

# **YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY**

## **ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2023-24**





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## **ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2023-24 For the year ended 31 March 2024**

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on 5 July 2024



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## **PERFORMANCE REPORT**

### **OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Overview is to provide sufficient information to ensure that the remit and purpose of the Youth Justice Agency (the Agency or YJA) is understood. The Overview includes:

- a statement from the Chief Executive providing his perspective on the performance of the Agency over the period;
- a statement of the purpose and activities of the Agency;
- the key issues and risks that could affect the Agency in delivering its objectives; and
- a performance summary.

### **FOREWORD BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Despite significant challenges in budget and reduced staffing levels this year, my teams have pulled together to ensure the Agency continued to deliver a high level of performance on achieving our mission to reduce offending by supporting children to achieve their full potential. The impact of this hard work by all my colleagues can be clearly seen in our third Performance Impact Report covering 2022-23, which we published on the Department of Justice website in September 2023. That report includes the voices of those who use our services as well as a wide range of statistics. I am very proud of my colleagues and all they have achieved. Thank you.

2023 was a special year for YJA. We celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a number of events. These included open days across all our area teams in June. These were very well-attended by parents, our partners from the statutory and the voluntary and community sectors and by politicians. It gave our teams a fantastic opportunity to showcase their work and renew connections. We also ran a schools Poster competition on the theme of online safety and cyber bullying, with a prize giving ceremony in Parliament Buildings at the end of September. I was bowled away by the quality of the entries, and it was lovely to meet pupils, their teachers, and families. The winning entry is now on display in all our offices, and we are hoping to make use of more of the posters in a range of future communications.

We welcomed two new non-Executive members to our Board in April 2023. Richard Horton and Thomas Moore bring with them a wide range of experience from the public and private sectors which is already contributing to the good governance of the Agency.

**FOREWORD BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CONTINUED)**

Our senior team has also changed over the last year with Mary Aughey moving to take up the role of Director of Woodlands, Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) in March 2023 and Colleen Heaney being appointed as Director of Youth Justice Services on 4 March 2024 following an external recruitment competition. Mary has led a journey of continuous improvement in the JJC, which has included forging stronger links with the Agency's community-based teams. This has helped us to work more holistically to support the needs of the most vulnerable children in our care. She also plays a vital role as the Agency's representative on the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. Colleen has been leading on a range of work, including the Agency's efforts to become a trauma-informed organisation and on improving the participation and involvement of young people in how we design and operate our services. We are also sharing our expertise on participation in the Derry and Strabane Council area in a project supported by UNICEF.

I'm grateful to all of the Directors in supporting me to develop a new three-year workforce plan for the Agency. This was approved by the Board in November and has a particular focus on improving retention and supporting recruitment. Our levels of pay have lagged behind similar public sector organisations, particularly for social workers, and we have lost a number of valued colleagues to other employers as well as to retirement over the last year. Through the workforce plan we are working hard with HR, local universities and others to improve the retention of experienced colleagues as well as to support newly qualified social workers and youth workers to join us on our journey of keeping communities safe by reducing offending by children and helping them reach their full potential. I was delighted to welcome a number of new youth justice practitioners, including many who are newly qualified, in September last year. We continue to welcome final year placement social work and youth work students to YJA and to develop links with our two local universities as well as with the Open University.

Partnership continues to be very important to us and this year we have continued to work closely with PSNI, the Public Prosecution Service and the Courts in delivering our mission and diverting as many children as possible from the formal criminal justice system. Our relationships with Health and Social Care organisations also continue to go from strength to strength and we value the shared work we have done on diverse issues such as mental health, reducing the level of interaction between care experienced children and the justice system and identifying the needs of unaccompanied minors. We also continue to build our links with the Education Authority, both in terms of both education and youth work, and with a number of organisations in the voluntary and community sector.

We've had a range of visitors to our services this year. These have included the new Commissioner for Children and Young People. We welcome his level of interest and engagement and look forward to continuing to work with him. We've also welcomed visitors from further afield, including voluntary sector organisations based in England and governmental delegations from Latvia, Norway, France and the Republic of Ireland.



**FOREWORD BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CONTINUED)**

There was particular interest in our operating model in the Juvenile Justice Centre and in our approach to restorative justice, through youth conferencing. This is an important process in which the voice of the victim and the child who has offended are heard, the child is held accountable for their actions and ways to repair the harm caused by the offence are explored. In support of this work, Kelvin Doherty led the development of a revised Victims Charter for the Agency which tells victims how we will meet our obligations to them under the NI Victims Charter.

Towards the end of the year, the devolved institutions were re-established and we have enjoyed the opportunity to re-engage with the Minister and elected representatives on our work. We look forward to continuing this engagement in the year ahead.

**Stephen Martin**  
**Chief Executive and Accounting Officer**

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES

### History and statutory background

The Agency was established on 1 April 2003 as an Executive Agency within the Northern Ireland Office following the recommendations of the Criminal Justice Review. On 12 April 2010, justice functions in Northern Ireland were devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Department of Justice (DoJ) came into existence as a new Northern Ireland Department. From that date, the Agency became an Executive Agency of the DoJ.

The Agency sits within the DoJ's Reducing Offending Directorate (ROD).

### Aims and objectives

The overall aim of the Agency is to ***make communities safer by helping children to stop offending***. The Agency is part of the wider criminal justice system and contributes, alongside other partners, to achieving the system's overall aims and objectives.

### Our statement of purpose

'Making communities safer by helping children to stop offending'.

### Our mission statement

To reduce offending by supporting children to achieve their full potential.

### Our principles

- utilising our professionalism and expertise;
- acting in the best interests of children and promoting their rights;
- advocacy, ensuring that children have access to universal services;
- children should be diverted at the earliest possible stage;
- we will focus on children's needs as well as addressing their deeds;
- promoting resilience, desistance and reintegration;
- we will work restoratively and involve victims when appropriate;
- we will work in partnership with others; and
- we will focus on positive outcomes.

## **Our shared values**

We will:

- treat children as individuals in their own right;
- focus on strengths and be positive;
- promote safety and consider public protection; and
- listen to everyone and everyone will have a voice.

We are:

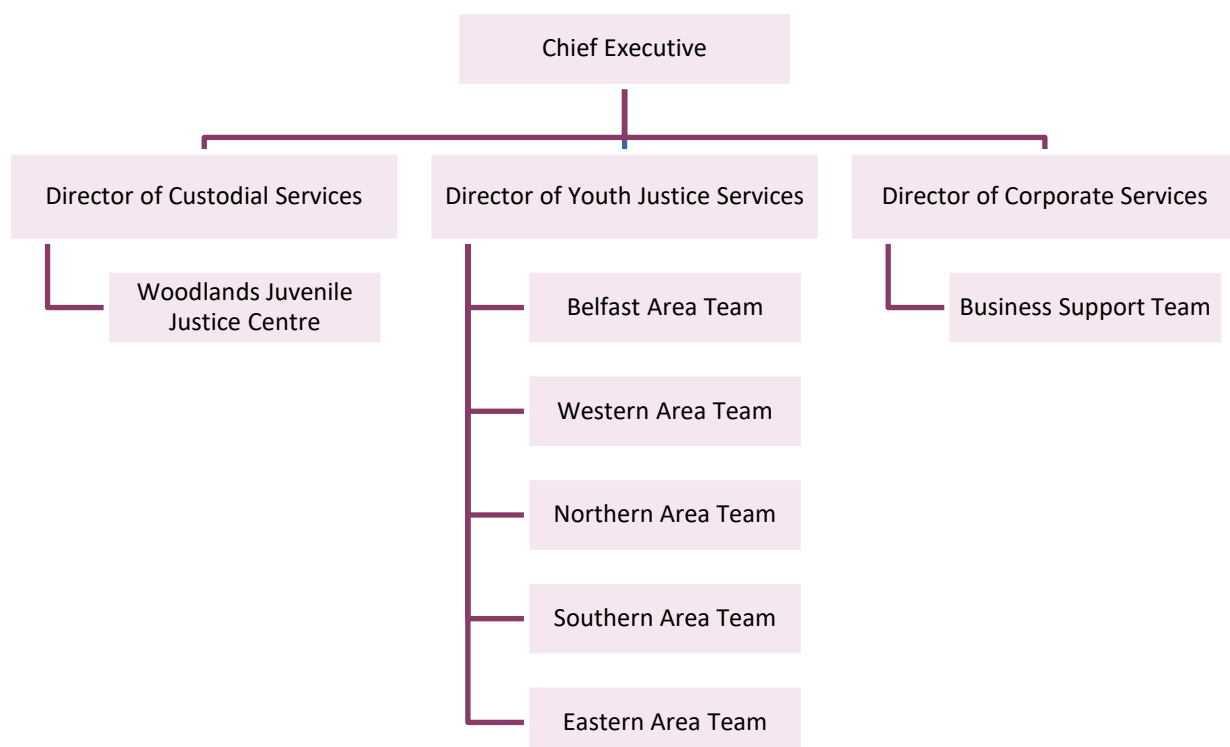
- fair, open and honest;
- kind, compassionate and trauma aware; and
- non-judgemental.

## Structure

The Agency provides a range of statute-based and non-statutory support services to young people who offend between the ages of 10 to 17 years, both within the community and within custody. In doing so, it works alongside key justice partners, such as the PPS and PSNI; other statutory bodies, including the Departments of Education (DE), Health (DoH) and Communities (DfC); and voluntary and community-based organisations. The emphasis is on helping children to address their offending behaviour, diverting them from crime, assisting their integration into the community and also meeting the needs of the victims of crime, with restorative and reparative justice at its core.

The Youth Justice Agency is within the statutory remit of CJINI and can be subject to independent inspection or review as a single organisation or as part of a thematic inspection. CJINI inspect Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in partnership with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) against Expectations for Children in Custody, incorporating the Inspection and Self Evaluation Framework for Education Other Than At School provision, and Quality Standards for Health and Social Care. Services may also be subject to review by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

The Agency comprises three Directorates and its management structure is as follows:



## Structure (continued)

### *Youth Justice Services*

Youth Justice Services (YJS) delivers all community-based interventions. The Youth Justice Services (YJS) Directorate staff is overseen by the Director of Youth Justice Services. It comprises of both administrative and front-line operational staff currently based in five Area Teams strategically located across Northern Ireland. The focus of our interventions is to ensure children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point with appropriate support and to deliver improved outcomes for young people, families, victims and communities. Our aim is to reduce offending and reoffending, to improve a young person's life chances and to work in and with communities in order to achieve this.

The Agency has a Children First approach to our work with children and young people, and all services delivered to children/young people and their parents/carers are underpinned by Children First principles. We deliver a range of services often in partnership with others, to:

- Address the needs of children and young people to help them address their offending behaviour.
- Support Children and young people to make amends for the harm caused by their behaviour and assist their integration into the community.
- Meet the needs of the victims of crime.

We do this through:

- working with young people who are on the cusp of the formal youth justice system in order to intervene at the earliest opportunity (Earlier Stage Diversion);
- delivering a range of earlier stage and diversionary initiatives including facilitating Children's Diversion Forums in partnership with the PSNI, Education Authority, Health and Social Care Trusts and relevant others;
- hosting and delivering Youth Engagement Clinics;
- facilitating and delivering Youth Conferences - both Court ordered and diversionary, ensuring that the victims voice where possible, is heard and represented in any agreed actions;
- supervising and supporting young people, using our YJA Model of Practice Framework, across the continuum of Earlier Stage Diversion through to working with the most complex children at risk of custody or on leaving custody;
- service provision and attendance at all Youth Court sittings across Northern Ireland, including Magistrates', Crown and High Courts as required; and

**Structure (continued)**

- delivering programmes and interventions to young people and their parents/carers to prevent reoffending.

***Custodial Services***

Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) is located in Bangor. It is the only custodial facility for children in Northern Ireland. It is overseen by the Director of Custodial Services supported by a team of social workers, care workers, nurses, teachers, vocational instructors, support staff and administrative staff. JJC provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment for 10 to 17 year old boys and girls who have been remanded or sentenced to custody by the Courts in Northern Ireland. The Centre also accommodates young people under Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) legislation.

The JJC has been designed as a centre of excellence within a secure environment, offering and provides a wide range of services and support, tailored to each young person's specific needs to support their reintegration to the community upon release and help prevent them reoffending.

A Case Management/Care Planning process integrates social care, education, healthcare and mental health interventions with tailored group-work and individual plans to improve outcomes for young people. Families and carers are involved at all points in this process both within the JJC and the wider Agency.

The JJC works closely with colleagues in Youth Justice Services, ensuring a seamless transition from custody back into the community joint exit planning and agreement on the required support services needed on release. The joint YJA Model of Practice further supports custody to community practices and services. The JJC also actively works with partner organisations to support young people while in custody and on release through effective information sharing, collaborative working and involvement in decision making.

***Corporate Services***

The Business Support Team is based in the Agency's Headquarters and delivers an amalgam of core administrative and executive business services on behalf of the Chief Executive. The services provided include corporate governance, Ministerial/Assembly business, communications, business performance, records management, information technology and estates management.

Other functions, such as financial management and research and statistics, are provided by DoJ on a shared services basis. Personnel services are provided by Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources (NICSHR).

Internal Audit services to the DoJ are provided by a Group Internal Audit and Fraud Investigation Service. Internal Audit staff from the Department of Finance (DoF) deliver the internal audit service to the Core Department, its agencies and a number of arm's length bodies.

## Key risks and issues

The Agency's Risk Register is regularly reviewed and links with the Department's Corporate Risk Register. This has resulted in a uniform approach across the Department in how we present and manage risk.

The key risks identified in 2023-24 included:

- inability to retain and recruit sufficient skilled staff to deliver the YJA Corporate Plan;
- failure to provide a safe environment for young people leading to an adverse incident; and
- delays in relocation of HQ and Belfast Area Team.

The key issues faced during 2023-24 included:

- delivering the required level of service;
- implementing the recommendations of the Review of Residential Secure Care report; and
- securing a suitable property and completing refurbishment for relocation of YJA Headquarters and the Belfast Area Team.

Further details in relation to the risks faced by the Agency and how these are mitigated are provided in the Performance Analysis section. The Governance Statement also provides an overview of the Agency's risk management and internal control system.

## Equality of delivery of services to different groups in society

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 placed statutory duties on all public authorities, including the Youth Justice Agency, that, in carrying out our functions, we are to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and to make equality central to public policy decision-making.

In fulfilling these obligations, the Agency promotes equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, we aim to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Section 75 duties are integrated throughout all of our functions whereby any new initiatives, proposals, schemes or programmes are considered within the context of these duties. This complements the outcomes-based accountability approach allowing the Agency to focus on improving outcomes for our users and staff.

In November 2022, the YJA Management Board approved the YJA Equality Action Plan. The plan mirrors that of the Corporate Plan and covers the period 2022 to 2025. It sets out how the Agency intends to meet its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Agency's Equality Action Plan contributes to the commitments set out in the DoJ Equality Scheme.

The YJA Equality Action Plan focuses on four key areas:

- Strategy and policy;
- Operational practice;
- Data; and
- Leadership and governance.



## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY AND FORWARD LOOK

### Performance summary

The DoJ produced its own Departmental Business Plan for 2023-24 which underpins its Mission Statement of ‘Working in partnership to create a fair, just and safe community where we respect the law and each other’. It sets out four strategic themes as follows:

- Support safe and resilient communities;
- Address harm and vulnerability;
- Challenge offending behaviours and support rehabilitation; and
- Deliver an effective justice system.

The work of the Youth Justice Agency contributes right across these themes but more specifically as outlined below:

<p><b>DoJ Priority:</b> Challenge offending behaviours and support rehabilitation</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To put in place arrangements for the care of children in a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment supported by a youth justice policy and legislative framework with a coherent approach to early intervention</p>		
Action	Progress during 2023-24	Year-end status
<p>a) Continue to develop a strategic approach to Earlier Stage Diversion (ESD) by working with partners to create additional alternatives to children entering into the formal justice system.</p>	<p>A new Earlier Stage Diversion scheme (which will supplement existing schemes) has been designed. PSNI, PPS and YJA have agreed to move to pilot. There has been delays in proceeding due to work required within PPS and PSNI to agree and implement changes to their IT and data management systems to support the pilot.</p> <p>PSNI continue to work on extending the criteria for Community Resolution Notices (CRNs), and YJA will explore developing an enhanced YJA referral scheme when this work has been completed.</p>	<p>Partially achieved</p>

**Performance summary (continued)**

<p><b>DoJ Priority:</b> Challenge offending behaviours and support rehabilitation</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To put in place arrangements for the care of children in a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment supported by a youth justice policy and legislative framework with a coherent approach to early intervention</p>		
Action	Progress during 2023-24	Year-end status
<p>b) Continue to work with the Department of Health (DoH) and Department of Education (DoE) to implement a Regional Care and Justice Campus Programme to better support the needs of vulnerable children including those in the justice system.</p>	<p>Work to harmonise services between Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre and Lakewood Regional Secure Care Centre has largely been completed and in light of this, Ministers have decided to step down the Programme in its current form. Ongoing delivery of harmonisation activity will be overseen by a Partnership Board, jointly chaired by the Director of Children’s Services in the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) and the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Agency.</p> <p>The Department of Justice continues to work strategically with the DoH on addressing the support needs of vulnerable children and DoJ is represented on the Children’s Social Care Services Strategic Reform Board, set up by the DoH to address the findings from the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care Services, undertaken by Professor Ray Jones on behalf of DoH and published on 21 June 2023.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>c) Complete and evidence the implementation of recommendations made by CJINI in the Inspection of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre 2022 report.</p>	<p>YJA (Woodlands, JJC) have implemented all the recommendations arising from the CJINI Inspection of Woodlands which was published on 28 Sept 2022.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

**Performance summary (continued)**

Within this context, the Agency has established five key themes, each with an associated strategic outcome, for delivery of its business activities:

Theme	Strategic Outcome
1. Earlier Stage Diversion	Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate support.
2. Community-based Interventions	Positive outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities affected by offending.
3. Joint Custodial and Community-based Interventions	Positive outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities affected by offending. Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment.
4. Custodial Interventions	Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment.
5. Resource Management	YJA has a multi-skilled, flexible and diverse workforce which is well-led, highly performing and outcomes focused.
6. Resource Management	YJA resources are used effectively, complying with corporate and financial governance.

