



# Business Plan 2016/17

November 2016

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Ministerial Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1 - Welcome to the Department for Communities</b>	<b>5</b>
Who Are We?	5
What We Do	6
How We Operate	9
Corporate Governance	10
Our People	11
Our Resources	12
<b>Section 2 – What We Will Deliver</b>	<b>16</b>
Our Strategic Objectives	16
Commitments and Milestones 2016/17	17
<b>Annexes</b>	
Organisational Structure	22
Arm’s Length Bodies	23

## Ministerial Foreword

Welcome to the new Department for Communities.

The responsibilities of this new Department are vast. It delivers important public services in all parts of Northern Ireland that really connect with people and communities and have a huge impact on their lives. From the payment of pensions and benefits to urban regeneration, from housing to sports culture and leisure, from developing policies on social issues to delivering services directly to members of the public, this Department touches on the lives of almost every person and every community in Northern Ireland. I want our staff and customers to be proud of the public services provided by the Department for Communities and I want to continually improve how those services are delivered. Many of the public services which this Department is responsible for are already going through significant reforms. I am determined that these changes will be successfully implemented to help make a real difference to the lives of our citizens.



The range and diversity of responsibilities of the Department for Communities means it has the potential to make a real and positive difference to the quality of life for individuals and communities. I believe that the creation of this new Department has, for the first time, brought together all of the functions of government that can contribute to bringing about real and lasting change in the lives of all our citizens. This makes it a very exciting time for everyone involved in the work of the Department.

However, although bringing together all the policies and functions that can create change together in one Department is a great start, it is not enough by itself. I will be leading the Department with a very personal commitment to helping people make better lives for themselves; to enable individuals achieve their potential and lead fulfilling lives; to assist families break out of poverty and into work and to facilitate the development of vibrant and sustainable communities where everyone can thrive. To achieve this, I will ensure that we work collaboratively within the Department, with other Executive Departments and with

partners from across society. I believe that meaningful and ongoing engagement with all stakeholders, whether they are in the community, in business or in the public sector, is essential if we are to achieve the ambitious outcomes which we need and want to see.

There are many problems in our society which have persisted for many years in spite of all the government's efforts. That is why the Executive's new Programme for Government is all about outcomes. The determination to deliver better outcomes will mean directing our efforts on the actions that can make the greatest difference to the lives of people. It will mean that we must be more creative, more innovative and, above all, more collaborative in delivering the changes that really make a difference. It will also mean prioritising what we do and how we use our resources on those things that make the biggest impact.

The agenda set out in the new Programme for Government is challenging and it will present us with some difficult decisions, not least in terms of setting our priorities and making the best use of our resources. However, I am confident that the Department for Communities can and will rise to that challenge and be a force for positive change across our community.

This Business Plan sets out how the Department will play its part in delivering the outcomes in the Programme for Government, and how it will organise its work to deliver those outcomes for our people. We will all have to work extremely hard to achieve these outcomes and to realise our vision of supporting people, improving communities and tackling disadvantage.

[Minister's signature]

**PAUL GIVAN**

**Minister for Communities**

## SECTION 1

### WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES

#### Who Are We?

- 1.1 On 26 May 2016, the Executive published the Programme for Government Framework, which sets out the ambition the Executive has for our society (<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/>). This ambition is transformational – the Executive intends to address the big issues facing our society and to make a difference to the things that matter most to people.
- 1.2 In parallel with this, the Department will develop a Corporate Plan which will align with this new Programme for Government and the budget position approved for the Department. This Business Plan presents the way forward during an important transition year during which we must continue to deliver high quality public services at the same time as doing the necessary development work to support the new focus on outcomes.
- 1.3 The Department for Communities is a new Department formed on 9 May 2016, combining the functions and statutory powers which were previously exercised in six separate Departments:
- All of the functions of the Department for Social Development;
  - Most of the functions of the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, except inland fisheries and waterways;
  - The Employment Service from the Department of Employment and Learning;
  - Responsibility for debt policy and financial capability from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment;

