <b>VSP 2020-2022</b> with a focus on 4 strategic outcomes.	- Annual monitoring of funded organisation budgets and delivery plans.	- Improvement in quality of services provided by VSS and funded organisations.	Achieved

## APPENDIX 2

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring and evaluation framework agreed with each funded organisation.</li> <li>- Consistent and up to date monitoring of progress towards meeting VSS outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improved partnership working and relationships between VSS and funded organisations.</li> <li>-Clarity on position post 2022</li> </ul>	
<b>30</b>	<b>Programme Management of PEACE IV</b> in line with EU Programme Rules and national rules and legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual monitoring of budget and work plans.</li> <li>- Progress against overall PEACE IV outputs (11,350 HWN Assessments, 6,300 Advocacy – over full project life).</li> <li>- Regular meetings between VSS and its PEACE IV Partners (CVS and WAVE).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improved quality of services and care</li> <li>-Effective management of PEACE Partnership</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>31</b>	Carry out a review of Management Information Systems across the VSS with a view to integration and consolidation with outcomes based monitoring and evaluation strategy and GDPR requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduction in office storage requirement by allowing records to be stored off-site/archived.</li> <li>- Increased digitisation of paper records</li> <li>- Audited updated policies &amp; procedures in relation to GDPR (inc DSAs)</li> <li>- Implementation of HR &amp; Recruitment systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved access and quality of information.</li> <li>- Improved quality control and consistency of records.</li> <li>-Compliance with GDPR requirements</li> <li>- Implementation of updated website</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of more efficient reporting procedures/processes</li> </ul>		
<b>32</b>	Implement communication and engagement plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current and accurate framework of stakeholders.</li> <li>- Strong communication with relevant agencies &amp; sectors.</li> <li>- Strong and relevant key messages.</li> <li>- Updated publicity and communications information.</li> <li>- Quarterly VSS newsletter to be produced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved communication and engagement with key stakeholders</li> <li>- Informed and dynamic engagement with key stakeholders that is responsive to changing views and emerging concerns.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>33</b>	Continue to develop an effective workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff development plan</li> <li>- Appropriate provision of training</li> <li>- Staff succession plan</li> <li>- VSS Staff H&amp;WB Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced reliance on key staff</li> <li>- Highly skilled VSS workforce with evolving skillsets aligned to VSS activities and objectives</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>34</b>	<p>Agree and embed the VSS Clinical governance Framework with VSS staff and VSS funded organisations.</p> <p>Audit of clinical governance policies/procedures and standards with associated report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All interventions delivered in line with best practice guidelines.</li> <li>- A transparent and consistent approach to addressing the needs of victims and survivors.</li> <li>- Robust policies and procedures in place to ensure safety of victims and survivors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased staff confidence and competence</li> <li>- 80% of VSS staff feel supported in their work</li> <li>- 80% of staff across the sector report an increased understanding or trauma and evidence based practise</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

REF	Key Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Performance
		and the staff who are engaged with them.	Confidence that clinical governance is embedded in practice and consistently applied	

## APPENDIX 3

### Appendix 3: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

*Measuring the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Strategic Outcomes for Victims and Survivors 2017-2022.*

Thematic Area per Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CVS, 2012)	Strategic Outcome	Potential Indicators	How will this be measured?
<p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <p><b>Social Support</b></p>	Improved health and wellbeing of Victims and Survivors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved mental health</li> <li>• Reduced risk</li> <li>• Improved physical and social function</li> <li>• Reduction of symptoms</li> <li>• Positive Attitude</li> <li>• Improved Integration</li> <li>• Improved quality of life</li> <li>• Reduced Isolation and improved social networks</li> <li>• Improved family relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CORENET (Talking Therapies)</b> <i>Collects client reported outcome measures and uses this to manage therapeutic outcomes.</i> <a href="http://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_Tools.html">http://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_Tools.html</a></li> <li>• <b>MYMOP (Complementary Therapies)</b> <i>Client centered and individualised outcome questionnaire focusing on specific problems but also general wellbeing</i> <a href="http://www.bris.ac.uk/primaryhealthcare/resources/mymop/">http://www.bris.ac.uk/primaryhealthcare/resources/mymop/</a></li> <li>• <b>Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS)</b> <i>A Client-centered self-report scale of functional impairment attributable to an identified problem</i></li> <li>• <b>TAKE 5 Monitoring Framework</b> under development by Victims Practitioners Working Group and Belfast Strategic Partnership.</li> </ul>