The Agency has continued to develop and refine its internal performance management and reporting systems based upon the principles of OBA and linked to the PfG outcomes. Performance against pre-determined strategic outcomes is reported to the Agency’s Management Board on a quarterly basis by way of a Business Report Card. This is set out in greater detail in the Performance Analysis section.

This analysis is underpinned by the continuous development and refinement of the Agency’s data collection and analysis processes. The Agency produces an annual statistical bulletin each autumn showing the previous full financial year’s data. Early extraction of data for the 2023-24 year reveals:

- over the five-year period through to 2021-22, the number of children entering the formal justice system has reduced by 9.3% (based upon the most recent published figures for entrants to the justice system which relate to the 2021-22 cohort).
- the proportion of Earlier Stage Diversion referrals accounts for 13.4% (206) of all referrals in 2023-24 (2022-23: 16.9%);
- the proportion of statutory referrals has increased from 76.4% (1,246) in 2019-20 to 81.2.% (1,244) in 2023-24;

**Performance summary (continued)**

- 75.7% of individual victims participated in the youth conferencing process (2022-23: 82.1%); and
- all sentenced young people leaving custody in 2023-24 had a reintegration plan in place before leaving (2022-23: 100%).

The Agency has delivered on its departmental goals, strategic objectives and priority outcomes for 2023-24 and continues to meet ongoing challenges through the development of innovative practice and greater agility in how we deliver our services to the young people under our care - whether that be within the community or within custody - in a way that fully respects the well-being of our staff and young people.

**Forward look**

While our budget for 2024-25 is challenging, and represents a reduction to our long-term baseline, this will be managed through non recurrent savings and will not stop us from our journey of continuous improvement as an Agency. We continue to respond to the changing needs of our service users and through our excellent learning and development offer and our Model of Practice, we will continue to skill up our staff and develop our services to address need and support children and their families. We are also looking to further improve how we measure the quality and impact of our services and I'm grateful to colleagues who are leading on our data development agenda. This is important to help us ensure we continue to deliver a quality service that meets need and delivers value for money.

I also welcome the work of Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) who have a statutory role to inspect our services. CJINI completed an inspection of Youth Justice Services in the 2023-24 business year and we look forward to the publication of the Inspectorate's report early in the new business year.

In recent years, we have put significant effort to developing a pilot co-located YJA-Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) partnership. This has been hugely successful in improving access to mental health services for young people in the criminal justice system and we continue to make the case for the funding needed to mainstream this service across Northern Ireland.

2024-25 is the last year of our current three year corporate plan. I look forward to working with colleagues, service users and partners to develop our next three year plan.

In the year ahead, our Belfast office and headquarters will move location. I'm grateful to Paul Gibson, our Director of Corporate Services, and his team for leading this significant project and we're using the opportunity to make the public spaces more trauma-informed in line with our ethos and intention to become a more trauma-informed organisation.

**Stephen Martin**  
**Chief Executive and Accounting Officer**

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

The performance of the Agency against its pre-determined strategic outcomes is detailed below.

<p><b>Theme:</b> Earlier Stage Diversion (ESD)</p> <p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate support</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>a) Review Youth Justice Agency Needs Assessment (YJANA) – Earlier Stage Diversion to develop staff understanding across YJA.</p>	<p>In the first quarter of the business year all Area Teams completed a Practice Forum on YJANA to inform the Review of YJA Needs Assessment. In response to the findings from this process analytical assessment training was sourced and made mandatory training for all practice staff. Training has been delivered to all area teams.</p>	Achieved
<p>b) Continue to develop a strategic approach to Earlier Stage Diversion by working with partners to create additional alternatives to children entering the formal justice system.</p>	<p>A new Earlier Stage Diversion scheme (which will supplement existing schemes) has been designed. PSNI and YJA have agreed to move to pilot. There has been delays in proceeding due to work required within PPS and PSNI to agree and implement changes to their IT and data management systems to support the pilot.</p> <p>PSNI continue to work on extending the criteria for Community Resolution Notices, and YJA will explore developing an enhanced YJA referral scheme when this work has been completed.</p>	Partially achieved
<p>c) Undertake an evaluation of Commission an evaluation of Children’s Diversion Forums and implement findings.</p>	<p>Organisations tendered to undertake an independent evaluation of Children’s Diversion Forums and Queen’s University Belfast was awarded the tender. The evaluation commenced in 2023-24 and we anticipate receiving the evaluation report by the middle of the 2024-25 business year.</p>	Partially achieved
<p>d) Implement Internal Audit recommendations of ESD Strand 1&amp;2 funding in order that they can deliver activities/programmes for children to promote community integration and to help them Be Connected.</p>	<p>ESD Funding Guidance was revised and reissued in response to the recommendations from the Internal Audit Report dated 6 April 2023.</p>	Achieved

<p><b>Theme:</b> Earlier Stage Diversion (ESD)</p> <p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate support</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>e) Review the Youth Engagement process and implement recommendations, particularly to reduce unnecessary delay.</p>	<p>Work to update Youth Engagement Guidance was completed in quarter 4. The revised guidance was subsequently endorsed by partner organisations at the Youth Engagement Steering Group meeting in April 2024.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

<p><b>Theme:</b> Community-based Interventions</p> <p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Positive outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities affected by offending</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
a) Review the Youth Conference guidance and align to the YJA model of practice.	This activity is on hold until the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) inspection report of Youth Justice Services becomes available.	Partially achieved
b) Return 90% of youth conference reports to court within 20 working days and 30 days for PPS.	During 2023/24 88.3% of reports were returned to court within 20 working days and 81.8% of reports were returned to PPS within 30 working days.	Partially achieved
c) Update the Regional Initial Assessment Tool (RIAT) and guidance to address substance misuse issues and signpost to appropriate help and intervention when appropriate.	<p>Confirmation received from Public Health Agency (PHA) that we can amend RIAT to better suit the needs of YJA, with the inclusion of a line adapted with permission from the DoH and the PHA.</p> <p>Work to format the changes to the assessment will resume in the new business year.</p>	Achieved
d) Implement the Working with Families Development Plan	The Working with Families Working Group progressed a number of actions to implement the Development Plan. These included the development of a clearer definition of formal family work, and how this work should be recorded, delivery of staff awareness sessions to embed understanding of the new definition and recording processes, developing case examples of formal family work, and delivering internal training (follow-up Introduction to Systemic Practice Course). Some of this work focused on developing and consolidating work with families in Woodlands JJC.	Achieved
e) Embed new YJA procedures for children to ensure their Education, Training and Employment (ETE) status improves during their time with us.	Cross departmental meetings continued via the Employability Working Group with YJA working collaboratively with Careers Service to promote the Jobstart programme with 16+ young people. The programme allows employers to create new high quality job opportunities to help young people at risk of long-term unemployment to enter the job market.	Achieved

<p><b>Theme:</b> Community-based Interventions</p> <p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Positive outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities affected by offending</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
f) Further rollout of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).	<p>Despite the lack of a budget for this service and, in light of its significant benefits for children, YJA decided to proceed at risk and extend the CAMHS/YJA Service. There is now coverage of the northern sector of the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT). Co-located senior mental health workers were appointed in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) areas and took up post in May 2024.</p> <p>The priorities in the next business year will be to secure sustainable funding for the existing CAMHS/YJA service and, funding permitting, seek to establish a service in Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area.</p>	Achieved
g) Maximise Direct Victim Attendance at Youth Conferences by ensuring that 45% of direct victims attend the youth conference.	<p>In 2023/24, 32.7% of cases involving victims had direct victims or victim representatives in attendance at the conference. Of the individual victims identified, 75.7% participated in the conference process which provided them an opportunity to articulate the impact which crime had on them.</p>	Partially achieved
h) Deliver a targeted Schools Programme across 5 area teams working collaboratively with statutory partners.	<p>The Schools programme, which raises awareness of activities which can lead young people into offending behaviour, continued throughout the business year with 168 workshops delivered in 31 schools by the five area teams with a total of 5,154 attendees.</p>	Achieved
i) Embed an Enhanced Case Management model into operational practice (intensive wrap around services) in order to reduce risk and meet need.	<p>An amended procedure of Enhanced Case Management has been developed following consultation with area teams and managers. YJA will await the findings of the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland report on Youth Justice Services before finalising the procedures.</p>	Achieved



<p><b>Theme:</b> Community-based Interventions</p> <p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Positive outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities affected by offending</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>j) Promote the participatory practice of children, families and victims in relevant development and delivery of policy and practice.</p>	<p>Our Participation Officer has continued to work to ensure children’s, families and victim’s participation is evident in all YJA policy and practice.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>k) Review and update YJA bail procedures and policy.</p>	<p>Review complete with escalation policy added to bail procedures.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>l) Produce a best practice guidance document on working with young women.</p>	<p>Practice Guidance paper completed and agreed by senior management. Joint Director’s notice issued. First meeting of the champions group will take place in the new business year to agree an implementation plan to take forward the recommendations of the paper.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

<p><b>Theme:</b> Joint Custodial and Community based Interventions</p> <p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Positive outcomes for children, families, victims and communities affected by offending.</p> <p>Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment.</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>a) Review YJANA, further develop staff understanding across YJA for children who come through the formal justice system route.</p>	<p>Training has been delivered to all YJS area teams and to practitioners in the JJC.</p> <p>YJA will await the findings of the CJINI inspection report on YJS before making changes to the assessment framework.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>b) Establish a custody champions group to monitor the implementation of the custody-community transition guidance paper.</p>	<p>A Champions Custody Group has been established to monitor progress in taking forward an implementation plan to enhance custody-community transitions. The plan was reviewed and updated at quarterly meetings.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>c) Introduce a shadowing scheme where custody and community-based staff may learn more about the various roles and practices within each directorate.</p>	<p>40 staff in the community have now completed their shadowing or have been working shifts in the JJC.</p> <p>4 staff from the JJC completed shadowing in the community (in the Belfast Team). JJC and Youth Services staff champions have agreed to prioritise this in the next business year.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>d) The Juvenile Justice Centre will support, influence, and assist in the delivery of effective community-based programmes in preparation for leaving custody to ensure the child is connected.</p>	<p>Work has been progressed to ensure that care planning and pre-release multidisciplinary meetings have a clear focus on connecting young people to with the community supports and programmes. Both Directorates in the Agency have work closely to identify the programmes to help support young people remain part of their community on discharge from Woodlands.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

<p><b>Theme:</b> Joint Custodial and Community based Interventions</p> <p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Positive outcomes for children, families, victims and communities affected by offending.</p> <p>Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment.</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>e) Support children and young people and their families/carers throughout the care planning process to promote a positive return to their community.</p>	<p>All committed young people are discharged with a comprehensive discharge plan that is agreed at a multi-disciplinary pre-release meeting.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>f) Review the bail support scheme to include escalation when appropriate.</p>	<p>Review of the bail support scheme completed, and an escalation policy has been added to bail procedures to address accommodation issues.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>g) Support a seamless transition back into the community through targeted use of Enhanced Case Management</p>	<p>Current Enhanced Case Management model is being embedded into discharge meetings at the JJC to ensure appropriate support is in place Review is ongoing to include CJINI recommendations.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>h) Complete the SBNI self-assessment exercise to inform the actions required by YJA to becoming a trauma informed organisation</p>	<p>All staff were invited to complete the Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) self-assessment questionnaire. The implementation report from the SBNI self-assessment exercise was positive and we have a clear direction regarding the way forward to further develop and embed TIP within YJA. The TIP strategic steering group have meet to consider the findings and will be launching a new agency wide TIP Implementation plan in the new business year.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

<p><b>Theme:</b> Custodial based Intervention</p> <p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
a) A multi-disciplinary approach will be taken to develop individual needs-based care plans for young people informed by YJANA.	Multidisciplinary care planning is in place for all sentenced young people. Care planning is informed by the YJANA process.	Achieved
b) Review and deliver an ongoing refurbishment programme that continues to reflect a child friendly, therapeutic and modern environment for children in custody.	<p>Following review, a Refurbishment Action Plan has been developed to take forward an ongoing refurbishment programme this work has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>essential upgrade work on the existing CCTV system,</li> <li>refurbishment of a house unit within this financial year with plans to roll-out further house unit refurbishments to ensure all spaces best meet the changing needs of the Centre.</li> </ul> <p>Work was also completed on the development of a contract specification and business case for the re-tendering of the Facilities Maintenance Contract for Woodlands. The Facilities Management Contract is out to tender with a planned commencement date of 30 June 2024.</p>	Achieved
c) Identify education and employment opportunities for young people leaving custody in partnership with the educational and vocational departments.	Young people are enrolled in Woodlands comprehensive educational and vocational training programme to enhance their employment prospects and linked to an external placement on discharge.	Achieved

<p><b>Theme:</b> Custodial based Intervention</p> <p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>d) Work in partnership with Health to deliver the Regional Care and Justice Programme, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Work to harmonise services between Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre and Lakewood Regional Secure Care Centre has largely been completed and in light of this, Ministers have decided to step down the Programme in its current form. Ongoing delivery of harmonisation activity will be overseen by a Partnership Board, jointly chaired by the Director of Children’s Services in the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Agency.</p> <p>The Department of Justice continues to work strategically with the DoH on addressing the support needs of vulnerable children and DoJ is represented on the Children’s Social Care Services Strategic Reform Board, set up by the DoH to address the findings from the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care Services, undertaken by Professor Ray Jones on behalf of the DoH and published on 21 June 2023.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>e) In partnership with ACORN Therapeutic Services, we will promote the emotional health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>At year end there has been 100% engagement with ACORN by young people with completed screening assessment, and 100% of young people who engaged with ACORN were followed up by Community CAMHS within 10 days of discharge.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>f) Promote quality improvement in service delivery.</p>	<p>Business and Quality Improvement Action Plans have been development and implemented for Case Management; Young Person Development and Wellbeing; and Data Management.</p> <p>A Youth Forum has been established and has provided a positive platform for young people to raise their views and opinions with regards to service improvements.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

<p><b>Theme:</b> Resource Management</p> <p><b>Outcome 4:</b> YJA has a multi-skilled, flexible and diverse workforce which is well-led, highly performing and outcomes focused.</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>a) Ensure an effective workforce plan is in place to meet current and emerging business and operational requirements across YJA.</p>	<p>The YJA Workforce Plan 2023-25 was approved by the Agency Board on 29 November 2023 and work is underway to implement it.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>b) Continue to improve the impact of YJA's investment in learning and development.</p>	<p>A joint YJA Learning and Development Plan for 2023/24 was developed and signed off by Management Board at their June meeting. Significant progress was made in delivering the learning and development priorities within the plan, with cross directorate training between Woodlands and YJS proving extremely successful and well received by those staff attending joint training events.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>c) Train staff in equality and diversity issues.</p>	<p>Following a message from the HoCs on 4 May 2023, all staff were enrolled on a mandatory e-Learning programme called Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion (NICS). Staff are required to complete this training every 2 years.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>d) Maintain innovative practice developed during Covid-19 in implementing the 'New Ways of Working' arrangements.</p>	<p>The NICS New Ways of Working policy has been implemented across the YJA for those staff who can work from home.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

<p><b>Theme:</b> Resource Management</p> <p><b>Outcome 4:</b> YJA has a multi-skilled, flexible and diverse workforce which is well-led, highly performing and outcomes focused.</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>e) Maintain effective systems of internal communication, staff engagement and well-being support within YJA.</p>	<p>Staff are kept informed of corporate and practice developments thorough regular notices, staff bulletins, and monthly team meetings. Valuing Our People sessions with the YJA Management Board have provided staff with further scope for sharing of information and discussion on matters affecting their working lives.</p> <p>As part of the Agency’s commitment to promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace a three Health and Wellbeing Action Plan has been developed, using the World Health Organisation Healthy Workplace Model. Actions within the plan have been aligned with the Agency’s Workforce Plan, Learning and Development Plan, and our work to become a trauma informed organisation.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