- Responsibility for local government and built heritage from the Department of the Environment; and
- Responsibility for social inclusion policies and strategies from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

## **What We Do**

1.4 The Department delivers a wide range of services to the public – both directly and through its Arm’s Length Bodies – which almost every person living in Northern Ireland will encounter at some point. The most significant services that the Department delivers include:

- The social welfare system, which helps people take up employment and provides financial support to families. The Department pays out over £5.5 billion each year in pensions and other benefits to people right across Northern Ireland;
- The Employment Service, which provides advice to jobseekers and employers;
- Housing services, which provide support for the homeless, deliver good quality social and affordable housing, and help vulnerable people to live independently;
- The Child Maintenance Service, which promotes the financial responsibility parents have for their children;

- Facilities for sport, art and culture – like stadia, museums and galleries and libraries – and programmes that enable people to participate in these activities;
- Regeneration work in town and city centres – like public realm improvements and funding to refurbish buildings – that help make them more attractive and economically sustainable;
- Funding programmes that help community and voluntary organisations to make a difference in local areas; and
- Protecting Northern Ireland’s built heritage, including some of our most famous historic sites.

1.5 In delivering these public services, the Department will ensure that the impact they make and how they are delivered align with the outcomes and indicators in the new Programme for Government.

1.6 The Department is also responsible for the Social Strategy Pathfinder Project, which is one of three pathfinder projects that are exploring how the outcomes focused Programme for Government might be delivered in practice. Many aspects of the Department’s work – such as social welfare, housing and regeneration – make a significant contribution to helping vulnerable people and those living in poverty cope with the financial pressures which they have to confront in their daily lives. The Department is working to ensure that these activities and the policies which underpin them will make a significant contribution to the Social Strategy.

1.7 Northern Ireland's public sector is going through a major process of change. The creation of the Department for Communities itself came about due to one part of that change – the restructuring of Northern Ireland Departments. The Department is at the forefront of many significant public sector reforms.

- The social welfare system is changing, in particular for working age people, and there are further changes planned during the next few years. The Department has policy and operational responsibility for implementing these changes, as well as delivering the Executive's response to helping people deal with the changes in the welfare system;
- Changes are needed to Northern Ireland's housing system to ensure that it is able to provide an adequate supply of high quality housing for current and future generations. Reforms to the regulation and inspection of housing associations and the arrangements for tenant participation have been agreed and are being implemented. Proposals for other changes, such as the social housing selection scheme, the regulation of the private rented sector and the structure of the Housing Executive are being developed;
- Local government was reformed in 2015 when the 11 new district councils were created out of the 26 previous councils. The Department is working with local government to ensure that the changes, especially the introduction of community planning, are fully embedded and deliver for the citizens of Northern Ireland; and
- More and more, people expect to be able to engage with public services on-line. Major parts of the services provided by the Department and its Arm's Length Bodies are moving to digital delivery.

1.8 As well as delivering public services and implementing reforms, the Department also has a major role in developing new policies, strategies and legislation. Some of the areas of policy, strategy and legislation that the Department is working on are:

- The Executive's new social strategy for promoting opportunity for everyone and tackling poverty and social exclusion;
- A new cultural strategy for Northern Ireland;
- Legislation on a range of issues including social policy matters, housing, and social security matters including pensions; and
- Strategies to promote and protect the interests of children, older people, people with disabilities, and other socially excluded groups.

## **How We Operate**

1.9 The Department operates at all times under the direction and control of the Minister for Communities, who has overall responsibility for all the Department's functions. The Minister's role includes decision making on strategy, business objectives and the policy and legislative programme for the Department.

1.10 The administration of the Department is led by the Permanent Secretary. The Department is organised into five Business Groups, each headed by a Deputy Secretary. The structure is summarised at Annex 1. The Department is also supported in its delivery by 20 Arm's Length Bodies. These are listed at Annex 2 within the lead business area where policy responsibility lies.

