

# **Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022-23**

# **Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)**

## **ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022-23 For the year ended 31 March 2023**

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Correction: **Page 5, 1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph, Line 3**

Text currently reads:

**Ms Siobhan Carey CBO**

Text should read:

**Ms Siobhan Carey CBE**

Date of correction: **24 July 2023**

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# PERFORMANCE REPORT

## OVERVIEW

### Our organisation

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), which incorporates the General Register Office (GRO), is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance (NI) (DoF) and was established on 1 April 1996. The administration of the marriage and civil partnership law in Northern Ireland (NI) is the responsibility of the GRO, along with the registration of births, deaths, adoptions and gender recognition. GRO is also responsible for the maintenance of registration records and the production of certificates in relation to these events on request.

The Agency is the principal source of official statistics and social research on Northern Ireland. These statistics and research not only inform public policy but also academic and private sector research and contribute to debate in the wider community. The insight we provide guides the decisions of others. The decennial Census of Population and Housing was conducted in March 2021 and the first results were published on 24 May 2022, with further results made available at different times throughout the year. The Census is used by central and local government, health and education authorities and other organisations to plan and provide future services which will form the basis of the wide range of upcoming reports. Less publicly, we provide our services to a wide range of Government Departments and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to assist the policy development process and the delivery of their business objectives.

### Our purpose

Support decision makers in the formulation of evidence-based policy and inform public debate through the production and dissemination of high quality, trusted and meaningful analysis; facilitate research and deliver the decennial population census and every day civil registration services.

### Our mission

Provide citizens and decision makers with trusted insight on life in Northern Ireland.

### Our vision

We aspire to:

- be the go-to organisation for an accurate and insightful account of life in Northern Ireland, informing decision making and recognising that our people are our strength;
- provide comprehensive registration and genealogy services that give our customers what they need; and
- be motivated and valued people doing excellent work together; innovating, growing and proud of our Agency and our impact.

## Our values

Key to the Agency's future success will be the extent to which we live up to the standards we have set for ourselves, both individually and collectively. These are encapsulated within INSIGHT, the initiative we will use to give substance to our shared values, provide a focus for planned transformational activities and be a vehicle for the communication and exploration of organisational culture and the projection of leadership behaviours.

<b>Investment</b>	<i>in people, technology and learning &amp; development.</i>
<b>Network</b>	<i>of specialist staff across the public sector, working within a shared culture of collaboration, supportive team-working and effective communication.</i>
<b>Standards</b>	<i>of best practice, professionalism, personal integrity and respect, taking pride in all we do and delivering on our promises.</i>
<b>Improvement</b>	<i>through innovation and a challenge mind-set, supporting positive change and adding value in all we do to increase our efficiency, effectiveness and impact.</i>
<b>Good governance</b>	<i>of data and our corporate processes.</i>
<b>High quality</b>	<i>insight and analysis, outputs and publications, engendering trust in what we say and the information that supports it.</i>
<b>Trust</b>	<i>extended as a sign of our shared responsibility, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.</i>



## Risks and Uncertainties

Risk management has been incorporated into the business planning and decision making processes of the Agency. The Agency maintains a Corporate Risk Register which defines the framework of control and describes the process for identifying and managing risks.

NISRA has an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), the purpose of which is to support the Accounting Officer in monitoring NISRA risk, control and governance systems. Additionally, the ARC will give advice to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of coverage of audit arrangements (internal and external) to provide required assurances.

The Committee includes three Non-Executive independent Members, currently John Smyth, Elizabeth Ensor and Tom Taylor. The Committee is chaired by an independent Non-Executive Member of the Departmental Board (Tom Taylor) and during this reporting period, operated under the best practice guidance in accordance with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) 2018.