<p><b>Theme:</b> Resource Management</p> <p><b>Outcome 5:</b> YJA resources are used effectively, complying with corporate and financial governance.</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>a) Seek ways to reduce unit costs while maintaining the quality of service.</p>	<p>The YJA Executive Team, Senior Management, Budget Holders and finance colleagues held regular meetings to consider the impact of budget reductions and identifying ways to reduce costs. The Agency has continued to live within its reduced budget through the management of vacancies and the review of staffing levels in JJC. Unit costs have been managed through reductions in overhead costs including accommodation and IT costs. The Agency has also managed its discretionary spend in line with DoJ direction.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>b) Effectively implement all agreed inspection and audit recommendations.</p>	<p>YJA have implemented all the recommendations arising from the CJINI Inspection of Woodlands which was published on 28 Sept 2022.</p> <p>YJA have actioned all recommendations arising from Internal Audit reports.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>c) Provide information within statutory time limits in relation to pre-YJA historic case files in support of the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Scheme.</p>	<p>Information was provided within statutory time limits.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>d) Maintain and develop the YJA case management arrangements and MIS database to provide enhanced statistical and management information.</p>	<p>Throughout the year the statistics team have met frequently with YJA business managers (via the database working group and ad hoc as and when required) to ensure consistency with data recorded and to check if any alterations are needed to the database to meet business need. A case management report has been drafted along with a 2-year action plan focused on reducing duplication, improving efficiency and effectiveness, and promoting further integration between YJS and JJC. The Case Management Review Team have met periodically throughout the year and there are no concerns about meeting the timescales of the action plan.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>



<p><b>Theme:</b> Resource Management</p> <p><b>Outcome 5:</b> YJA resources are used effectively, complying with corporate and financial governance.</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>e) In accordance with the YJA Equality Action Plan, further develop YJA data to help improve understanding of the factors contributing to over-representation of certain groups in the youth justice system.</p>	<p>The Equality Action Plan contained the following two actions which have now both been completed.</p> <p>Use the QUB report to identify weaknesses and gaps in data currently collected and, if appropriate and proportionate, draw up action plan to address. The referrals database has been amended to collect S75 information for ESD referrals by type. Collection of the information has also been added as an ongoing item agenda to be discussed at the Database Working group.</p> <p>Determine if YJA can play a greater role in filling gaps in equality data relating to Youth Engagement Clinics. If possible, draw up an action plan to address issues. The fields for recording this information are available on the database. Collection of the information has also been added as an ongoing item agenda to be discussed at the Database Working group.</p> <p>A third action to ensure the need for improved equality data collection is built into any specification for a future YJA case management system will be taken forward when the YJA moves to introduce a new case management system. However, this is unlikely in the short to medium term.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>f) Effectively manage the relocation of the Belfast Area Team and Corporate HQ to new accommodation.</p>	<p>YJA have received DoF approval to relocate to Charles House, Belfast. Work is currently ongoing to agree the lease with a view to completing the relocation by the summer of 2024.</p>	<p>Partially achieved</p>

<p><b>Theme:</b> Resource Management</p> <p><b>Outcome 5:</b> YJA resources are used effectively, complying with corporate and financial governance.</p>		
Strategic Outcome	Comment	Year-end status
<p>g) Seek ways to improve our external communications and transparency through delivery of key objectives in the YJA Communication Action Plan 23/24.</p>	<p>A range of communications activities were undertaken to improve external communications as outlined in the Communication Action Plan which was approved by the YJA Management Board on 17 May 2023. These included community services 'open days', a Keeping Safe Online Poster Competition 2023, publication of the annual Performance Impact Report for the period 2022-23, a review of our Victims Charter (in conjunction with the Commissioner Designate for Victims of Crime), and regular social media posts to highlight the outcomes from our work to develop and deliver services to children, families and victims.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

## Risk management

The Agency's Management Board considers the YJA Risk Register at each of its meetings and risk management has continued to focus on:

- active management of risk within the Agency, including taking into account findings from recent audits of existing procedures and to ensure that risk management procedures reflect best practice guidelines;
- ensuring that risk management is understood and embedded as a management tool across the Agency; and
- ensuring that risk management processes are sufficiently joined-up and are being appropriately applied.

During the course of 2023-24 the Agency faced a number of key issues that could have had significant impact on the Agency's ability to achieve its corporate objectives.

### ***Delivering the required level of service***

The Agency did not experience unacceptable levels of staff absence during the year leading to capacity or capability issues. However, the Agency has been managing a significant risk in relation to the recruitment and retention of professionally qualified practice staff. NICS levels of pay have lagged behind similar public sector organisations, particularly for social workers, and we have lost a number of valued colleagues to other employers as well as to retirement over the last year. Through the workforce plan, approved by the Board in November 2023, we have worked with HR, local universities and others to improve the retention of experienced colleagues as well as to support newly qualified social workers and youth workers to join us.

### ***Implementing the recommendations of the Review of Residential Secure Care Report***

In March 2022, the Justice and Health Ministers made decisions on the way forward on the Regional Facilities Programme for Children and Young People. Following a public consultation, the two Ministers decided that the Lakewood Secure Care Centre (run by the South Eastern HSC Trust) and the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (run by YJA) will continue to operate independently but will co-operate more fully on the provision of harmonised shared services.

Work to deliver harmonisation has largely been completed and in light of this, Ministers have decided to step down the Programme in its current form. Ongoing delivery of harmonisation activity will be overseen by a Partnership Board, jointly chaired by the Director of Children's Services in the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Agency.

The Department of Justice continues to work strategically with the DoH on addressing the support needs of vulnerable children and DoJ is represented on the Children's Social Care Services Strategic Reform Board, set up by the DoH to address the findings from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Services, undertaken by Professor Ray Jones on behalf of the DoH and published on 21 June 2023

***Relocation of YJA Headquarters and the Belfast Area Team***

The Agency has managed the relocation to Charles House by agreeing an extension of the existing lease for Waring Street to allow for the completion of legal formalities and the necessary fit out of the new premises.

## Financial Review

### *Net expenditure per Accounts*

The net expenditure of the Agency for 2023-24 is compared to the previous two financial years in the table below:

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22 *Restated
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Total operating income</b>	<b>(38)</b>	<b>(120)</b>	<b>(109)</b>
Staff costs	10,854	10,652	10,935
Purchase of goods and services	3,471	3,546	3,706
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,487	1,137	755
Provision expense	226	(41)	(251)
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>	<b>16,038</b>	<b>15,294</b>	<b>15,145</b>
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>15,174</b>	<b>15,036</b>
Finance expense	5	(41)	14
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>	<b>16,005</b>	<b>15,133</b>	<b>15,050</b>
Audit notional costs	25	19	19
Other notional costs	604	609	687
<b>Total notional costs</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>706</b>
<b>Net expenditure for the year after notionals</b>	<b>16,634</b>	<b>15,761</b>	<b>15,756</b>

\* 2021-22 figures have been restated to reclassify notional costs in line with guidance from Department of Finance.

### *Budget Outturn for 2023-24*

The Agency's 2023-24 non-ringfenced (cash) resource outturn was £14.387m, £0.400m (2.7%) less than the current approved annual budget. This is mainly due to the delay in filling vacancies, lower leased property costs, the delay in maintenance costs and rollout of CAMHS services in Youth Justices Services, alongside lower utility costs than originally forecast. The Agency's 2023-24 capital spend was £0.476m, £0.107m less than the approved budget and relates to the delay of capital works at Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre, which were not completed before year-end.

### *Financial position*

The total net assets of the Agency at 31 March 2024 were £18.718m (2022-23: £19.387m).

## Financial Review (continued)

### *Non-current assets*

Non-Current Asset expenditure movements are detailed in Notes 5 and 6 to the financial statements. Capital expenditure in 2023-24 totalled £0.589m (2022-23: £0.931m).

### *Cash flow*

As detailed in the Statement of Cash Flows, the Agency's Net Assembly draw down in 2023-24 was £14.275m (2022-23: £14.466m) and the net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the year was £0.125m (2022-23: decrease £0.084m).

### *Financial risk*

The Agency relies primarily on the Department of Justice for funding and the risk to this funding is low.

The Agency accounts for all transactions in sterling and has no borrowings. As such, the Agency is not exposed to any exchange rate or liquidity risk.

### *Cost of custody*

The annual cost of custody per young person in Northern Ireland was as follows:

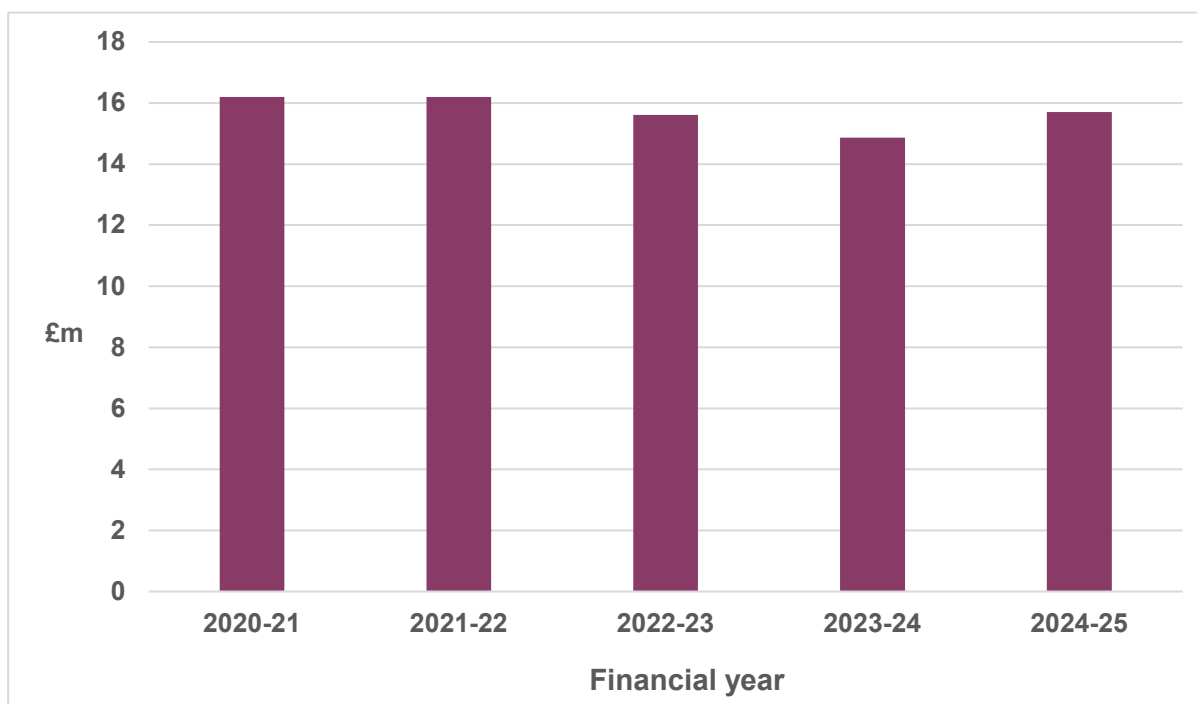
- £193,880 (2022-23: £185,660) based on dividing Operating Expenditure (excluding non-standard costs) by the maximum number of available places; or
- £387,759 (2022-23: £371,320) based on dividing Operating Expenditure (excluding non-standard costs) by the number of places the Centre is resourced to accommodate based on current staffing levels and resources available for service delivery.

Operating expenditure relates to the resource expenditure outturn with non-standard cost items removed. These relate to the costs in respect of Youth Justice Services, an apportionment of corporate overheads, the costs associated with the joint project with the DoH regarding the proposed repurposing of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre, movements in provisions and impairments arising from the revaluation of fixed assets. The movement in the cost of custody reflects rising staff costs with the Agency and higher depreciation costs for the replacement of capital works at Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre.

### Long-term expenditure trends

The chart below shows the movement in the Agency’s opening baseline for non-ringfenced Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) over the period 2020-21 to 2024-25. This budget pays for programme delivery and running costs excluding non-cash charges for depreciation and impairment of assets.

**Chart 1: YJA Non-Ringfenced Resource DEL opening baselines**



#### **2023-24 financial year**

On 27 April 2023, in a Written Ministerial Statement, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland set out a final budget for 2023-24. The Written Ministerial Statement provided a non-ringfenced resource budget for the Department of £1,156.7m\*.

The Department of Justice’s non-ringfenced Resource DEL Budget was as follows:

- an adjusted opening baseline budget of £1,140.1m;
- funding from the NI Consolidated Fund of £1.5m (from 2022-23);
- budget cut for 2023-24 of £19.4m (c. 1.7%);
- additional security funding for the PSNI of £31.2m; and
- NI Protocol funding of £3.2m.

*\*Totals may not add due to roundings*

The opening budget for 2023-24 provided an allocation of £14.9m for YJA, which reflected a 4.75% decrease against the 2022-23 opening baseline position.

## Long-term expenditure trends (continued)

### 2024-25 financial year

On 25 April 2024, in a Written Ministerial Statement, the Finance Minister set out the 2024-25 budget for Northern Ireland departments which has been agreed by the Executive. The Written Ministerial Statement provided a non-ringfenced Resource DEL budget for the Department of £1,262.5m\*.

The Department of Justice's non-ringfenced Resource DEL Budget was as follows:

- an adjusted opening baseline budget of £1,123.4m;
- an additional allocation of £95m;
- additional security funding for the PSNI of £31.2m; and
- funding for the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme of £12.8m (this is funding to be distributed across various departments and is not solely for the use of DoJ).

\*Totals may not add due to roundings

The opening budget for 2024-25 provides an allocation of £15.7m for the Youth Justice Agency, which reflects a 4.0% increase against the 2023-24 adjusted budget position of £15.1m.

## Audit

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

The notional audit fee for the work performed by the staff of the C&AG during the reporting period was £24,600 (2022-23: £19,000). In addition, £nil (2022-23: £1,319) was hard charged by NIAO to the Agency for audit work undertaken in respect of the National Fraud Initiative.

The C&AG may also undertake other statutory activities that are not related to the audit of the body's Financial Statements such as Value for Money (VFM) reports. No such work was undertaken during 2023-24.

## Payment of suppliers

The Agency's policy is to pay bills from all suppliers within 10 working days following receipt of a properly rendered invoice or in accordance with contractual conditions, whichever is the earlier. During the financial year, the Agency achieved an average of 90.3% (2022-23: 90.5%) of invoices paid to suppliers within 10 working days following receipt of a properly rendered invoice. The Agency achieved an average 96.9% (2022-23: 95.5%) of invoices paid to suppliers within 30 calendar days following receipt of a properly rendered invoice.



## **Anti-corruption and anti-bribery**

The Agency is committed to the values of probity and accountability which foster a positive organisational culture. It is also committed to the elimination of any fraud within the Agency, to the rigorous investigation of any prima facie case, and, where fraud or other criminal acts are proven, to ensure that wrongdoers are dealt with appropriately. The Agency will take proportionate steps to recover any assets lost as a result of fraud, corruption or theft. The Agency has a zero-tolerance approach towards acts of bribery and corruption by staff, associated persons and organisations.

## **Raising a Concern**

The Agency adheres to the DoJ Raising a Concern policy, which is designed to reassure staff that it is safe and acceptable to speak up when they have a concern about malpractice. The procedures provide arrangements so that such concerns can be addressed at an early stage and in a fair and proper way. The Head of Internal Audit is involved in conducting independent investigations into issues raised under the policy.

## **Human rights**

Civil servants have a statutory duty to respect, protect and fulfil people's human rights when developing and delivering government policy and services. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) interactive guide to Human Rights is available to staff in the Agency to ensure they have knowledge of human rights law and standards and the core principles through which human rights are realised. The training is designed to increase human rights knowledge and strengthen the culture of human rights awareness and good practice within the Agency.

## **Estates review**

The Agency's estate requirements are reviewed regularly by the Estates, IT and Procurement Committee. Management of the Agency estate is driven by strategic developments in the wider NICS, and its accommodation activities are governed by the Executive's Asset Management Strategy and the property controls that this strategy put in place. In practice this has seen a move away from small, leased premises towards maximising the utilisation of NICS premises, and freehold properties (as far as possible), as well as active consideration being given to co-location with other government bodies, where practicable.

## **Freedom of information and Data Protection**

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 provides a general right of access to information held by public authorities in the UK subject to certain exemptions. It is intended to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public sector bodies, and therefore facilitate better public understanding as to how public authorities carry out their duties, why they make the decisions they do, and how they spend public money.

The Data Protection Act 2018 controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses, or the government. Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles' to ensure personal data is

**Freedom of information and Data Protection (continued)**

used fairly, lawfully and transparently. The Agency displays, on its website, the processes by which information requests can be made. They must make sure the information is: used fairly, lawfully and transparently.

During 2023-24, the Agency received 8 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act of which none were returned late and 19 requests regarding personal information under data protection legislation, of which one was returned late.

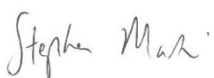
**Environmental and sustainability matters**

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 sets a clear statutory target of net zero emissions by 2050 and places a number of duties on each NI department, with DAERA named as the lead department in the Act. DAERA Sustainability Reporting Guidance 2022-23 dated April 2023 provides a suggested list of actions for government bodies until specific targets are developed for reporting purposes.