1.11 The responsibilities of each of the Groups are as follows:

- **Community Cohesion:** Culture, arts and leisure policy and services; the historic environment; PRONI; and the voluntary and community sector;
- **Working Age:** Working Age benefit services and Universal Credit; Employability, Health and Benefits Policy; Social Security Policy and Legislation;
- **Social Inclusion:** Social Strategy; the Programme for Government Social Strategy Pathfinder; active ageing; disability benefits; Pensions and Child Maintenance Services;
- **Community Regeneration and Housing:** Housing and urban regeneration policy and services;
- **Strategic Policy and Resources:** Corporate services for the Department, such as Human Resources, finance and communications, analytical and statistical services that support evidence-based outcome-focused policy making; social policy; and local government.

1.12 Collaborative working between organisations and groups in the public, voluntary and private sectors is a key feature of the new Programme for Government. Although the Department has been organised into five large groups, the groups will work closely with each other to deliver the outcomes in the Programme for Government. The Department will also work closely with our Arm's Length Bodies, other parts of the public sector organisations and local government, as well as groups outside Government in the community and voluntary sectors to develop new proposals and implement new approaches.

## Corporate Governance

- 1.13 The work of the Department is co-ordinated and monitored by the Departmental Management Board, which provides leadership to the staff in the organisation and monitors performance against departmental objectives and targets. The Board provides support and assurance to the Principal Accounting Officer (the Permanent Secretary) in exercising his overall responsibility for ensuring that effective financial planning, monitoring and control systems are in place.
- 1.14 The Department has put in place corporate governance arrangements to ensure proper and effective management of the Department's resources and the delivery of its programmes and priorities within available resources. These arrangements include regular monitoring of the Departmental Business Plan, stringent financial management procedures, policies and procedures on managing risk, anti-fraud policies and whistle-blowing arrangements, and publication of the Department's Annual Report and Accounts.
- 1.15 The corporate governance arrangements are monitored by the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee, which provides assurance and objective advice on issues concerning business risk, internal control and the overall corporate governance of the Department.
- 1.16 The Department will also implement its Equality Scheme to promote equality of opportunity and good relations, and its Disability Action Plan to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage participation of disabled people in public life. The Department is committed to complying fully with its statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**Our People**

1.17 Over 8,000 people work in the Department for Communities. The allocation of the staff between the five main business areas in the Department is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

Business Area	Number of staff
Strategic Policy & Resources Group	889
Community Regeneration and Housing Group	294
Community Cohesion Group	312
Working Age Group	4,171
Social Inclusion Group	2,445
	<b>8,111</b>

1.18 In addition to the staff listed above, the Department engages 328 staff through recruitment agencies. Most recruitment agency staff are employed at the Administrative Officer level in the Child Maintenance Service, administering fixed-term work packages on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions.

**Our Resources**

1.19 The total budget provided to the Department by the Executive for 2016/17 – known as the *Departmental Expenditure Limit* (DEL) – is just under £1 billion. This is made up of £837 million of Resource funding and £161 million of Capital funding. The allocation between the five main business areas in the Department is shown in Table 2 below. These figures would normally be based on the opening budget but in this case are based on the June Monitoring position for the new Department. The opening budget did not fully reflect the position of the new department.

**Table 2**

<b>Business Area</b>	<b>Resource £,000</b>	<b>Capital £,000</b>
Strategic Policy & Resources Group	248,660	2,382
Community Regeneration & Housing Group	182,038	132,437
Community Cohesion Group	101,436	18,050
Working Age & Social Inclusion Groups	305,095	8,377
	<b>837,229</b>	<b>161,246</b>

1.20 Approximately 29% of the Department's Resource budget is spent on staff salaries. The vast majority of the remainder - 69% - is directed to a wide range of programmes, including Grant-in-Aid funding to Arm's Length Bodies, the welfare reform mitigations, support to local government and grants to third party organisations as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

<b>DEL Resource Budget</b>	<b>£,000</b>
Salaries	247,683
Admin	31,555
Other Programme	557,991
<b>Total Del Resource</b>	<b>837,229</b>

1.21 As well as the budget provided to it by the Executive, the Department is also responsible and accountable for managing large amounts of *Annually Managed Expenditure* (AME) which is funded directly from HM Treasury. This covers expenditure which is demand led and generally less predictable and controllable than expenditure in the DEL – see Table 4.