### APPENDIX 3

Thematic Area per Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CVS, 2012)	Strategic Outcome	Potential Indicators	How will this be measured?
<b>Personal Development</b>	Improved access to opportunities for learning and personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced self-esteem and self-worth</li> <li>• Enhanced opportunities to contribute to wellbeing of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Studies</li> <li>• Surveys (pre and post training)</li> <li>• Other measurement tools</li> </ul>
<b>Financial and Welfare Support</b>	Victims and Survivors, and those most in need, are helped and cared for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved Financial Support</li> <li>• Greater sense of responsibility and independence in addressing practical needs</li> <li>• Increased access to benefits and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Welfare Changes and Support reporting</li> <li>• Other measurement tools</li> </ul>
<b>Truth, Justice and Acknowledgement</b>	Victims and Survivors, and their families, are supported to engage in legacy issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewed relationships and trust within families and communities</li> <li>• Improved mental health and social networks</li> <li>• Agreed narrative with families and agencies around the incident</li> <li>• Increased confidence and reduced isolation due to being acknowledged and supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Studies</li> <li>• 1 to 1 interviews</li> <li>• External and Internal periodic evaluations</li> <li>• Other measurement tools</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 4

### Appendix 4: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (HIA)

*Measuring the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Strategic Outcomes for Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA)*

Area	Strategic Outcome	Potential Indicators	How will this be measured?
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>  <b>Social Support</b>	Improved health and wellbeing of survivors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved mental health</li> <li>Reduced risk</li> <li>Improved physical and social function</li> <li>Reduction of symptoms</li> <li>Positive Attitude</li> <li>Improved Integration</li> <li>Improved quality of life</li> <li>Reduced Isolation and improved social networks</li> <li>Improved family relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>CORENET (Talking Therapies)</b>  <i>Collects client reported outcome measures and uses this to manage therapeutic outcomes.</i>  <a href="http://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_Tools.html">http://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_Tools.html</a> </li> <li> <b>MYMOP (Complementary Therapies)</b>  <i>Client centred and individualised outcome questionnaire focusing on specific problems but also general wellbeing</i>  <a href="http://www.bris.ac.uk/primaryhealthcare/resources/mymop/">http://www.bris.ac.uk/primaryhealthcare/resources/mymop/</a> </li> <li> <b>Work &amp; Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS)</b>  <i>A Client-centred self-report scale of functional impairment attributable to an identified problem</i> </li> <li> <b>TAKE 5 Monitoring Framework</b> under development by Victims Practitioners Working Group and Belfast Strategic Partnership.  <a href="http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/take5/">www.makinglifebettertogether.com/take5/</a>;  <a href="http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/">www.mentalhealthireland.ie/</a> </li> </ul>





## APPENDIX 4

Area	Strategic Outcome	Potential Indicators	How will this be measured?
<b>Personal Development</b>	Improved access to opportunities for learning and personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced self esteem and self worth</li> <li>Enhanced opportunities to contribute to wellbeing of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Studies</li> <li>Surveys (pre and post training)</li> <li>Other measurement tools</li> </ul>
<b>Financial &amp; Welfare Support</b>	Survivors, and those most in need, are helped and cared for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved Financial Support</li> <li>Greater sense of responsibility and independence in addressing practical needs</li> <li>Increased access to benefits and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative Surveys</li> <li>Welfare Changes and Support reporting</li> <li>Other measurement tools</li> </ul>
<b>Information Recovery</b>	Victims and survivors and their families, are supported in information recovery and redress processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased confidence due to being acknowledged and supported</li> <li>Victims and survivors feel informed and empowered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Studies</li> </ul>

## Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Northern Ireland

### Introduction

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited (VSS) delivers support and services to improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors on behalf of The Executive Office. During my audit of the 2020-21 accounts I identified concerns regarding:

- The eligibility and equality of access to a VSS programme for education and training; and
- The robustness of governance arrangements.

### Background Information

Victims and survivors are those as defined by the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Act 2008 as any of the following:

- (a) someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident<sup>4</sup>;*
- (b) someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned in paragraph (a); or*
- (c) someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict related incident.*

VSS provides support to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict through a number of programmes including:

- Individual Needs Programme (INP);
- Victims Support Programme (VSP); and
- EU PEACE programme.

INP support is delivered by VSS and community based Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers to individual victims whereas VSP funding is paid to community groups under a Letter of Offer who in turn provide services to victims.

Broadly speaking there are two tiers of INP support for individuals presenting themselves to VSS:

- Direct financial assistance to eligible existing clients who were registered with VSS before 31 March 2017 and new and existing bereaved clients; and
- **Needs based support for all new and existing clients providing full access to services and support to meet their Health & Wellbeing needs including Persistent Pain, Disability Aids Education and Training, Psychological**

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<sup>4</sup> “conflict-related incident” means an incident appearing to the Commission to be a violent incident occurring in or after 1966 in connection with the affairs of Northern Ireland

**Therapies, Trauma Focused Physical Activity, Social Isolation, Volunteering & Carer Respite.**

**Education and Training Scheme**

Education and Training (E&T) is available to all clients, both new and existing within the INP Needs Based Framework. Guidance for VSS staff on the VSS Eligibility Process states that *'the scheme provides a personalised approach to improving the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors whose education and development opportunities have been impacted by (a) specific Troubles/conflict-related incident(s), by supporting them to avail of education and training opportunities which lead to employment, enhancement of employability and career progression.'*

The total spend on the Education and Training Scheme in 2020-21 was £298k (19-20-£211k). Within this amount there were 27 payments, totalling £125k and each above £4k (19-20 13 payments totalling £62k), which related to the payment of University and other Educational Fees for clients. Some of these clients received E&T financial support in previous years and many have also secured further E&T financial support in future years. 22 of the 27 payments related to University fees paid on behalf of victims of trans-generational trauma. The table below provides an analysis (based on information provided by VSS).