Within the DoJ, an Outline Sustainability Strategy and associated action plan was launched in Summer 2023. This sets out our commitment to sustainable practices and supports us in meeting our obligations under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 and in contributing to the first NI Climate Action Plan 2023-2027. Departmental officials also sit on a cross-departmental Strategic Oversight Group and Climate Action Plan Technical Advisory Group, both chaired by DAERA.

As the YJA forms part of the DoJ Reducing Offending Directorate along with the NI Prison Service, the Agency has committed to the NIPS Sustainability Policy, Strategy and Action Plan. In 2007/2008, the YJAs predecessor (Juvenile Justice Board) operated its community services from 23 centres and opened the Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) , Woodlands on 5 November 2007. In recent years, we have closed offices in Coleraine and Omagh. As of 2024/25, the YJA operates community services from eight commercially rented offices across its five area teams.

The JJC is the only custodial facility in NI for young people and is an Agency asset. In 2022/23, the Agency commissioned an energy audit of the JJC and will undertake work to address the findings of the report including actions around building management systems, energy monitoring, insulation, LED lighting and water optimisation. The relocation of the YJA HQ and its Belfast Area Team is due to take place over the summer of 2024. New accommodation has been identified that will deliver a 30% reduction in floor space in line with the NICS New Ways of Working and also a much-improved energy rating.

**PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**Stephen Martin**  
**Chief Executive and Accounting Officer**  
**27 June 2024**

## **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

The Accountability section of the Annual Report outlines how the Agency meets its key accountability requirements to the Assembly and ensures best practice with corporate governance norms and codes. The three sub-sections within the Accountability Report are outlined below.

### **i - Corporate Governance Report**

The purpose of this section is to explain the composition and organisation of the Agency's governance structures and how they support the achievement of its objectives.

The Corporate Governance Report includes:

- Directors' Report;
- Non-Executive Members' Report;
- Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities; and
- Governance Statement.

### **ii - Remuneration and Staff Report**

This section sets out the Agency's remuneration policy for directors, reports on how that policy has been implemented and sets out the amounts awarded to directors as salary and pension entitlements.

In addition, the report provides information relating to remuneration and staff that the Assembly and other users see as key to accountability.

### **iii - Assembly Accountability and Audit Report**

This section brings together the key Assembly accountability documents within the Annual Report and Accounts. It comprises:

- Other Assembly accountability disclosures; and
- Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Assembly.

## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT**

### **DIRECTORS' REPORT**

#### **Management Board**

The Agency is headed by a Chief Executive who is supported by a Management Board. The Agency's Management Board is responsible for the strategic and business management of the Agency's operations. Details of the salary and benefits of the Management Board members are disclosed in the Remuneration Report. The structure and members of the Management Board for the year ended 31 March 2024 are set out below. Directors were in post for the full financial year unless otherwise noted.

<b>Post</b>	<b>Member</b>
Chief Executive	Stephen Martin
Director of Custodial Services	Mary Aughey
Director of Youth Justice Services	Colleen Heaney (from 4 March 2024)
Acting Director of Youth Justice Services	Kelvin Doherty (from 1 March 2023 until 30 September 2023) Colleen Heaney (from 1 October 2023 until 3 March 2024)
Director of Corporate Services	Paul Gibson
Non-Executive Member	Dr Richard Horton
Non-Executive Member	Dr Thomas Moore

Dr Richard Horton and Dr Thomas Moore were appointed as Non-Executive Members for a fixed period of three years from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026.

#### **Board members' interests**

A Register of Interests is maintained by the Agency, in keeping with best practice, to record declarations of personal, or business interests which may conflict with responsibilities as a member of the Agency's Management Board. A copy of the Register is published on the governance section of the YJA website [www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/youth-justice-agency-governance](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/youth-justice-agency-governance). Details of transactions of the Agency with organisations in which Board members hold an interest and which could potentially conflict with their management responsibilities are disclosed in Note 16 to the Accounts, Related Party Transactions.

The Agency has a responsibility to safeguard the information it holds, both in electronic and hard copy format, and has in place data security procedures which mirror those of the DoJ to minimise the risk of compromise of that information. Information assurance issues are reported quarterly to the Agency Management Board.

During 2023-24, the Agency had one minor information security incident which was not reportable to the Information Commissioner.

## Safeguarding and child protection

In line with the Youth Justice Agency 'Child First' ethos, the Agency is committed to the protection of children and young people from abuse. It seeks to achieve this by operating safe, secure, trauma informed and caring environments. YJA staff work to address the needs of children and young people, whilst reducing risk to and from others. This is most often achieved through working in partnership with colleagues across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

As a member of, Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI), the Agency is guided by and has a statutory obligation under the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to have due regard for the safety and welfare of children in the exercise of its functions. As a member of SBNI, the Agency is well represented across a range of Committees, Sub-groups, Panels, and the Board itself.

All children, young people, staff, parents, and representatives of other organisations who use, or have contact with Agency services are encouraged and or, trained to be alert to, and to report any concerns about abuse. All matters, whether past or present, will be responded to in keeping with these principles and procedures.

YJA have a commitment to protecting face to face delivery of services. Staff have significant contact with children and recognise many of the current and emerging stressors which impact children within their families and communities. YJA recognises that it is the role of staff to be attuned to early recognition, and appropriate follow-up actions on behalf of children, parents/carers, where safeguarding concerns may be emerging or confirmed. The YJA Safeguarding Policy and Procedures have been reviewed in 2023 with Mandatory Child Protection Training delivered to all staff in line with SBNI staff Learning and Development requirements.

Currently the predominant safeguarding themes reported within the Agency involve: issues of mental health including serious self-harm and substance misuse, and children under threat within the community. However, practice experience informs us that issues regarding online safety, and domestic abuse (including peer on peer abuse and child to parent violence), are also prevalent.

As a member Agency of SBNI, we are committed to continuing to integrate the latest research and best practice in the field of Youth Justice alongside our safeguarding responsibilities and to ensure Youth Justice Agency staff continue to make child protection referrals as appropriate.

### Complaints

The Agency has an easy to understand and responsive complaints procedure which encourages anyone who feels they have been treated unfairly or inappropriately by the Agency to speak out so that concerns can be addressed. The aim is to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant at the earliest possible stage of the Agency's four-step complaints process, which is monitored in accordance with the Agency's Complaints Charter.

During 2023-24 a total of 12 complaints were received by the Agency. Full details of the Agency's complaints procedures can be found on the Departmental website at: [www.justice-ni.gov.uk](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk).

## NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' REPORT

Our role as independent Non-Executive Members of the Youth Justice Agency Board is to advise, support and constructively challenge the Senior Management Team on matters pertaining to policy, performance, risk management and corporate governance. We also provide oversight and challenge in key areas including budgetary control, human resources, organisational development, business planning and the achievement of strategic outcomes.

It is our view that the Youth Justice Agency has performed well during 2023-24, notwithstanding budgetary and staffing pressures and the legacy of Covid. The excellent performance of the Agency in achieving business objectives and maintaining robust governance standards reflects the exemplary commitment, enthusiasm, adaptability and resilience of staff and management.

Having taken up our appointments on April 1st, 2023, we greatly appreciated induction briefings provided by the Department of Justice, the Northern Ireland Audit Office, the Chief Executives' Forum and the Agency. We also welcomed the training and development opportunities afforded to us by attending meetings of the NICS Non-Executive Directors' Forum organised by the Department of Finance, which also enabled us to engage with other NICS Non-Executive Board Members and listen to presentations on various strategic issues. Also, the Audit and Risk Committee Chair attended the DOJ/ARC Chairs' meeting in September 2023 to meet other Non-Executive colleagues and keep abreast of developments in corporate governance.

### Agency Board

The Agency Board met eight times during the year 2023-2024 and both Non-Executive Board Members (NEBMs) attended all meetings.

The pattern of the meetings is regularised and normally begins with a pre meeting opportunity to meet with a range of staff in the geographical areas in which the Agency Board meeting takes place. This normally lasts about 30-45 minutes and is called Valuing Our People. As new NEBMs we have both found this type of engagement open, informative, and very useful regarding the challenges, opportunities and developments taking place in that catchment area. These are well attended by local staff and for us, as relatively new Members, extremely helpful to hear the contributions of staff and ask questions. They have afforded us an opportunity to witness first-hand the accounts and reflections from staff, how they are engaged in front-line initiatives taking place to meet the needs of young people, carers, their families, and victims.

The Agency Board rotates the venues where its meetings are held to ensure it reaches out, and has a presence, across the full geography of Northern Ireland. The venues for the Agency Board Meetings have thus far included: Banbridge; Newtownards; Belfast (HQ Office); Ballymena; Enniskillen and Bangor (Woodlands JJC). These forums are an opportunity for the Chief Executive, Directors and NEBMs to formally recognise and thank staff for the work they do, across the year.

The Agency Board meetings with full attendance are always well structured with agenda and papers distributed in advance to enable the necessary pre-reading and scrutiny of

**NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

related papers and reports. Adequate time for all agenda matters with space for questions and discussions is provided. This allows us as new NEBMs, to grasp and appreciate the scale and reach of the essential work of the Agency. Each meeting, has a full set of minutes, covering all main agenda items, discussion papers and actions agreed, coupled with an Action Log, populated with actions to be followed up and where necessary, reported back on. This has helped to ensure follow through and provide assurance that matters are acted upon.

Examples of the important business conducted at the Agency Board have included the Chief Executive reporting on the collaboration between the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (Woodlands JJC) and Lakewood Regional Secure Care Centre, which are continuing to work collaboratively to harmonise delivery of services across both centres, and over recent months the Independent Review of Children's Social Services, conducted by Professor Ray Jones, on behalf of the DoH. This report has since been published in June 2023 and at the time of preparing this Annual Report. DoH have now consulted on this report and are currently considering options to complete and analysis of responses. Outcomes from this process will inform Ministerial decisions on the future direction of the harmonisation programme.

The Chief Executive provides regular updates to the Agency Board on initiatives to recruit to and upskill the workforce. Recruitment and retention present an ongoing challenge and efforts and resources are directed to manage this going forward. The Agency has developed a Workforce Plan (2023-2025), engaging and consulting with staff, and developing a comprehensive SWOT analysis to feed into it, with the overall aim of developing further and sustaining the skills of staff needed to deliver the Agency's objectives.

The Board also noted the Directors' Reports at each meeting which provided an update to Members on current workstreams, e.g., on the engagement with Queens University Belfast (QUB) to explore options for formal evaluation of the CAMHS pilot. Reports at each Board meeting relating to Finances, Human Resources, Directors' Updates, and Performance Reports aligned to the Business Plan all provide transparent, comprehensive and regular positions on these essential components of the Agency's work.

Directors also updated the Board on outcomes from the Expert by Experience (EBE) pilot which operated during 2022-2023. This also featured as a presentation to the Agency Board. The pilot had been developed as part of the Agency's commitment in 2021 to a model of practice framework underpinned by the 'Children First' approach. It is intended that the NEBMs will have an opportunity to meet with EBEs in the future to gain further insights into the excellent work they do.

Both NEBMs visited Woodlands JJC and met with a Senior Centre Manager. He provided a wide ranging and informative presentation on the training, safeguarding and governance processes in place. The discussion also referenced the behaviour management and restraint system (Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint- (MMPR)) operating in Woodlands JJC. This was useful in helping to understand approaches to de-escalation and diversion strategies employed to manage incidents, with restraints, used only as a

## **NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

last resort, for everyone's protection.

A range of stakeholder events were held in June 2023, attended by the Chief Executive and Directors. One of the NEBMs also attended and found this a very useful opportunity to meet and engage with a wide range of stakeholders. A number of Open Days were held in mid-June to celebrate the Youth Justice Agency 20th Anniversary. These were very successful and were well attended by stakeholders, partners, judiciary, and politicians.

In the latter part of 2023, the Criminal Justice Inspector NI (CJINI) commenced their inspection of Youth Justice Services (YJS). Both NEBMs had the opportunity to be interviewed as part of the inspection; and were able to share their initial thoughts and reflections on the critical and important work being undertaken by the Agency, and its partners across N.I. A draft report is expected in February 2024, with the Final Report anticipated around May 2024.

During 2023-2024 the Management Board conducted a comprehensive redesign of the Corporate Risk Register. The half day workshop devoted to this built upon the regular 'deep dive' approach to risk review and analysis undertaken throughout the year. This workshop, involving both NEBMs, provided the assurance that corporate risk management is at the heart of governance within the Agency. This is to be commended.

### **Audit and Risk Committee**

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) consists of two Non-Executive Members and Mr John McCord, Independent Member and a civil servant. The role of ARC is to support and constructively challenge the Management Board in its responsibilities for ensuring that corporate governance, risk management and internal control processes operate effectively.

ARC met on three occasions during 2023-24 and received ongoing reports from internal and external auditors, regular updates in relation to finance, information assurance, draft annual accounts and guidance in relation to finance circulars. These meetings were also attended by representatives of the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

The ARC Chair (Richard Horton) wishes to record his thanks to Mr John McCord (ARC Independent Member) for his valuable contributions to the Committee's work, and to the other attendees for their professionalism and commitment.

### **Conclusion**

We wish to record our thanks and appreciation to Agency management and staff as we approach the end of our first year on the Management Board and Audit and Risk Committee, and we look forward to working with you during the coming year.

**Richard Horton and Thomas Moore**

**Non-Executive Members**



## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, the Department of Finance (DoF) has directed the Youth Justice Agency to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in a form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Agency and of its income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position and cash flows for the financial year.

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

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by DoF, including 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 accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Accounting Officer for the Department of Justice has designated the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Agency as the Accounting Officer for the Agency. The responsibilities of an Agency Accounting Officer include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable and for the keeping of proper records and for safeguarding the Agency's assets are set out in the Accounting Officer's Memorandum in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland issued by DoF.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Agency's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

### 1. Scope of responsibility

The Agency is an Executive Agency of the DoJ and operates within the context of the Department's overall vision and strategic objectives. The principal aim of the Agency is to make the community safer by helping children to stop offending. In seeking to achieve this the Agency delivers a range of services, often in partnership with others, to help children and young people address their offending behaviour, divert them from crime, assist their integration into the community, and to meet the needs of victims of crime.

As the designated Accounting Officer for the Agency, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Agency's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI). I am accountable for the effective, efficient and economic use of resources provided to the Agency; for the regularity and propriety of its expenditure; and for ensuring that the requirements of MPMNI are met.

The Agency sits within the DoJ's Reducing Offending Directorate which fulfils the sponsor role for both the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the Agency. The Directorate provides end to end support to individuals to help reduce their risk of offending and brings together custodial services across Northern Ireland.

A Framework Document is in place - this defines the responsibilities of, and the relationship between, the Agency, DoJ, Ministers and the Northern Ireland Assembly and outlines the Agency's financial structure, personnel management arrangements and relationship with other agencies.

Our Sponsor Directorate also approves the Agency's Business Plan and regularly reviews the Agency's progress through regular review meetings.

### 2. Purpose of the governance framework

MPMNI summarises the purpose of the Governance Statement as being to record the stewardship of the organisation to supplement the accounts, providing a sense of how successfully it has coped with the challenge it faces. The Agency's governance framework consists of the Board operating framework, the risk management framework, financial management systems and supporting policies and procedures. The governance framework delivers the systems and processes as well as the culture and values by which the Agency is directed and managed. It sets out how the Agency monitors the achievement of its strategic objectives and considers whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The Agency's Governance Framework is set out in the next section of this Governance Statement.

## 2. Purpose of the governance framework (continued)

There is also a risk management system in place which is designed to identify the Agency's risk appetite and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Agency's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, their potential impact and to manage them effectively. The system of internal control has been in place in the Agency throughout the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the accounts.

## 3. Governance framework

### Management Board

The Agency's governance framework is overseen by the Management Board which provides collective strategic and operational leadership. The Agency's governance framework complies with the Corporate Governance Code and is based on:

- a clear organisational structure with accountability structures;
- an effective business planning process including monitoring and evaluation of progress against targets;
- strong financial management controls including delegated authority limits;
- early implementation of guidance to relevant budget holders and monthly financial reporting analysis;
- proper procurement controls and adherence to DoF guidance;
- thorough appraisal of projects, with business cases being prepared for expenditure and approved within delegations; and
- progress against performance targets and objectives which are monitored throughout the business year and a full assessment published in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts.

I am supported by the Management Board which focuses primarily on policy, planning and priority setting and the monitoring of business performance. The three Directors each have specific areas of responsibility. The two Non-Executive Members bring a good mix of previous knowledge and experience from a wide range of other organisations both public and private sector. I thank them for providing the benefit of their professional skills and advice.

The Management Board, which currently comprises six members, meets regularly and the meetings are chaired by me, the Chief Executive. The Management Board is supported by the Agency's designated Financial Shared Services Accountant, NICSHR representative and the Head of Communications who also attend the meetings.

### 3. Governance framework (continued)

#### Management Board (continued)

Attendance by members is shown below for the eight meetings of the Agency Board during 2023-24:

Position	Member	Attendance
Chief Executive	Stephen Martin	8
Director of Custodial Services	Mary Aughey	8
Director of Youth Justice Services	Colleen Heaney (from 4 March 2024)	1
Acting Director of Youth Justice Services	Kelvin Doherty (from 1 March 2023 until 30 September 2023)	4
	Colleen Heaney (from 1 October 2023 until 3 March 2024)	3
Director of Corporate Services	Paul Gibson	8
Non-Executive Member	Richard Horton	8
Non-Executive Member	Thomas Moore	8

The Terms of Reference were last reviewed in May 2023. The YJA Board also undertook a self-assessment in 2023 no issues were identified in relation to the effectiveness of the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) Management Board and its committees. It was agreed the Board would undertake a review of its effectiveness on an annual basis.