**Table 4**

<b>AME Budget</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Other AME Capital	21,457
AME Resource	5,881,533
AME Res non-cash	27,446
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,930,436*</b>

\*These figures would normally be based on the opening budget but in this case are based on the June Monitoring position for the new Department. The opening budget did not fully reflect the position of the new department.

AME Budget	Grand Total
Disability Benefits	1,421,212
Employment Support Allowance	872,341
Housing Benefit	559,108
Industrial Injuries Benefit	29,464
Impairments	16,995
Income Support	159,670
Job Seekers Allowance	140,188
Maternity Allowance	13,245
Pension	2,508,015
Provisions	6,533
Social Fund	61,414
Widows Bereavement Benefit	19,666
Other Statutory Benefits	69,400
Corporation Tax	50
Depreciation	7,088
Misc	46,047
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,930,436</b>

1.22 The UK Government manages the UK public finances on a Total Managed Expenditure basis, which incorporates both DEL and AME. Measures to control AME remain a key part of the UK Government's overall deficit reduction plans. Therefore, although this spending is not directly under the control of Northern Ireland Ministers, the Department has a responsibility to ensure that it is properly managed and is required to provide robust estimates of AME expenditure to the Office of Budget Responsibility.

1.23 The total amount of AME which will be controlled by the Department in 2016/17 is estimated at **£5.930 billion**. The vast majority of this is for pensions and other social security benefits.

## SECTION 2

### What We Will Deliver

#### a) Our Strategic Objectives

Our long term goals are arranged into four main sections. These goals have significant inter-dependencies to delivering outcomes / results which will support people, improve communities and tackle disadvantage. This will require the Department to work effectively with customers and stakeholders, having sound internal processes and highly skilled and motivated staff.

<p><b>Results</b></p> <p>R1. A more confident people living their lives to the full</p> <p>R2. More cohesive communities</p> <p>R3. Lower levels of economic inactivity and unemployment and a high quality benefits service for those in need</p> <p>R4. Improved communities and better housing</p>	<p><b>Customers/Stakeholders</b></p> <p>CS1. Effective engagement with people, stakeholders, and delivery partners</p> <p>CS2. Responsive and effective service delivery</p> <p>CS3. Welfare reform</p> <p>CS4. Partnership and engagement with local government</p>
<p><b>Internal Processes</b></p> <p>IP1. Effective corporate governance</p> <p>IP2. Effective and efficient management of financial resources</p> <p>IP3. Improving services and processes through the Digital Strategy</p> <p>IP4. Information assurance</p>	<p><b>Organisational Learning and Growth</b></p> <p>OLG1. Effective organisational leadership, engagement, and highly skilled workforce</p> <p>OLG2. Reduced levels of sickness absence</p>

## b) Commitments and Milestones

### Results

Objective	Target
A more confident people living their lives to the full	<p>R1.1 By 31 March 2017, to develop a Programme for Government Social Strategy Pathfinder Project in reducing poverty</p> <p>R1.2 By 31 March 2017, to deliver cross-community youth sports programmes as part of the Executive's <i>Together: Building a United Community</i> strategy in at least two urban villages and one rural area, to achieve positive good relations and social inclusion outcomes</p> <p>R1.3 By 31 March 2017, to further develop the contribution that volunteering makes to wellbeing and civil society</p> <p>R1.4 To tackle area based deprivation to achieve positive outcomes for the people who live in those areas through the Neighbourhood Renewal (36 areas), Areas at Risk (14 areas), Small Pockets of Deprivation (17 areas) and Building Successful Communities (6 areas) programmes throughout 2016/17</p> <p>R1.5 To assist 29,000 working age benefit clients into employment by March 2017</p> <p>R1.6 Promote greater financial responsibility among separating parents so that by 31 March 2017 at least 60% of cases on the statutory CMS scheme are managed directly between parents, avoiding charges and collection fees</p> <p>R1.7 By 31 March 2017, to have engaged in the development of the Executive's new Social Strategy for promoting opportunity for everyone and tackling poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>R1.8 By 31 March 2017, to provide assistance to at least 18,500 householders ( to be updated) annually to live as independently as possible</p>