The Committee met on 4 occasions during the course of 2022-23. The Corporate Risk Register was provided to all meetings and the Committee reviewed, in detail, risks in relation to:

1. The 2021 Census
2. The GRO Supply Chain
3. Business Continuity and the Impact of COVID-19
4. Governance
5. Modernisation of Statistical Data Collection Infrastructure
6. Staff Absence
7. Production of key Economic Statistics
8. Recruitment / Loss of Senior Managers
9. Meeting Customer Needs and Expectation
10. Application of the Code of Practice for Statistical Releases
11. Data Loss and Cyber Threat
12. Lack of an Executive

## Chief Executive Overview

I was appointed to the joint position of Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and Registrar General for Northern Ireland at the end of February 2023. My appointment followed the retirement of my predecessor, Ms Siobhan Carey CBO, and the close of an extraordinary period for the Agency, as the impact of the pandemic on society and the economy has gradually waned.

I want to pay tribute to Siobhan for her leadership of NISRA, particularly during the pandemic. This includes NISRA's deployment of its social survey infrastructure to underpin the UK wide COVID-19 Infection Study; the successful conduct of the 2021 Census including the dissemination of the main results; maintaining the integrity of the registration functions during the unprecedented circumstances that prevailed and the continued development of administrative data research capabilities. My new colleagues have fond memories of Siobhan's visionary, open and inclusive style of leadership as well as her strong focus on collaboration, innovation and automation, which will serve the Agency well going forward. On behalf of the Agency, I want to extend our sincere best wishes and thanks to Siobhan.

Although much of the progress set out in this report occurred before my appointment, it is apparent to me that 2022-23 was a year of delivery for NISRA. Although the day-to-day impact of the pandemic lessened, the importance of and demand for statistics, analysis and data remained very strong, requiring our staff to work hard to meet growing user needs for more timely statistics and data through new ways of flexible working.

The publication of the first results from the 2021 Census – setting out how the population of Northern Ireland has changed over the last decade – is perhaps the most visible example of how these demands were met. Significant progress was also made in delivering our suite of economic and labour market statistics, enabling a stronger understanding of how the economy of Northern Ireland responded to national and international events, as well as to the new trading arrangements agreed under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Working across the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), NISRA produced key insights on the impact of increases in the cost of living resulting from the war in Ukraine and the associated increase in the price of energy. Statisticians across the full range of departments – supported by an excellent interviewer force collecting critically important data in the field – provided timely, insightful and important analysis to support the delivery of policy over this exceptional period.

The General Register Office (GRO) continued to operate under pandemic regulations and procedures for electronic transmission of documentation and remote registration for the deaths which occurred during 2022-23. The Office remained open for business throughout the year to service the needs of the General Public. In these and many other ways, the staff of NISRA and the GRO continued to meet exceptional user needs in a dynamic and efficient manner.

NISRA's work throughout the year continued to be guided by our five year corporate plan. Developed in collaboration with staff from across the Agency, this plan is now entering its fifth and final year and work will shortly begin to develop a new 'compass' for the organisation's development over the years to come. Our annual business plan – including how we will work in the constrained financial environment of 2023-24 – and our outcomes based monitoring framework will build on this corporate plan during its final year. I look forward to working with my new colleagues towards these objectives over the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PD Wales". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

**Dr Philip Wales**  
**NISRA Chief Executive and Registrar General**  
**23 June 2023**

## Highlights of the Year

Throughout 2022-23, considerable effort was expended by colleagues in the Census Office (and indeed the wider NISRA family) to ensure that the main outputs from the 2021 Census were released within two years of Census Day (21 March 2021) in accordance with plans. This challenging milestone was successfully achieved with the results made readily accessible via the Census section of the NISRA website <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/2021-census/results>. These include:

- **Population and Household Estimates:**  
Released in May 22 providing the headline counts for people and households from the 2021 Census rounded to the nearest 100.
- **Main Statistics:**  
Released in three phases between September 2022 and March 2023. These tables are mostly univariate in nature and cover all main census topics at Northern Ireland and Local Council level. Phase 1 of this release also provided an update to the first release in the form of unrounded population and household counts.
- **Person and Household Estimates for Data Zones in Northern Ireland:**  
Released in February 2023 providing population and household counts for areas below Local Council level to coincide with the release of the new local level output geographies created for Census 2021. These new Super Data Zones and Data Zones replaced the outdated Super Output Areas and Small Areas created for the 2001 Census.
- **Census Area Explorer ([explore.nisra.gov.uk](https://explore.nisra.gov.uk)):**  
An online application allowing users to browse census data by selecting areas on a map and viewing Census 2021 information on a topic by topic basis, including the ability to compare the data with the 2011 Census.