The Management Board is supported by a number of Committees working within the organisation which gives the Board members assurance over the quality of information being presented to them each month. The Committees are:

- Audit and Risk Committee;
- Communications Committee; and
- Procurement, Estates and IT Committee.

### 3. Governance framework (continued)

#### Audit and Risk Committee

I am also supported by the Agency's Audit and Risk Committee which meets three times a year with a membership of:

- the Agency's two Non-Executive Members (NEMs); and
- a Senior Civil Servant independent of the Agency from within the NICS.

Attendance by members is shown below for the three meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee during 2023-24:

Position	Member	Attendance
Non-Executive Member	Dr Richard Horton (Chair)	3
Non-Executive Member	Dr Thomas Moore	3
Independent Member	John McCord - Civil Servant in Department for Communities	2

The following were generally in attendance at all Audit and Risk Committee meetings:

Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Information and Records Management, Head of Internal Audit, and representatives from Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and Financial Services Division (FSD).

The objectives of the Committee are to advise the Accounting Officer on:

- the Agency's risk management process and preparation and updating of the risk management framework;
- the adequacy of arrangements for internal control and risk management including the preparation of the Governance Statement;
- the accounting policies;
- the review of the Annual Report and Accounts prior to submission for audit;
- recommendations identified in the Report to those Charged with Governance;
- planned activity of Internal Audit and External Audit;
- the results of internal and external audit activity including ensuring appropriate action has been taken;
- assurances relating to the corporate governance requirements; and
- anti-fraud policies, raising a concern processes and arrangements for special investigations.

The Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee were reviewed in April 2024 and formally agreed in June 2024.

### 3. Governance framework (continued)

#### Communications Committee

The Communications Committee meets regularly throughout the year. It is chaired by the Chief Executive with membership comprising representation, at a senior level, from each Directorate and from the DoJ Communications (Press Office) Team. The Committee operates under agreed Terms of Reference and meetings are recorded. Regular reports are provided to the Management Board by the Head of Communications on behalf of the Committee.

The Committee is responsible for oversight of all communications activities both internally and externally to support the Agency's strategic aims in accordance with its corporate plan. This includes:

##### *External*

- establishing and maintaining an appropriate public/media profile for the Agency consistent with the requirements of the Management Board; and
- promoting the work of the Agency to key stakeholders, the media, and to the general public.

##### *Internal*

- delivering effective internal communications across the Agency; and
- enhancing staff engagement opportunities.

The Committee also has responsibility for the oversight and delivery of the Agency's charity policy and procedures, and oversees the planning and delivery of corporate social responsibility initiatives and corporate events.

#### Procurement, Estates and IT Committee

The Procurement, Estates and IT Committee meets regularly throughout the year. It is chaired by a Director, who is also a Board member. The Committee operates under agreed Terms of Reference and meetings are recorded. The Committee provides regular updates to the Management Board.

The Committee is responsible for all issues of control, governance and associated assurances in relation to the procurement of goods and services across the Agency. It is supported by an internal Premises Forum which links regional offices and ensures local office needs are met and efficiency is maintained across the estate.

The Committee is also responsible for ensuring that the Agency's estate is commensurate with business needs and delivers value for money. In addition, it oversees the IT strategies, policies and operational requirements within the Agency to ensure they are in line with business needs and the NICS strategic direction.

### 3. Governance framework (continued)

#### Procurement, Estates and IT Committee (continued)

The role of the Committee is to:

##### ***Procurement***

- ensure best practice in the procurement and contract management of goods and services in line with the public procurement policy and guidance from DoF's Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD);
- ensure the Agency procurement strategy supports the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan;
- ensure transparency, equality of opportunity and consistency in all procurement practices;
- work towards achieving value for money through competitive tender, collaborative opportunities within the wider DoJ family etc;
- provide advice to Senior Managers on the most efficient, economic and effective process for the procurement of goods and services;
- identify areas for efficiency and establish Agency wide contracts for generic services; and
- consider all procurement proposals in relation to goods and services, IT, premises; external funding to voluntary and community groups, small grants, learning and development and consultancy.

##### ***Estates***

- carry out a fundamental review of the Agency estate, particularly in relation to Youth Justice Services Directorate (regionally-based);
- ensure the Youth Justice Services estate is fit for purpose and is of the right configuration to meet caseload;
- work towards achieving value for money through reducing the estate or by collaborative accommodation arrangements within the wider DoJ family; and
- monitor maintenance contracts in place in the JJC, Headquarters and Youth Justice Services and costs.

##### ***IT***

- ensure IT provision meets the business needs of the Agency;
- ensure the Agency's IT strategy and policies are aligned to DoJ;
- oversee the IT User Group; and
- ensure adequate arrangements are in place across all Agency premises in the interests of the security of staff, IT, records and assets.

#### 4. Risk management and internal control

The management of risk is controlled by the Agency's Management Board and Audit and Risk Committee. It is the responsibility of the Agency's Management Board to identify and control the risks faced by the Agency in order to minimise any potential issues. The format of the Agency's Risk Register is consistent with the Department's Corporate Risk Register which ensures a uniform approach across the Department in how we present and manage risk. The Agency held a Strategic Risk Workshop in October 2023 and reviewed, in depth, the Risk Register. In addition, the Agency Management Board undertakes a deep dive of one risk at each of its meetings.

The Agency employs the following structured approach to the risk management process:

- the Chief Executive and Directors are responsible for risk management within their areas. The Management Board reviews the Agency's risk appetite and the top risks as well as the Agency's compliance with best corporate governance. The Audit and Risk Committee also reviews the risks listed in the Agency's Risk Register together with the likelihood; impact; controls in place to mitigate the risks; and further action required. It also identifies emerging risks and the impact they may have on the Agency.
- the Chief Executive receives Dear Accounting Officer (DAO) letters and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Reports from DoJ/DoF which provide specific advice on issues of accountability, regularity and propriety and annual accounting exercises. These reports are reviewed, shared with staff and acted upon as necessary.
- the Management Board promotes an anti-fraud culture, supported by budget managers and their staff who are best placed to recognise the potential for fraud within the everyday operations of their teams.
- a Risk Management Policy for the Agency has been produced and ensures that the management of risk is embedded in policy making, planning and delivery of the Agency's aims and objectives. It includes a plan setting out the Agency's co-ordinated approach to risk management, what it involves and how it should be conducted.
- the 'DoJ Risk Management - A Practical Guide' has been used to provide clear approaches to risk management in the Agency. The Risk Management Policy of the Agency puts risk management at the forefront of improving its corporate governance. In this regard, corporate governance is managed and monitored at the Management Board and Audit and Risk Committee.
- the Agency has a process of delegation embedded within the Agency to ensure expenditure is being approved at the appropriate level.
- Stewardship Statements are completed at Directorate level at half and full year intervals. The purpose of these Stewardship Statements is to improve management and control by identifying management's specific responsibilities and seeking written assurances that these have been exercised with due care and attention.



#### 4. Risk management and internal control (continued)

As the Agency's Accounting Officer, I am required to provide assurance to the DoJ's Accounting Officer on the standard of internal control within the Agency. In this regard, a Sponsored Body Stewardship Statement is returned to DoJ at half and full year intervals. Both the internal Stewardship Statements and the DoJ Stewardship Statements inform the content of this Governance Statement.

Another key element of the Agency's risk and control framework is a professionally led Internal Audit function that works to Government Internal Audit Standards. It reviews the overall arrangements for managing risk, provides assurance, and reports any matters of concern to the Audit and Risk Committee. Assurance is also obtained from the external auditors who present their report to the Audit and Risk Committee following the statutory audit of the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts.

There are a number of other sources from which I draw assurance on the system of internal control. These include the work of the following independent bodies:

- Criminal Justice Inspection NI (CJINI);
- NI Children's Commissioner (NICCY);
- NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC);
- Department of Health (DoH);
- Independent Monitoring Role; and
- Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI).

There were no significant control weaknesses identified from reviews carried out by these independent bodies in 2023-24.

#### ***Information assurance***

The Agency has fully embraced the DoJ's Information Assurance policy and procedures and is represented at the DoJ Information Risk Owners Council (IROC) which comprises senior business owners across the departmental family and holds them to account for the ownership and management of information assurance risks within their respective business areas. In line with IROC requirements, the Agency has appointed a Security Manager to oversee delivery of the Information Assurance policy and procedures and to implement the Security Policy Framework. All IT systems are accredited by the DoJ Accreditation Authority Panel.

## 5. Review of effectiveness of the governance framework

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework. I have been advised throughout the year on the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Board and Audit and Risk Committee, and from reports by executive managers within the Agency who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

Information presented to the Board is fundamental for its assessment and understanding of the performance of the Agency. The Board receives a variety of standard information, and other papers, which are quality reviewed by the Board secretariat. The information received is considered to be of a high standard and allows the Board to be kept informed of any issues that it needs to be aware of to support decision making and drive improvement. The Board considers that it is fulfilling its governance requirements.

As part of the review of effectiveness of the governance framework, each Director provides a bi-annual and an annual Stewardship Statement in relation to their specific responsibilities for supporting the effectiveness of the internal control and governance environment.

Regular meetings took place throughout the year between the Agency and its Sponsor Directorate with the Chief Executive meeting monthly with the Directors and Acting Director to discuss progress against key priorities.

I have ensured the effective management of financial resources by following financial management practices and guidance issued by DoJ/DoF. Budget holders also received monthly management accounts and updated financial forecasts throughout the year.

My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control has been informed by the reports produced by Internal Audit. The Head of Internal Audit provides an Annual Report and Opinion on the level of assurance that can be provided based on the work done. For the 2023-24 year, an overall satisfactory opinion was provided.

During 2023-24, the following audits were completed by Internal Audit:

Area	Status
Creditors Payments including Gifts and Hospitality	Satisfactory
Government Procurement Card (YJA and Woodlands)	Satisfactory
Complaints Handling (YJA and Woodlands)	Satisfactory

The level of assurance provided by each rating is as follows:

**Satisfactory** - overall there is an adequate and effective system of governance, risk management and control. While there is some residual risk identified this should not significantly impact on the achievement of objectives.

## 5. Review of effectiveness of the governance framework (continued)

**Limited** - there is an inadequate and/or ineffective system of governance, risk management and control in place. Therefore there is significant risk that the system will fail to meet its objectives.

The recommendations made in the Internal Audit Reports carried out in 2023-24 have all been accepted by the Agency. All recommendations have been drawn up into Action Plans for implementation, the progress of which is reported to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Looking ahead the following internal audit reviews will be carried out in 2024-25:

- Managing and Minimising Physical Restraint - Woodlands
- GDPR in terms of CCTV
- Overtime

In addition to these assurances, the Audit and Risk Committee receives from the Northern Ireland Audit Office a 'Report to Those Charged with Governance' which includes observations and recommendations on internal controls arising from the annual audit of the Annual Report and Accounts.

The outcomes of the following reviews have in particular provided me with further assurance of the effectiveness of the governance framework:

- In 2023-24, independent monthly monitoring visits to JJC were undertaken by a retired senior member of the management team from DoJ's Reducing Offending Directorate. These visits are to ensure that young people are being appropriately treated and managed in accordance with the aims of the Centre. A report of each visit was presented to and reviewed by the Agency's Management Board. These reports have been encouraging and have demonstrated that young people are being appropriately treated and managed.

## 6. Budget position and Authority

The Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2024, which received Royal Assent on 14 March 2024, together with the Northern Ireland Spring Supplementary Estimates 2023-24 which were agreed by the Assembly on 9 April 2024, provide the statutory authority for the Executive's final 2023-24 expenditure plans. The Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2024 also provides a Vote on Account to authorise expenditure by departments and other bodies into the early months of the 2024-25 financial year.

## 7. Significant internal control issues

Effective governance arrangements and senior oversight are maintained to ensure appropriate and timely responses to such issues that arise.

There were no significant internal control issues during 2023-24.

## 8. Accounting officer statement on assurance

The Agency has established a robust assurance framework that includes primary assurance through line management structures on the achievement of objectives. This primary assurance is supplemented by secondary assurances provided through oversight of management activity, and by Internal Audit operating to Government Internal Audit Standards. They deliver an agreed prioritised programme of systems-based audits covering the Agency's systems over time. The Head of Internal Audit provides me with an Annual Report and her professional opinion on the level of assurance that she can provide based on the work done. The Head of Internal Audit forms her professional opinion on the basis of the Internal Audit work completed over a three-year period and she has provided overall satisfactory assurance.

The Agency has maintained a framework of control to ensure that there are sufficient control processes in place to provide assurance over financial and operational risks, as well as performing a regular review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. I am therefore satisfied that I have effective governance arrangements and the necessary policies and procedures in place to provide a sound system of internal control to support the Agency in delivering its statutory duties and to meet the aims and objectives set by the Minister, while safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in my letter of delegation and in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

## **REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT**

### **REMUNERATION REPORT**

#### **Remuneration policy**

The pay remit for the Northern Ireland Civil Service, including senior civil servants (SCS), is normally approved by the Minister of Finance. Following the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's 27th April 2023 Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) on the budget, the NI public sector pay policy guidance was published on 31st May 2023 in FD (DoF) 05/23. This was subsequently updated on 12th March 2024 in FD (DoF) 04/24 to reflect the return of Executive Ministers and revised departmental budgets.

Annual NICS pay awards are made in the context of the wider public sector pay policy. The pay award for NICS non-industrial staff, including SCS, for 2023/24 has been finalised and is due to be paid in June 2024. The 2023/24 pay award for NICS industrial staff has also been finalised and was paid in May 2024.

The pay of NICS staff is based on a system of pay scales for each grade, including SCS, containing a number of pay points from minimum to maximum, allowing progression towards the maximum based on performance.

The Chief Executive is the only member of staff within YJA who is a member of the SCS. Staff at Grade 7 and below fall within the same pay settlement arrangements as NICS staff at the same grades.

#### **Service contracts**

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

Unless otherwise stated, the officials covered by this report hold appointments that are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in consideration of the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme<sup>1</sup>

Dr Richard Horton and Dr Thomas Moore were appointed as Non-Executive Members for a fixed period of three years from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026.

<sup>1</sup> [Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland \(nicscommissioners.org\)](https://www.nicscommissioners.org)

## Remuneration and pension entitlements - Officials

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior management of the Agency.

*[Audited information]*

<b><u>Single total figure of remuneration</u></b>				<b>2023-24</b>
<b>Officials and NEMs</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)</b>	<b>*Pension Benefits (to nearest £1,000)</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Stephen Martin</b> Chief Executive	80-85	-	(14)	65-70
<b>Mary Aughey</b> Director of Custodial Services	60-65	-	24	85-90
<b>Colleen Heaney</b> Director of Youth Justice Services (from 4 March 2024)  Acting Director of Youth Justice Services (from 1 October 2023 to 3 March 2024)	25-30 (full year equivalent 50-55)	-	(1)	25-30 (full year equivalent 50-55)
<b>Kelvin Doherty</b> Acting Director of Youth Justice Services (from 1 A 2023 to 30 September 2023)	25-30 (full year equivalent 50-55)	-	23	45-50 (full year equivalent 75-80)
<b>Paul Gibson</b> Director of Corporate Services	55-60	-	(13)	40-45
<b>Dr Richard Horton</b> Non-Executive Member	5-10	0.3	-	5-10
<b>Dr Thomas Moore</b> Non-Executive Member	5-10	0.5	-	5-10

## Remuneration and pension entitlements - Officials (continued)

<u>Single total figure of remuneration</u>				2022-23
Officials and NEMs	Salary	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	*Pension Benefits (to nearest £1,000)	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Stephen Martin</b> Chief Executive	75-80	-	(3)	70-75
<b>Paul McStravick</b> Acting Director of Custodial Services (until 28 February 2023)	55-60 (full year equivalent 60-65)	-	13	70-75 (full year equivalent 75-80)
<b>Mary Aughey</b> Director of Youth Justice Services (until 28 February 2023) Director of Custodial Services (from 1 March 2023)	60-65	-	23	80-85
<b>Kelvin Doherty</b> Acting Director of Youth Justice Services (from 1 March 2023)	0-5 (full year equivalent 50-55)	-	2	5-10 (full year equivalent 50-55)
<b>Paul Gibson</b> Director of Corporate Services	55-60	-	(31)	20-25
<b>Hilary McCartan</b> Non-Executive Member	5-10	0.1	-	5-10
<b>Nick Fullerton</b> Non-Executive Member	5-10	0.3	-	5-10

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

**Salary**

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any severance or ex gratia payments. This report is based on accrued payments made by the Agency and thus recorded in these accounts.

**Benefits in kind**

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the Agency and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. The benefits in kind shown above are in respect of expenses incurred on Agency business including approved mileage claims and parking. In line with revised guidance from HMRC for Non-Executive Members (NEMs) with effect from 1 April 2019, expenditure on benefits in kind has been

grossed up for individual NEMs and PAYE/NIC rules applied in line with normal payroll procedures.