Objective	Target
	R1.9 By 31 March 2017, to have developed a Programme for Government Disability Indicator Delivery Plan for improving the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families.
More cohesive communities	<p>R2.1 By 31 March 2017, to have completed construction and benefits realisation of Kingspan and Windsor Park Stadia and to have progressed redevelopment of Casement Park to the submission of an application for planning permission</p> <p>R2.2 To deliver at least 220,000 instances of people engaging in culture, arts or leisure activities specifically designed to achieve positive educational, health or social inclusion outcomes</p> <p>R2.3 By 31 March 2017, bring forward proposals for the future conservation and management of State Care Monuments, informed by pilot projects during the 2016 season</p>
Lower levels of economic inactivity and unemployment and a high quality benefits service for those in need	<p>R3.1 To maintain or reduce further the level of loss through fraud and error, expressed as a percentage of overall expenditure against the figure reported for 2015</p> <p>R3.2 By 31 March 2017, to have completed a formal review of all employment programmes (contracted and non-contracted) and bring forward recommendations</p>
Improved communities and better housing	<p>R4.1 By 31 March 2017, to have delivered 2,350 social and affordable homes</p> <p>R4.2 By 31 March 2017, to have opened at least three new shared neighbourhood developments</p> <p>R4.3 By 31 March 2017, to deliver energy efficiency measures in 9,000 homes</p> <p>R4.4 By 31 March 2017, to drive forward plans for investment in NIHE housing stock</p> <p>R4.5 The effective planning of major regeneration schemes in: St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena; Queen's Parade, Bangor; Portrush; Girdwood in Belfast; Fort George and Clondermot in Londonderry throughout 2016/17</p>

Objective	Target
	<p>R4.6 By 31 March 2017, to progress major Development Schemes for an area North of Belfast City Centre and at Queen's Quay in Belfast</p> <p>R4.7 By 31 March 2017, to improve the environment in 20 towns and cities to maximise their investment potential and encourage greater use of cities and town centres</p>

**Customers/Stakeholders**

Objective	Target
<p>Effective engagement with people, stakeholders, and delivery partners</p>	<p>CS1.1 By 31 March 2017, all business areas to have in place appropriate mechanisms to enable regular and effective two-way communication with customers and stakeholders</p> <p>CS1.2 By 31 March 2017, to have secured agreement to changes to the delivery of housing services to the citizens of Northern Ireland</p> <p>CS1.3 By 31 March 2017, to have implemented the new Regulatory Inspection Programme For Housing Associations</p> <p>CS1.4 By 31 March 2017 to have implemented the new Tenant Participation Strategy</p>

Objective	Target
Responsive and effective service delivery	<p>CS2.1 To develop in partnership with people working across the Social Inclusion Group a suite of performance indicators centred on the views of people who use our services</p> <p>CS2.2 By 31 March 2017, to have achieved average actual clearance times for the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Income Support – 8 days</li> <li>- Jobseekers Allowance – 11 days</li> <li>- State Pension – 6 days</li> <li>- State Pension Credit – 9 days</li> <li>- Employment Support Allowance – 14 days</li> <li>- Housing Benefit – 22 days</li> </ul> <p>CS2.3 By 31 March 2017, to have achieved the following financial accuracy targets of total expenditure for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Income Support – 99%</li> <li>- Jobseekers Allowance – 99%</li> <li>- State Pension – 99%</li> <li>- State Pension Credit – 98%</li> <li>- Employment Support Allowance – 98%</li> </ul> <p>CS2.4 Deliver a responsive and effective Child Maintenance Service that meets the needs of our Customers</p>
Welfare reform	CS3.1 By 31 March 2017, to have introduced welfare reforms including the recommendations of the Evason Working Group
Partnership and engagement with local Government	CS4.1 By 31 March 2017, to have supported local government to produce 11 Community Plans