<b>Basis of eligibility</b>	<b>No of clients</b>	<b>2020-21 E&amp;T awards £</b>	<b>Pre 2020-21 E&amp;T awards</b>	<b>Future awards (2021-22) £</b>	<b>TOTAL £</b>
Psychological injury- Trans-generational victims	22	£102k	£14k	£59k	£173k
Psychological injury- direct involvement	5	£23k	£11k	£5k	£39k
	<b>27</b>	<b>£125k</b>	<b>£25k</b>	<b>£64k</b>	<b>£212k</b>

A review of case files identified the following:

25 of 27	Number of clients classified as 'new' (registered after 31 March 2017).
22 of 27	Number of victims whose eligibility was based on trans-generational trauma.
18 of 22	Number of victims impacted by trans-generational trauma emanating as a result of the death of a relative in the Troubles/conflict.

17 of 22	Number of victims impacted by trans-generational trauma not yet born when the conflict related incident took place. In one case the victim was born 26 years after the incident took place.
17 of 22	Number of victims impacted by trans-generational trauma whose bereavement would not be considered a close relationship. In the majority of cases, the trans-generational relationship was outside of the scope of the client's close family, with many being bereaved of an Uncle/Aunt.
17 of 22	Number of victims of trans-generational trauma associated with the same funded organisation.

The file review also confirmed that VSS relied primarily on referral letters and Individual Needs Consultation documentation from funded groups as confirmation of eligibility. This is contrary to VSS Guidance on the Training and Education Process which requires VSS staff to carry out an internal review of the file for evidence confirming client meets the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. In response to queries raised by my staff, VSS advised that *'funded groups do not determine eligibility for the INP frameworks – this is carried out by VSS. The VSS groups support where they can in providing supporting documentation to VSS to confirm eligibility'*. However my staff saw no evidence of a full and proper review having been carried out by VSS staff and this raises concerns about the clarity and robustness of how the eligibility rules are applied to trans-generational cases.

It is concerning that VSS does not appear to have clearly defined criteria in place to determine eligibility to the Education and Training scheme. Currently there are no set parameters with regard to how far wide or down the generations the impact of a Troubles/conflict related incident can apply. That being the case, it would appear that VSS support for Troubles/conflict victims may be open ended long term commitment. Based on the file review most of the victims in receipt of support were already enrolled on and had commenced degree courses (some in their final year), having availed of Student Loans to pay for their fees before they registered with VSS for support. These loans were subsequently cancelled when VSS paid their fees. Given that these clients had already availed of the opportunity to undertake a degree course without VSS support, this appears contrary to the scheme guidance. VSS told me that it intends to review this scheme with a view to focusing on the impact of funding provided to victims.

In particular, it will focus on providing support to victims who have been unable to gain access to educational opportunities as a result of trauma. I welcome this development. I also recommend that VSS liaise with The Executive Office to assess the equality impact of the Education and Training scheme. It is important that VSS demonstrate fair and equal opportunity for all victims and survivors and that any promotion or canvassing in relation to this scheme is across the board.

## **Governance**

Under current arrangements the VSS Board operates with a Chair and four members (all non-executive). This is well below the normal complement of Chair plus seven members. Some of these positions have been vacant for some time and I am also aware that there have been a further two recent Board resignations. In addition some of the current Board members have been in position for a long time. This situation is unsustainable and impacts on the ability of the Board and its sub-committees to function effectively and to be quorate. I acknowledge that the appointment of new Board members is the responsibility of The Executive Office and am aware that VSS have been pressing for action to be taken to address this concerning situation.

I am also concerned about the structure of the VSS Audit and Risk Committee. The Chair and two of the committee members, whilst considered by VSS to be independent are employees within the Northern Ireland Civil Service and therefore, in my view, not truly independent. Furthermore two members of the committee also work in the same organisation.

It is imperative that The Executive Office progresses the recruitment for new Board members as a matter of urgency. I also recommend that the composition and independence of the VSS Audit and Risk Committee is reviewed.

My audit opinion on the 2020-21 financial statements is not qualified in respect of any matters raised in this report. I will monitor how VSS addresses the issues raised in this report and consider any implications for the audit of the 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts.



KJ Donnelly  
Comptroller and Auditor General  
Northern Ireland Audit Office  
1 Bradford Court  
Galwally  
Belfast  
BT8 6RB

6 May 2022