## Fair pay disclosures

### Pay ratios

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

#### [Audited information]

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in the Agency in the financial year 2023-24 was £80,000 to £85,000 (2022-23: £75,000 to £80,000).

The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation's workforce is disclosed below:

<b>2023-24</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>75<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>
Total remuneration (£)	29,258	34,126	39,451
Pay ratio	2.82:1	2.42:1	2.09:1

<b>2023-23</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>75<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>
Total remuneration (£)	28,706	34,017	38,650
Pay ratio	2.70:1	2.28:1	2.01:1

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.

The values for the salary component of remuneration for the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, median and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile were £29,258 (2022-23: £28,706), £34,126 (2022-23: £34,017) and £39,451 (2022-23: £38,650) respectively.

No employees (2022-23: None) received remuneration in excess of the highest paid Director.

Remuneration ranged from £21,053 to £80-£85,000 (2022-23: £20,000 to £75-80,000).



**Percentage change in remuneration**

Reporting bodies are also required to disclose the percentage change from the previous financial year in the:

- a) salary and allowances, and
- b) performance pay and bonuses,

of the highest paid director and of their employees as a whole.

The percentage changes in respect of the Agency are shown in the following table. It should be noted that the calculation for the highest paid director is based on the mid-point of the band within which their remuneration fell in each year.

<b>Percentage change for:</b>	<b>2023-24 v 2022-23</b>	<b>2022-23 v 2021-22</b>
Average employee salary and allowances	0.14%	0.1%
Highest paid director's salary and allowances	6%	0%
Average employee performance pay and bonuses*	0%	0%

\* The Northern Ireland Civil Service special bonus scheme was withdrawn with effect from 31 March 2021.

## Pension entitlements - Officials

[Audited information]

Officials	Accrued pension at age as at 31/3/24 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/24**	CETV at 31/3/23*	Real increase in CETV	Employer contribution to partnership pension account	Nearest £100
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		
<b>Stephen Martin</b> Chief Executive	25-30 plus a lump sum of 70-75	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	645	605	(22)	-	
<b>Mary Aughey</b> Director of Custodial Services	20-25 plus a lump sum of 30-35	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	381	422	16	-	
<b>Colleen Heaney</b> Director of Youth Justice Services (from 4 March 2024)	10-15 plus a lump sum of 0-5	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	143	143	(1)	-	
Acting Director of Youth Justice Services (from 1 October 2023 to 3 March 2024)							
<b>Kelvin Doherty</b> Acting Director of Youth Justice Services (from 1 March 2023)	10-15 plus a lump sum of 0-5	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	161	127	17	-	
<b>Paul Gibson</b> Director of Corporate Services	25-30 plus a lump sum of 70-75	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	641	631	(20)	-	

\* Or date of joining if later.

\*\* Or date of leaving if earlier.

Note: Any members affected by the [Public Service Pensions Remedy](#) may have been reported in the 2015 scheme for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 in 2022-23, but are reported in the legacy scheme for the same period in 2023-24.

No pension benefits are provided to the Non-Executive Members.

## Compensation for loss of office

There were no compensation benefits paid by the Agency to any members of the Management Board during the financial year.

### ***Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes***

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

The alpha pension scheme was initially 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 members of the Classic, Premium, Classic Plus and Nuvos pension arrangements (collectively known as the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS(NI)]) also moved to alpha from that date. Transitional protection measures introduced alongside these reforms meant any members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age remained in their previous scheme arrangement (full protection) and those who were between 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 (tapered protection).

### ***McCloud Judgment***

In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional protections put in place back in 2015 that allowed older workers to remain in their original scheme, were discriminatory on the basis of age. As a result, steps have been taken by the Department of Finance to remedy this discrimination.

The Department has now made regulations which remedy the discrimination by:

- ensuring all active members are treated equally for future service as members of the reformed alpha scheme only from 1 April 2022, and
- providing each eligible member with options to have their pension entitlements for the period when the discrimination existed between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the remedy period) retrospectively calculated under either the current (reformed) scheme rules, or the old (pre-reform) legacy rules which existed before 2015.

This means that all active NICS Pension Scheme members are in the same pension scheme, alpha, from 1 April 2022 onwards, regardless of age. This removes the discrimination going forwards in providing equal pension provision for all scheme members.

The Department is now implementing the second part of the remedy, which addresses the discrimination which was incurred by affected members between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

Eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) will now be entitled to a choice of alternative pension benefits in relation to that period. i.e. calculated under the pre-reformed PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' rules or alternatively calculated under the reformed alpha rules. As part of this 'retrospective' remedy most active members will now receive a choice about their remedy period benefits at the point of retirement. This is known as the Deferred Choice Underpin

**Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes (continued)**

(DCU). For those members who already have pension benefits in payment in relation to the Remedy Period, they will receive an Immediate Choice which will be issued by 31 March 2025.

At this stage, allowance has not yet been made within CETVs for this remedy. Further information on the remedy will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which, once published, are available at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/dof-resource-accounts>.

As part of the remedy involves rolling back all remediable service into the relevant legacy PCSPS(NI) arrangement for the 7-Year Remedy Period, the value of pension benefits may change for affected members and some figures previously reported may change. The 2023-24 pension disclosures above are calculated based on HM Treasury guidance using;

- a. Rolled back opening balance
- b. Rolled back closing balance
- c. CETV calculated by CSP on the rolled back basis
- d. No restatement of prior year figures where disclosed.

**Alpha**

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 current accrual rate is 2.32%.

From 1 April 2015, all new entrants joining the NICS can choose between membership of alpha or joining a 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (Partnership Pension Account).

**Information on the PCSPS(NI) – Closed Scheme**

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 were eligible to be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' legacy defined benefit arrangements (Classic, Premium and Classic Plus). From April 2011, pensions payable under these arrangements have been reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. New entrants who joined on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 will have chosen between membership of Premium or joining the Partnership Pension Account.

New entrants who joined on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the legacy PCSPS(NI) Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a Partnership Pension Account. Nuvos was also a CARE arrangement in which members accrued pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate of accrual was 2.3%.

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

**Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes (continued)**

retirement. For Premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike Classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic Plus is essentially a variation of Premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per Classic.

**Partnership Pension Account**

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. The normal scheme pension age in alpha is linked to the member’s State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. The Scheme Pension age is 60 for any pension accrued in the legacy **Classic**, **Premium**, and **Classic Plus** arrangements and 65 for any benefits accrued in **Nuvos**. 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).

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 2023 was 6.7% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2024.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 are as follows:

**Scheme Year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands)		Contribution rates – All members from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
From	To	
£0	£26,302.49	4.6%
£26,302.50	£59,849.99	5.45%
£59,850.00	£160,964.99	7.35%
£160,965.00 and above		8.05%

**Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes (continued)****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) Regulations 1996 (as amended) and do not take account of any actual or potential benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may have been due when pension benefits are taken. The Lifetime Allowance will end in April 2024 and will be replaced by the Lump Sum Allowance and The Lump Sum And Death Benefit Allowance.

HM Treasury provides the assumptions for discount rates for calculating CETVs payable from the public service pension schemes. On 27 April 2023, HM Treasury published guidance on the basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes. In their guidance of 27 April 2023, HM Treasury advised that, with immediate effect, the discount rate adopted for calculating CETVs should be in line with the new SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation, superseding the previous SCAPE discount rate of 2.4% above CPI inflation. All else being the same, a lower SCAPE discount rate leads to higher CETVs. The HM Treasury Guidance of 27 April 2023 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basis-for-setting-the-discount-rates-for-calculating-cash-equivalent-transfer-values-payable-by-public-service-pension-schemes/basis-for-setting-the-discount-rates-for-calculating-cash-equivalent-transfer-values-payable-by-public-service-pension-schemes>.

**Real increase in CETV**

This reflects the increase in CETV that is 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 (which therefore disregards the effect of any changes in factors).

## STAFF REPORT

## Staff costs

[Audited information]

			2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
	Note	Permanently Employed Staff	Others	Total
			Total	Total
Wages and salaries		7,569	361	7,930
Social security costs		819	–	819
Other pension costs		2,105	–	2,105
<b>Total costs*</b>	2	<b>10,493</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>10,854</b>

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

The NICS main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes, but the Agency 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 2020 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in October 2023. The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027.

The Cost Cap Mechanism (CCM) is a measure of scheme costs and determines whether member costs or scheme benefits require adjustment to maintain costs within a set corridor. Reforms were made to the CCM which was applied to the 2020 scheme valuations and included the introduction of a reformed-scheme-only cost control mechanism which assesses just the costs relating to reformed schemes (alpha for the NICS) and introduced an economic check. Prior to the cost control mechanism reforms, legacy scheme (PCSPS(NI)) costs associated with active members were also captured in the mechanism. The reformed-scheme-only design and the economic check were applied to the 2020 scheme valuations for the devolved public sector pension schemes, including the NICS pension scheme. The 2020 scheme valuation outcome was that the core cost cap cost of the scheme lies within the 3% cost cap corridor. As there is no breach of the cost control mechanism, there is no requirement for the Department of Finance to consult on changes to the scheme. Further information can be found on the Department of Finance website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-pension-scheme-valuations>.

**Staff costs (continued)**

For 2023-24, employers' contributions of £2,010,023 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2022-23: £2,093,404) at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £4,148 (2022-23: £4,289) were paid to one or more of the panel of two appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2022-23: 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay. The partnership pension account offers the member the opportunity of having a 'free' pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the member does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match member contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings.

Employer contributions of £Nil, 0.5% (2022-23: £Nil, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £Nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were £Nil.

No persons (2022-23: three person) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £Nil (2022-23: £24,664).

**Staff turnover**

The Agency staff turnover percentage (the total number of people that have left the Agency including those who have moved within the NICS) for 2023-24 is 7.4%, and the general turnover percentage (the people who have left the Agency and have not gone elsewhere in the NICS) is 9.9%, This has been calculated by NICS HR based on the Cabinet Office Guidance on calculations for Turnover in the Civil Service.

	2023-24 %	2022-23 %
<b>Agency Turnover</b>	9.9%	12.7%
<b>General Turnover</b>	7.4%	10.8%



## Average number of persons employed

[Audited information]

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

			2023-24 Number	2022-23 Number
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
Operational staff	186	6	192	201
Administration and support staff	15	-	15	15
<b>Total*</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>216</b>

\* Of the total, nil staff are engaged on capital projects (2022-23 Nil).

## Staff composition

[Audited information]

The number of persons employed was as follows:

	Female staff	Male staff	At 31 March 2024 Total staff	Female staff	Male staff	At 31 March 2023 Total staff
Agency Board	2	4	6	2	4	6
Senior Civil Service	-	1	1	-	1	1
Agency Employees	127	85	212	131	89	220

## Managing attendance

The Agency had an overall sickness absence rate of 19.1 days lost per employee in 2022/23. Annual sickness absence figures can be found in the “Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2022/23” report at [Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2022/23 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/sickness-absence-in-the-northern-ireland-civil-service-2022-23). The NICS Sickness Absence Report for the 2023-24 financial year is due to be published later in 2024 and Departmental/Agency reports will be available shortly afterwards.

## Employee engagement

When launching the 2023 NICS People Survey in April 2023, the Head of the Civil Service issued a message that the frequency of the Survey was changing from yearly to every other year to allow for proper targeting of actions, and so a People Survey is not due to take place in 2024. The 2023 NICS People Survey is therefore the most recent survey and was conducted by NISRA across the nine NICS ministerial Departments as well as the Public Prosecution Service and the Health & Safety Executive for NI. All staff working

## Employee engagement (continued)

in these organisations were invited to take part in the survey. For YJA, all (2021: all) permanent staff were invited to complete the survey, of which 86 (2021: 78) participated, a response rate of 42% (2021: 34%). The Employee Engagement Index (EEI) is the weighted average of the responses to the five employee engagement questions, and it ranges from 0% to 100%. YJA responses indicated an Employee Engagement Index of 56% (2021: 56%), compared to the NICS average of 54% (2021: 57%). The full survey can be accessed at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/nics-people-survey-results>.

## Staff policies

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

The NICS values and welcomes diversity and is committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace for all.

The NICS Diversity Champions Network includes senior colleagues as designated Diversity Champions for each of the nine NICS departments, as well as four thematic leads for gender, race and ethnicity, disability and LGBTQ+. The network alongside the NICS corporate HR function, People and Organisational Development, develops and delivers an annual NICS Diversity Action Plan, which sets out priorities for action by diversity and inclusion theme and cross-cutting priorities.

Equality is a cornerstone consideration in the development and review of all HR policies which determine how staff are recruited and appointed, their terms and conditions, how they are managed and developed, assessed, recognised and rewarded. Further information is available in the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

As part of the NICS' efforts to ensure equality of opportunity, the NICS continually conducts comprehensive reviews into the composition of its workforce and recruitment activity, publishing a wide range of data. The statistics are available on the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\)'s website](#).

The NICS continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998, which includes submission of an annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return and a tri-annual Article 55 Review to the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI), both of which assess the composition of the NICS workforce and the composition of applicants and appointees. Although not a statutory requirement, the NICS also conducts a similar formal review of the gender profile of its workforce. The findings from both tri-annual reviews are published in the NICS [Workforce Review](#)

The NICS uses the findings of all the equality monitoring and analysis to inform its programme of targeted outreach activity to address any areas of under-representation. As a public authority, the NICS has due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in carrying out its functions. Further information on the department's equality scheme is available on its website [Department of Justice](#).

## Employment, training, and advancement of disabled persons

The NICS is a lead partner of Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) and in 2023 was accredited as a [Disability Positive](#) employer.

The NICS delivers an annual programme of communications and training on disability awareness and understanding and has policies in place to support inclusive workplaces. A review of the NICS reasonable adjustment process for in-work support commenced in 2023 and a new reasonable adjustment policy and supporting resources is anticipated to launch during 2024. The NICS Disability Working Group, which includes representatives from the disability sector and colleagues with lived experience is a key stakeholder in the reasonable adjustment policy review.

The NICS is committed to the employment of disabled people and offers work experience for disabled people through the [NICS Work Experience Scheme for Disabled People](#) and annual participation in International Job Shadow Day (IJSJ).

To encourage job applications from disabled people, positive action advertising and targeted advertising alongside a programme of outreach are used. The NICS operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) which ensures a guaranteed number of disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview. Further information can be found on the “Information for disabled applicants” section of the [NICS recruit website](#). All selection panel members complete mandatory recruitment and selection training, and appointments to the NICS are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition, adhering to the [Recruitment Code](#).

## Employee consultation and Trade Union relationships

The Department of Finance is responsible for the NICS Industrial Relations Policy. People & Organisational Development consults on HR policy with all recognised Trade Unions and local departmental arrangements are in place to enable consultation on matters specific to a department or individual business area.

## Employee relations

The Agency recognises the importance of good employee relations and is committed to effective employee communications. Management Board meetings are rotated around all Agency premises and are preceded by Valuing People Group meetings which give local staff an opportunity for face-to-face discussion with Board members on a range of topical issues.

Throughout 2023-24 the Agency published regular updates, staff bulletins and Board briefings via e-mail and staff intranet. Managers also held regular team meetings to communicate with staff, receive feedback, and give staff the opportunity to raise any issues for the attention of senior management. Taken together, these served as a communications framework to deliver information to staff on a timely basis. Management and Trade Union representatives also meet as required to ensure continued good industrial relations.

## Learning and development

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

Development and delivery of generic staff training is centralised in NICS<sup>1</sup>HR<sup>1</sup>. Training is delivered using a variety of learning delivery channels (including classroom delivery, on-line, and virtual classrooms), providing flexible access to learning. Coherent learning pathways are aligned to both corporate need and the NICS Competency Framework.

Talent management is a key theme and highlights the importance of the development conversation between managers and staff, with a number of resources available within a talent management toolkit. The NICS offers a wide range of career development opportunities through mentoring, secondment and interchange opportunities, elective transfers, temporary promotion, job rotation and job shadowing.

## Application of Business Appointment Rules (BARs)

The NICS Standards of Conduct Policy, (Section 8 and Annexes 4) sets out the rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments, employment or self-employment for staff after they leave the NI Civil Service, including procedures to make staff aware of these rules and provides that the Permanent Secretary of the Department is responsible for the effective operation of the Business Appointment Rules within their Department. Further detail is available in the [NICS Standards of Conduct Policy](#). In compliance with Business Appointment rules, the department is transparent in the advice given to individual applications for senior staff, including special advisers. Advice regarding specific business appointments has been published on [Business Appointment Rules](#). During 2023-24, there were 15 staff exits from the Civil Service, with no applications from Senior Civil Servants within the Agency.

## Health and safety

The Agency is committed to providing an environment, that is, as far as possible, safe and free from risk to health for staff, young people and visitors. The Agency accepts the responsibilities as outlined within the scope of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and does all it can to ensure the full commitment at all levels of management and the cooperation of all members of staff in order to meet its obligations under this legislation. The Agency has developed an effective management system based on the HSG65 management model issued by the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI). This system ensures that legislative requirements are met and relies on the commitment of management and staff at all levels. Within our custodial environment the governance and delivery of health and safety requirements is further supported at an operational level by the establishment of a Health and Safety Committee. This well-established forum assists the Director and Senior Management Team in the discharge of their health and safety responsibilities specific to Woodlands, Juvenile Justice Centre. The Agency also continues to work closely with the HSENI on related matters.