## Internal Processes

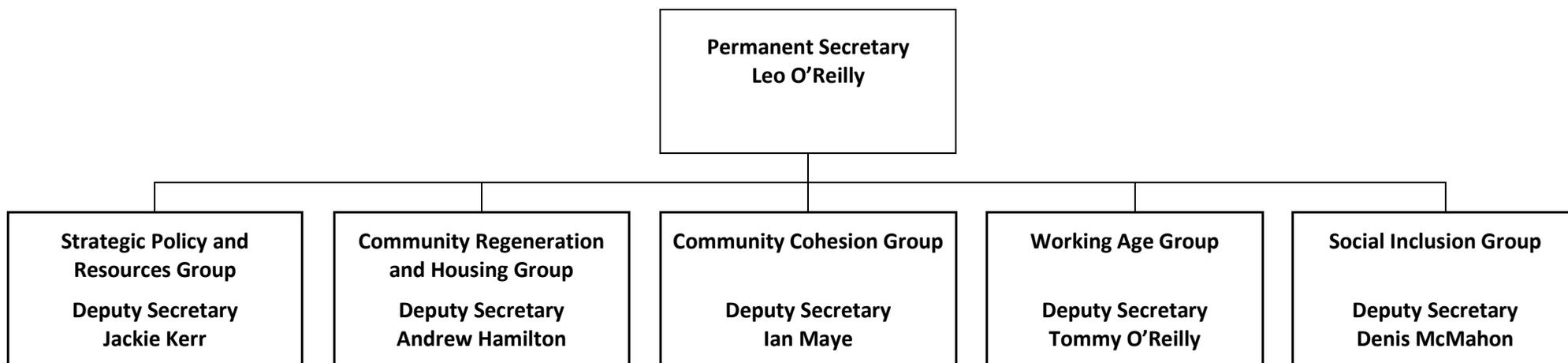
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>
Effective corporate governance	IP1.1 Throughout 2016/17, to ensure effective governance arrangements within DfC and its Arm's Length Bodies.
Effective and efficient management of financial resources	IP2.1 Throughout 2016/17, to manage and maximise the budget and prepare for Budget 2016 to ensure key priorities and objectives are met while ensuring no overspend and taking timely action to minimise any underspends.
Improving services and processes through the Digital Strategy	IP3.1 By 31 March 2017, to complete a landscape review of citizen contact activity to inform an Action Plan to enhance digital delivery to citizens.
Information assurance	IP4.1 Throughout 2016/17, to ensure an effective information assurance is in place

## Organisational Learning and Growth

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>
Effective organisational leadership, engagement, and highly skilled workforce	OLG1: Implement and build upon the NICS of the Future Action Plan
Reduced levels of sickness absence	OLG2: To manage staff absence effectively in line with good practice and NICS policy.

## Annex 1

### Group Structure of the Department



## ANNEX 2

### Arm's Length Bodies - lead policy responsibilities at Group level

Strategic Policy and Resources	Community Regeneration and Housing	Community Cohesion	Working Age	Social Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Local Government Staff Commission for NI</li><li>NI Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Northern Ireland Housing Executive</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Armagh Observatory and Planetarium</li><li>Arts Council for Northern Ireland</li><li>Historic Buildings Council</li><li>Historic Monuments Council</li><li>Libraries Northern Ireland</li><li>National Museums Northern Ireland</li><li>Northern Ireland Museums Council</li><li>North/South Language Body (<i>consisting of Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency</i>)</li><li>Sport Northern Ireland</li><li>Charity Advisory Committee</li><li>Charity Commission</li><li>Vaughan Trust</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Office of the Social Fund Commissioner</li><li>Ulster Supported Employment Limited</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland</li><li>NI Commissioner for Children and Young People</li></ul>