Basic health and safety training continues to be provided via e-learning including Fire Safety, Office Safety and Display Screen Equipment Awareness. In addition, bespoke Fire

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<sup>1</sup> NICS<sup>1</sup>HR is the NICS' centralised human resources operational delivery function, falling under the responsibility of the Department of Finance

**Health and safety (continued)**

Safety training, specific to Woodlands JJC, was provided to all staff within the Centre. Completion of this suite of courses is mandatory for all staff. Additional training for specialist roles and training needs identified by the risk assessment process will continue to be provided by NICSHR L&D.

**Expenditure on consultancy**

The Agency incurred no expenditure on consultancy during 2023-24 or 2022-23.

**Off-payroll engagements**

There were no off-payroll engagements requiring disclosure during 2023-24 or 2022-23.

**Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes - exit packages**

*[Audited information]*

There were no exit packages requiring disclosure during 2023-24 or 2022-23.

**ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT****OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY DISCLOSURES****Losses and special payments**

*[Audited information]*

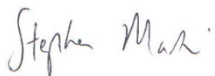
There were no losses or special payments that require disclosure in 2023-24 or 2022-23.

**Remote contingent liabilities**

*[Audited information]*

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of International Accounting Standard (IAS) 37 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*, the Agency also reports liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of a contingent liability. The Agency has no such liabilities.

Note 15 provides further details regarding the contingent liabilities that are included within the financial statements.

**ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

**Stephen Martin**  
**Chief Executive and Accounting Officer**  
**27 June 2024**

**THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL  
TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY****Opinion on financial statements**

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of Youth Justice Agency for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the Youth Justice Agency's financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

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 Youth Justice Agency affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Department of Justice directions issued thereunder.

**Opinion on regularity**

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

**Basis 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 and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies 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 my certificate.

My staff and I are independent of Youth Justice Agency in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, 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 AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Youth Justice Agency's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Youth Justice Agency'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 Youth Justice Agency is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Financial 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 Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

### 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 Accounting Officer is 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 certificate 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 AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)

### Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

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

### Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of Youth Justice Agency and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability 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 the Government Financial Reporting Manual 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 Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

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

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- ensuring the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report is prepared in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework; and
- assessing the Youth Justice Agency'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 Youth Justice Agency will not continue to be provided in the future.

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

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

My objectives are to obtain 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 Youth Justice Agency through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002.

**THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)**

- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on Youth Justice Agency'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 Youth Justice Agency'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 posting of unusual journals;
- 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 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; and
- 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;

**THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR  
GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)**

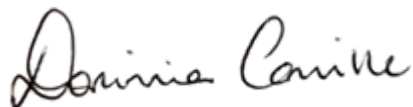
- assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

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.

**Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



*Dorinnia Carville*  
*Comptroller and Auditor General*  
*Northern Ireland Audit Office*  
*106 University Street*  
*BELFAST*  
*BT7 1EU*  
*Date 1 July 2024*

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure****For the year ended 31 March 2024**

This account summarises the expenditure and income generated and consumed on an accruals basis. It also includes other comprehensive income and expenditure, which include changes to the values of non-current assets and other financial instruments that cannot yet be recognised as income or expenditure.

		2023-24	2022-23
	<b>Note</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Revenue from contracts with customers	4	(3)	(4)
Other operating income	4	(35)	(116)
<b>Total operating income</b>		<b>(38)</b>	<b>(120)</b>
Staff costs	2	10,854	10,652
Purchase of goods and services	2	3,471	3,546
Depreciation and impairment charges	2	1,487	1,137
Provisions expense	2	226	(41)
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>		<b>16,038</b>	<b>15,294</b>
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>		<b>16,000</b>	<b>15,174</b>
Finance expense	2	5	(41)
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>16,005</b>	<b>15,133</b>
Audit notional costs		25	19
Other notional costs		604	609
<b>Total notional costs</b>		<b>629</b>	<b>628</b>
<b>Net expenditure for the year including notionals</b>		<b>16,634</b>	<b>15,761</b>
<b>Other comprehensive net expenditure</b>			
Items that will not be reclassified to Net operating expenditure:			
- net (gain) on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	5	(1,061)	(2,043)
- net (gain) on revaluation of intangibles	6	-	(1)
<b>Comprehensive net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>15,573</b>	<b>13,717</b>

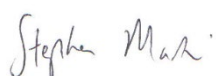
The notes on pages 83 to 105 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2024

This statement presents the financial position of the Youth Justice Agency. It comprises three main components: assets owned or controlled; liabilities owed to other bodies; and equity, the remaining value of the entity.

	Note	31 March 2024 £000	31 March 2023 £000
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	5	22,985	22,819
Intangible assets	6	5	8
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>22,990</b>	<b>22,827</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Trade and other receivables	9	148	166
Cash and cash equivalents	8	2	2
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>23,140</b>	<b>22,995</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	(3,044)	(2,597)
Provisions	11	(573)	(377)
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>(3,617)</b>	<b>(2,974)</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>19,523</b>	<b>20,021</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Provisions	11	(455)	(406)
Other payables	10	(350)	(228)
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>(805)</b>	<b>(634)</b>
<b>Total assets less total liabilities</b>		<b>18,718</b>	<b>19,387</b>
<b>Taxpayers' equity and other reserves</b>			
General Fund		10,563	11,890
Revaluation Reserve		8,155	7,497
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>18,718</b>	<b>19,387</b>



**Stephen Martin**  
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

**27 June 2024**

The notes on pages 83 to 105 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of Cash Flows

### For the year ended 31 March 2024

The Statement of Cash Flows shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Agency during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Agency generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of service costs and the extent to which these operations are funded by way of income from the recipients of services provided by the Agency. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash inflows and outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Agency's future public service delivery.

	Note	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net expenditure for the year		(16,634)	(15,761)
Adjustment for non-cash transactions	3	2,339	1,677
Decrease/(Increase) in trade and other receivables	9	18	12
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables	10	657	183
Use of provisions	11	(92)	(22)
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(13,712)</b>	<b>(13,911)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(147)	(263)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	-	-
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>(147)</b>	<b>(263)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - current year		14,275	14,466
Capital element of payments in respect of finance leases		(291)	(376)
<b>Net financing</b>		<b>13,984</b>	<b>14,090</b>
<b>Net (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period before adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>(84)</b>
Receipts due to the Consolidated Fund		2	-
Payments of amounts due to the Consolidated Fund		(2)	-
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period after adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>(84)</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of period</b>	8	<b>(155)</b>	<b>(71)</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of period</b>	8	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(155)</b>

The notes on pages 83 to 105 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

### For the year ended 31 March 2024

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Agency, analysed into 'general fund reserves' (i.e. those reserves that reflect a contribution from the Consolidated Fund). The Revaluation Reserve reflects the change in asset values that have not been recognised as income or expenditure. The General Fund represents the total assets less liabilities of the Agency, to the extent that the total is not represented by other reserves and financing items.

	Note	General Fund £000	Revaluation Reserve £000	Taxpayers' Equity £000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>		<b>12,313</b>	<b>5,697</b>	<b>18,010</b>
Net Assembly Funding		14,466	-	<b>14,466</b>
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(15,761)	2,044	<b>(13,717)</b>
Auditor's remuneration		19	-	<b>19</b>
Other notionals		609	-	<b>609</b>
Transfer between reserves		244	(244)	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>		<b>11,890</b>	<b>7,497</b>	<b>19,387</b>
Net Assembly Funding		14,275	-	<b>14,275</b>
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(16,634)	1,061	<b>(15,573)</b>
Auditor's remuneration		25	-	<b>25</b>
Other notionals		604	-	<b>604</b>
Transfer between reserves		403	(403)	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>		<b>10,563</b>	<b>8,155</b>	<b>18,718</b>

The notes on pages 83 to 105 form part of these accounts.



## Notes to the Accounts

### Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2023-24 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Youth Justice Agency Northern Ireland for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Agency are described below. They have been applied consistently in the year and the preceding year in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts unless otherwise stated.

#### 1.1 Accounting convention

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

The accounts are stated in sterling, which is the Agency's functional and presentational currency. Unless otherwise noted, the amounts shown in these financial statements are in thousands of pounds sterling (£000).

#### 1.2 Property, plant and equipment

Expenditure on property, plant and equipment of over £1,000 is capitalised. Where material the grouping of a range of property, plant and equipment has also been undertaken in respect of some personal computers, printers, office furniture and equipment.

In compliance with IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment, subsequent expenditure on an asset which does not meet the criteria of enhancement or improvement is treated as revenue spend.

On initial recognition property, plant and equipment are measured at cost including any expenditure, such as installation, directly attributable to bringing them into working condition. Items classified as 'under construction' are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position to the extent that money has been paid or a liability has been incurred.

All property, plant and equipment are carried at fair value.

Land and buildings are subject to professional valuation at least once every five years and are re-valued using indices in the intervening years. Properties regarded by the Agency as operational are valued on the basis of existing use, or where this cannot be assessed because there is no market for the property, its depreciated replacement cost. Properties regarded by the Agency as non-operational are valued on the basis of open market value, and where a sale is probable, disclosed as Assets Held for Sale.

### 1.3 Intangible assets

Expenditure on computer software licenses lasting more than one year and costing more than £1,000 is capitalised and classified as intangible assets.

All intangible assets are carried at fair value. Software licences are revalued annually using appropriate indices provided by the Office for National Statistics.

### 1.4 Revaluation Reserve

Upward revaluations are credited to the Revaluation Reserve and permanent reductions in the value of property, plant and equipment are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Any subsequent revaluation of assets is credited to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent that it reverses previous revaluation decreases recognised as an expense.

### 1.5 Depreciation and amortisation

All property, plant and equipment and intangible assets are depreciated/amortised at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives. Assets in the course of construction are depreciated from the point when the asset is brought into use.

Estimated useful lives, which are reviewed regularly, are:

<b>Asset category</b>	<b>Useful Life</b>
Land	No depreciation
Buildings	Up to 55 years
Vehicles, plant and machinery	4-15 years
Information Technology	3-10 years
Intangible Assets	5 years

### 1.6 Realised element of depreciation from Revaluation Reserve

Depreciation is charged to expenditure on the revalued amount of property, plant and equipment. An element of depreciation therefore arises due to the increase in valuation and is in excess of the depreciation that would be charged on the historical cost of assets. The amount relating to this excess is a realised gain on disposal and is transferred from the Revaluation Reserve to the General Fund.

### 1.7 Value Added Tax

Where output VAT is charged or input VAT is recoverable, the amounts are stated net of VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the relevant expenditure category or included in the capitalised purchase cost of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets. VAT is recoverable on a Departmental basis.

## 1.8 Provisions

Provision is made for legal or constructive obligations, which are of uncertain timing or amount at the reporting date, on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation.

The Agency is required to account for the cost of paying pensions of employees who retire early from the date of their retirement until they reach normal pensionable age and in some cases for the lifetime of the retired staff member and his/her spouse. For all new early retirement cases, the Agency provides in full for the cost of meeting pensions up to normal retirement age. The total cost is recognised in the year the decision is taken.

## 1.9 Contingent liabilities

In accordance with IAS 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets, the Agency discloses as contingent liabilities, potential future obligations arising from past obligating events where the existence of such obligations remain uncertain pending the outcome of future events outside the Agency's control, unless their likelihood is considered to be remote.

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

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

## 1.10 Third-party assets

Third-party assets are assets for which the Agency acts as custodian or trustee, but in which neither the Agency nor Government more generally has a direct beneficial interest. Third-party assets are not public assets, and hence are not recorded in the primary financial statements. In the interests of general disclosure and transparency, details of the Agency's third-party assets are provided in Note 17.

## 1.11 Financing

The Agency is primarily resourced by funds approved by the Assembly through the annual Supply process. Resources are drawn down each month to meet expenditure requirements and are credited to the General Fund.

## 1.12 Classification of Income and Expenditure

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Agency only includes programme income and expenditure. The classification of income or expenditure as programme follows the definition set by the Department of Finance (DoF).

## 1.13 Income

### Revenue from contracts with customers

Revenue is recognised at an amount that reflects the consideration to which the Agency is expected to be entitled in exchange for transferring goods or services to a customer. For each contract with a customer, the Agency: identifies the contract with a customer; identifies the performance obligations in the contract; determines the transaction price; allocates the transaction price to the separate performance obligations on the basis of the relative stand-alone selling price of each distinct good or service to be delivered; and recognises revenue when or as each performance obligation is satisfied in a manner that depicts the transfer to the customer of the goods or services promised.

### *Sale of goods and services*

Revenue from the sale of goods and services is recognised either:

- at the point in time when the customer obtains control of the goods, which is generally at the time of delivery; or
- over time as the services are rendered based on either a fixed price or an agreed rate.

### Other operating income

Other operating income is income which relates directly to the operating activities of the Agency including:

#### *Rental income*

Rent revenue from properties is recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

#### *Other income*

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

## 1.14 Staff costs

Under IAS19 (revised) Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the costs of any untaken leave as at the reporting date.

## 1.15 Pension costs

Employees of the Agency are covered by the provisions of the NICS pension arrangements.

The NICS pension arrangements are defined benefit schemes which are unfunded. The Agency recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis

### 1.15 Pension costs (continued)

over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the NICS pension arrangements of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the NICS pension arrangements. In respect of defined contribution schemes, the Agency recognises the contributions payable for the year.

Further details are contained in the Staff Report and Note 2 to the Accounts.

### 1.16 Leases

In 2022-23 the Agency adopted the new leasing standard, IFRS 16 for the first time, introducing a single lease accounting model that requires a lessee to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases (apart from the exemptions listed below).

#### ***Scope and exclusions***

At inception of a contract, the Agency assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time. To assess whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, the Agency assesses whether:

- the contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- the Agency has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefit from the use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- the Agency has the right to direct how and for what purpose the asset is used for.

IFRS 16 has also been applied to leases with nil or nominal consideration, for example peppercorn leases, defined as lease payments significantly below market value. These assets are measured at current value in use or fair value on initial recognition.

When making the above assessments the Agency excludes two types of leases:

- low value assets, with an assessment performed on the underlying asset when new (these are determined to be in line with capitalisation thresholds); and
- leases with a lease term of 12 months or less.

#### ***The Agency as a lessee***

At the commencement of a lease the Agency recognises a right of use asset and a lease liability.

#### ***Right of use assets***

The right of use asset is initially measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for initial direct costs, prepayments or incentives, and costs related to restoration at the end of a lease. The right of use assets are subsequently

### **1.16 Leases (continued)**

measured at either fair value or current value in existing use in line with property, plant and equipment assets.

The right of use asset is depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right of use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of the right of use assets are determined on the same basis of those of property, plant and equipment assets.

The Agency applies IAS 36 Impairment of Assets to determine whether the right of use asset is impaired and to account for any impairment loss identified.

#### ***Lease liabilities***

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, or if that cannot be readily determined, the rate provided by HM Treasury (3.51% for leases recognised in 2023, 4.72% for those in 2024).

The lease payment is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. It is re-measured when there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in the index or rate, if there is a change in the Agency's estimates of the amount expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee, or if the Agency changes its assessment of whether it will exercise a purchase, extension or termination option.

#### ***The Agency as a lessor***

Where the Agency acts as a lessor, the arrangement will be assessed to determine whether it constitutes a finance lease, this being where the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an underlying asset are substantially transferred to the lessee. For these leases the asset is derecognised, and a receivable is recognised, with accrued interest being treated as income over its life. All other leases are treated as operating leases and rental income is recognised in the SoCNE on a straight-line basis.

### **1.17 Notional charges**

Notional charges, in respect of services received from other Government departments and agencies, are included to reflect the full economic cost of services.

### **1.18 Segmental reporting**

In line with the provisions of IFRS 8, Operating Segments, the Agency does not analyse its net expenditure by operating segment as it has concluded that it has no separately identifiable operating segments. This conclusion is based on the Agency's current system/format of internal management reporting to the Agency's Chief Executive and Management Board, who consider financial performance at the Agency level.

## 1.19 Financial instruments

### Recognition and de-recognition of financial assets and financial liabilities

A financial instrument is defined as any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. A financial instrument is recognised when the Agency becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial assets are derecognised when the Agency no longer has rights to cash flows, the risks and rewards of ownership or control of the asset. Financial liabilities are derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires.

#### Financial assets

A financial asset is classified in this category if acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the short term (held for trading) or if so designated by management. Financial assets held in this category are initially recognised and subsequently measured at fair value, with changes in value recognised in the income statement in the line which most appropriately reflects the nature of the item or transaction.

#### *Trade and other receivables*

Financial assets within trade and other receivables are initially recognised at fair value, which is usually the original invoiced amount and subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method less provisions for doubtful receivables. Provisions are made specifically where there is objective evidence of a dispute or inability to pay.

#### *Cash and cash equivalents*

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash in hand and current balances with banks which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value and have an original maturity of three months or less. For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash and cash equivalents are as defined above net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

#### *Impairment of financial assets*

The Agency assesses at each reporting date whether a financial asset or group of financial assets are impaired. Where there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has arisen on assets carried at amortised cost, the carrying amount is reduced with the loss being recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

#### Financial liabilities

#### *Trade and other payables*

Financial liabilities within trade and other payables are initially recognised at fair value, which is usually the original invoiced amount, and subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

## **1.20 Critical accounting estimates and key judgements**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRS requires the use of accounting estimates and assumptions. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Agency's accounting policies. The Agency continually evaluates its estimates, assumptions and judgements based on available information and experience. As the use of estimates is inherent in financial reporting, actual results could differ from these estimates. The estimates and assumptions which have the most significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts are discussed below.

### ***Depreciation of property, plant and equipment and amortisation of intangible assets***

Depreciation and amortisation are provided in the accounts so as to write-down the respective assets to their residual values over their expected useful lives and as such the selection of the estimated useful lives and the expected residual values of the assets requires the use of estimates and judgements. Details of the estimated useful lives are as shown in Note 1.5.

### ***Impairment of property, plant and equipment***

Where there is an indication that the carrying value of items of property, plant and equipment may have been impaired through events or changes in circumstances, a review of the recoverable amount of that asset is undertaken.

### ***Provision for liabilities and charges***

Provision is made for legal or constructive obligations, which are of uncertain timing or amount at the reporting date, based on the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation. The recognition and measurement of provisions rely on the application of professional judgement and historical experience.

Other than as noted above, no material accounting estimates or judgements were made by the Agency in preparing these accounts.

## **1.21 Accounting standards, amendments, interpretations or other updates that were issued and effective for the 2023-24 financial year**

The Agency has considered those new Standards, interpretations and amendments to existing Standards which have been published and are mandatory for the Agency's accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2023 or later periods, but which the Agency has not adopted early. The Agency considers that these are not relevant or material to its operations.

## **1.22 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective**

The Agency has considered those new Standards, interpretations and amendments to existing Standards which have been published but are not yet effective, nor adopted early for these Accounts. The Agency considers that these are either not relevant or material to



## 1.22 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective

its operations.

<b>Standard</b>	IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements
<b>Effective date</b>	January 2027
<b>FReM application</b>	Not before 2027-28
<b>Description of revision</b>	IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements was issued in April 2024, replacing IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements, and is effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2027.
<b>Comments</b>	IFRS 18 will be implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector if required, from a future date (not before 2027-28) that will be determined by the UK Financial Reporting Advisory Board in conjunction with HM Treasury following analysis of this new standard.

## 1.23 Financial reporting - future developments

The Agency has considered the accounting initiatives identified by HM Treasury and Department of Finance covering potential changes and projects where standards, amendments or interpretations are in development. The Agency considers that these changes are either not relevant or material to its operations.

## 2. Programme expenditure

		2023-24	2022-23
	Note	£000	£000
<b>Staff costs*</b>			
Wages and salaries		7,930	7,658
Social security costs		819	825
Other pension costs		2,105	2,169
		—	
		<b>10,854</b>	<b>10,652</b>
<b>Purchase of goods and services</b>			
Accommodation costs, maintenance and utilities		1,347	1,526
IT, communications and office services		128	113
Consumables, equipment and transport costs		31	19
Contracted out and managed services		533	508
Professional and consultancy costs		129	104
Client and other programme operating costs		919	947
Rentals under operating leases		92	54
Staff related costs		283	267
Other costs		10	7
Auditor's remuneration**		-	1
		<b>3,472</b>	<b>3,546</b>
<b>Non-cash items:</b>			
Other		(1)	-
		<b>(1)</b>	<b>-</b>
		<b>3,471</b>	<b>3,546</b>
<b>Depreciation and impairment charges</b>			
Depreciation	5	1,484	1,130
Amortisation	6	3	7
		<b>1,487</b>	<b>1,137</b>
<b>Provisions expense</b>			
Provided in year	11	280	5
Written back in year	11	(54)	(46)
		<b>226</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b>Finance expense</b>			
Interest payable and similar charges		7	6
Borrowing costs on provisions	11	(2)	(47)
		<b>5</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b>Programme expenditure</b>		<b>16,043</b>	<b>15,253</b>

\*Further analysis of Staff costs is located in the Staff Report within the Accountability Report.

\*\*Audit fee for National Fraud Initiative.

**3. Non-cash costs**

		<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>Note</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Purchase of goods and services	2	(1)	-
Notional costs		629	628
Depreciation and impairment charges	5, 6	1,487	1,137
Provisions expense	11	226	(41)
Finance expense	11	(2)	(47)
		<b>2,339</b>	<b>1,677</b>

**4. Income**

		<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b>			
Sales of goods and services		3	4
		<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Other operating income</b>			
Rental income		-	49
Other non-trading income		35	67
		<b>35</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Total operating income</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>120</b>

## 5. Property, plant and equipment

2023-24

	Land £000	Buildings £000	Vehicles, Plant and Machinery £000	Information Technology £000	Total £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>					
At 1 April 2023	300	22,276	1,902	195	<b>24,673</b>
Additions	-	392	194	3	<b>589</b>
Disposals	-	(415)	-	(27)	<b>(442)</b>
Revaluation	-	245	41	-	<b>286</b>
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>22,498</b>	<b>2,137</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>25,106</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2023	-	393	1,295	166	<b>1,854</b>
Charged in year	-	1,356	120	8	<b>1,484</b>
Disposals	-	(415)	-	(27)	<b>(442)</b>
Revaluation	-	(791)	16	-	<b>(775)</b>
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>2,121</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>21,955</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22,985</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>21,883</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22,819</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>					
Owned	300	21,268	706	24	<b>22,298</b>
Finance leased	-	687	-	-	<b>687</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>21,955</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22,985</b>

Property, plant and equipment are held at fair value in accordance with IAS16. The Agency owns all of its assets and has no finance leases or PFI contracts.

Land and Buildings are independently valued by the Land and Property Service (LPS) at least every five years, in accordance with the Appraisal and Valuation Standards (the Red Book 5th edition) of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The last full valuation was carried out by LPS as at 31 March 2024. LPS valued the land and building at Juvenile Justice Centre at depreciated replacement cost using BCIS indices.

Other plant and equipment are adjusted to their current value by reference to the appropriate indices compiled by the Office for National Statistics.

## 5. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

2022-23

	Land £000	Buildings £000	Vehicles, Plant and Machinery £000	Information Technology £000	Total £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>					
At 1 April 2022	300	19,699	1,662	182	21,843
IFRS 16 leases opening adjustment	-	540	-	-	540
Additions	-	713	207	11	931
Disposals	-	-	(66)	-	(66)
Revaluation	-	1,324	99	2	1,425
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>22,276</b>	<b>1,902</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>24,673</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2022	-	-	1,250	158	1,408
Charged in year	-	1,047	76	7	1,130
Disposals	-	-	(66)	-	(66)
Revaluation	-	(654)	35	1	(618)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>1,854</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>21,883</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22,819</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>19,699</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20,435</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>					
Owned	300	21,023	607	29	21,959
Finance leased	-	860	-	-	860
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>21,883</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22,819</b>

**6. Intangible assets**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
At 1 April	42	37
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
Revaluation	2	5
<b>At 31 March</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>		
At 1 April	34	23
Charged in year	3	7
Disposals	-	-
Revaluation	2	4
<b>At 31 March</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>		
Owned	5	8
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>

Intangible assets are adjusted to their current value by reference to the appropriate indices compiled by the Office for National Statistics.

## 7. Financial instruments

As the cash requirements of the Youth Justice Agency are met through the Estimate process, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body.

The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with the Agency's expected purchase and usage requirements and the Agency is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

## 8. Cash and cash equivalents

	<b>2023-24</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>2022-23</b> <b>£000</b>
Balance at 1 April	(155)	(71)
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	125	(84)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(155)</b>
The following balances at 31 March are held at:		
NI banking pool	(32)	(157)
Cash in hand	2	2
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(155)</b>

Balances for Cash and cash equivalents are disclosed in the Statement of Financial Position as follows:

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2023-24</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>2022-23</b> <b>£000</b>
Current assets		2	2
Current liabilities	10	(32)	(157)
<b>Total</b>		<b>(30)</b>	<b>(155)</b>

## 9. Trade receivables, financial and other assets

	<b>2023-24</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>2022-23</b> <b>£000</b>
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
VAT recoverable	99	122
Trade receivables	24	26
Other receivables	2	7
Prepayments and accrued income	23	11
	<b>148</b>	<b>166</b>

**10. Trade payables, financial and other liabilities**

	Note	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>			
Bank overdraft	8	32	157
Trade payables		22	8
Other payables		766	796
Accruals and deferred income		2,093	1,370
Current part of lease liabilities	12	131	266
		<b>3,044</b>	<b>2,597</b>
<b>Amounts falling due after one year</b>			
Leases	12	350	228
		<b>350</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,394</b>	<b>2,825</b>

**11. Provisions for liabilities and charges**

	Early retirement	Legal claims	Lease dilapidation	2023-24 £000 Total
Balance at 1 April 2023	204	216	363	783
Provided in the year	3	277	113	393
Provisions not required written back	(6)	(48)	-	(54)
Provisions utilised in the year	(17)	(75)	-	(92)
Borrowing costs	(2)	-	-	(2)
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>1,028</b>
				2022-23 £000 Total
Balance at 1 April 2022	282	248	-	530
Provided in the year	-	5	363	368
Provisions not required written back	(14)	(32)	-	(46)
Provisions utilised in the year	(17)	(5)	-	(22)
Borrowing costs	(47)	-	-	(47)
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>783</b>



**11.1 Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows**

				2023-24 £000
	Early retirement	Legal claims	Lease dilapidation	Total
Not later than one year	19	325	229	573
Later than one year and not later than five years	61	45	247	353
Later than five years	102	-	-	102
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>1,028</b>
				2022-23 £000
	Early retirement	Legal claims	Lease dilapidation	Total
Not later than one year	19	129	229	377
Later than one year and not later than five years	61	87	134	282
Later than five years	124	-	-	124
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>783</b>

**11.2 Early retirement costs - £0.182 m (2022-23: £0.204m)**

This provision relates to inherited pension costs associated with the early departure of staff in the years prior to the creation of the Agency. These pension costs are payable to NILGOSC and are payable over the lifetime of the retired staff member and his/her spouse (where applicable).

This provision also relates to benefits payable under the Civil Service Injury Benefit Scheme (Northern Ireland), which are charged to the Agency by Civil Service Pensions (Northern Ireland) on a monthly basis. The allowance is payable to the former employees for life. Provision is made for the costs of providing injury awards to employees based on the current number of injury awards and the estimated life expectancy.

### **11.3 Legal claims - £0.370m (2022-23: £0.216m)**

This provision relates to potential compensation payments and associated legal costs of staff and young person personal injury claims and industrial tribunal cases against the Agency.

#### ***Other legal issues***

The Court of Appeal (CoA) judgment from 17 June 2019 (PSNI v Agnew) determined that claims for Holiday Pay shortfall can extend as far back as 1998. However, the PSNI has appealed the CoA judgment to the Supreme Court. The hearing was held in December 2022 and the judgment was delivered on 4 October 2023. The 2023-24 Holiday Pay provision has been estimated by HR and covers the period from November 1998 to 31 March 2020. There are still some significant elements of uncertainty around this estimate for a number of reasons:

- Outstanding legal advice now required following the Supreme Court judgment;
- Lack of accessible data for years previous to 2011; and
- Ongoing negotiations with Trade Union and their legal representatives.

### **11.4 Lease dilapidation - £0.476m (2022-23: £0.363m)**

This provision relates to dilapidation costs which are an estimate of the expenditure required to return vacated leased buildings to their original condition as at the date of commencement of the lease.

## 12. Leases - Right of use assets

In 2022-23 the Agency adopted the new leasing standard, IFRS 16 for the first time, introducing a single lease accounting model that requires a lessee to recognise assets and liabilities for leases. Further details are disclosed in Note 1.16.

### 12.1 Quantitative disclosures around right of use assets

Non-current assets, as recorded in the Statement of Financial Position, include the following amounts for leased right of use assets:

				<b>2023-24</b>
	<b>Land &amp; Buildings £000</b>	<b>Plant and Machinery £000</b>	<b>Information Technology £000</b>	<b>Total £000</b>
Balance at 1 April 2023	860	-	-	<b>860</b>
Additions in period	392	-	-	<b>392</b>
Depreciation charged in year	(565)	-	-	<b>(565)</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>687</b>
				<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>Land &amp; Buildings £000</b>	<b>Plant and Machinery £000</b>	<b>Information Technology £000</b>	<b>Total £000</b>
Balance at 1 April 2022	540	-	-	<b>540</b>
Additions in period	713	-	-	<b>713</b>
Depreciation charged in year	(393)	-	-	<b>(393)</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>860</b>

**12. Leases - Right of use assets (continued)****12.2 Quantitative disclosures around lease - maturity analysis**

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

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Buildings</b>		
Not later than one year	143	269
Later than one year and not later than five years	368	231
Later than five years	-	-
	<u>511</u>	<u>500</u>
<i>Less: interest element</i>	(30)	(6)
<b>Present value of lease obligations</b>	<u><b>481</b></u>	<u><b>494</b></u>
Current portion	131	266
Non-current portion	350	228
	<u><b>481</b></u>	<u><b>494</b></u>

**12.3 Quantitative disclosures around elements in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Variable lease payments not included in lease liabilities	-	-
Sub-leasing income	-	(49)
Expense related to short-term leases	88	45
Expense related to low value leases (excluding short-term leases)	4	9
<b>Total</b>	<u>92</u>	<u>5</u>

**12.4 Quantitative disclosures around cash outflows for leases**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Total cash outflow for leases	<u>291</u>	<u>376</u>

**13. Capital commitments**

	<u>2023-24</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2022-23</u> <u>£000</u>
Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these financial statements:		
Property, plant and equipment	-	12
<b>Total</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>12</u>

**14. Other financial commitments**

The Agency has entered into non-cancellable contracts (which are not lease or PFI contracts) for reception, security duties and planned maintenance at the Juvenile Justice Centre and service fees relating to its leasehold properties. Total future commitments are shown in the table below analysed according to the period in which the payments fall due.

	<u>2023-24</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2022-23</u> <u>£000</u>
Not later than one year	331	491
Later than one year and not later than five years	695	1,298
<b>Total</b>	<u>1,026</u>	<u>1,789</u>

**15. Contingent liabilities**

The Agency's contingent liabilities have been outlined below on the basis that amounts have not been recognised as provisions because their existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events, not wholly within the Agency's control.

The Agency is currently contesting a number of personal injury or industrial tribunal claims brought by staff or young people. Provision has been made in these financial statements for cases where it is considered probable that payment may be made in the future (see Note 11 for further details). However, there are cases which have not been provided for as the Agency does not consider it likely that payment will be made e.g. because it expects that the Agency will be able to successfully defend these cases.

***Public Sector Pensions - Injury to Feelings Claims***

The Department of Finance (DoF) is a named Respondent in a class action affecting employers across the public sector and is managing claims on behalf of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Departments. This is an extremely complex case with potential implications for the NICS and wider public sector. However the cases are at a very early stage of proceedings and until there is further clarity on potential scope and impact, a reliable estimate of liability cannot be provided.

## 16. Related party transactions

The Youth Justice Agency is an Executive Agency of the Department of Justice. During the year, the Agency had various material transactions with the Core Department and other agencies within the Department including Forensic Science Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Prison Service and Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service.

The Agency also had various material transactions with other entities for which the Department of Justice is regarded as the parent Department including Probation Board for Northern Ireland. In addition, the Agency had various transactions with other government departments and central government bodies. Most of these transactions have been with the DoH and Department of Finance (DoF).

None of the members of the Management Board or key management of the Agency had any material personal transactions with the Agency.

## 17. Third-party assets

### *Youth Conference Compensation*

Where a youth conference plan requires a young person to compensate a victim, the money is collected by the Agency and held in a separate bank account until it is paid over to the victim. The Youth Conference Compensation Account has a balance of £5,336 as at 31 March 2024 (2022-23: £3,514).

### *Young Persons Cash*

The young people in custody have a private cash facility for the lodgement of their pocket money and for funding tuck-shop purchases. When the young people are discharged, they are paid in full the balance on their account in cash. The balance held at 31 March 2024 is £173 (2022-23: £341).

### *Young Person Trust Account*

The Trust Account was set up with donations for the benefit of young people. The donations were invested in a Trust Account, which has a balance of £745 at 31 March 2024 (2022-23: £583).

### *Assets held*

The monies noted above are not included within the Agency's assets as they do not belong to the Agency. The assets held at the reporting period date to which it was practical to ascribe monetary values are set out in the table below:

	31 March 2023 £000	Gross Inflows £000	Gross Outflows £000	31 March 2024 £000
Monetary assets such as bank balances	4	17	(15)	6

**18. Events after the reporting period**

There were no events after the reporting period date that required adjustment to or disclosure in these financial statements.

**Date for authorisation of issue**

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 1 July 2024.

**OTHER**

**Addresses and contact details**

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