As before, we acknowledge the important role that the general public played in helping to make the Census the huge success that it was by completing their Census return. At 97%, the response rate was unprecedented (particularly during a pandemic) and with over 80% being completed online, this had a positive impact on the underlying quality and utility of the data and published results.

NISRA continued to provide its social survey research service to NI government and the wider public sector. Our team of experienced and committed survey interviewers continued with telephone interviewing and NISRA's successful 'Knock to Nudge' strategy, helping to ensure that key surveys continued to provide key information on a wide range of topics including the labour market, health, crime and wellbeing. Importantly, participation rates have now returned to, or exceeded, pre-pandemic levels. In parallel, NISRA's Central Survey Unit (CSU) also continued to provide the infrastructure underpinning the recruitment phase of the UK-wide COVID-19 Infection Study and other high profile surveys conducted by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

NISRA also continued to administer its eleven statutory business surveys which are integral to the functioning of the UK Economic Statistical System and the associated monitoring of the UK and more specifically, Northern Ireland Economy. We are most grateful to local businesses for their continued cooperation and support in completing the various surveys. The information provided has been central to informing, amongst other things, NI's position on key aspects of trade associated with the NI Protocol and facilitated economic policy development and support to local businesses. More than ever, the information secured through these statutory surveys is informing major decisions that affect

people's lives and livelihoods. Its importance in this respect is not expected to diminish over the next few years as NI endeavours to manage the major shocks that the pandemic has had on local businesses and both the NI economy and labour market more generally.

The period in question saw a continued interest in understanding trade following NI's exit from the EU on 31 January 2020 and the subsequent implementation of new trading requirements placed on businesses as a result of the NI Protocol. Building on developments in 2021-22: NISRA continued to tailor its outputs to meet users' needs for more timely and more detailed data, specifically around trade. By reviewing and redeveloping our statistical production processes for our flagship trade survey, the publication time for our main imports data was reduced by some six months, facilitating the release of headline trade related data in one all-encompassing publication (Northern Ireland Economic Trade Statistics) in December 2022 – historically 3 separate publications were released typically between December and May the following year.

Allied to this development, all of NISRA's trade data was made available on NISRA's PxStat Data Portal (which has a 5 star accessibility rating) making it more accessible to users who can now create their own data tables. A variety of other NISRA data sources were also made available via this new channel and on the Economic Statistics side, this has included: the Annual Business Inquiry, Interdepartmental Business Register, Construction Output Statistics, Index of Services, Index of Production, NI Composite Economic Index, Retail Sales Index, NI Ports Statistics, Traffic Counts data, Quarterly Employment Survey and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. The flexibility afforded through this development saw the publication of more granular data than was previously available and has been welcomed by key stakeholders.

Collaborative working continued with the Department for Economy (DfE) policy colleagues through the provision of bespoke datasets in order to support the ongoing development of the Skills, Energy and 10X Economy strategies. Work was also undertaken with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to support their work on regional data developments around trade and with the Office for the Internal Market within the Cabinet Office to inform their work in understanding the impact of the NI Protocol on NI.

Other important areas of focus in 2022-23 included understanding the impact of the cost of living crisis, the cost of doing business and the energy crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine. This involved close working with key stakeholders from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), DfE and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to inform their work and assist with, for example, the development of business support initiatives for energy payments to businesses.

In its role as a partner within the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded Administrative Data Research NI (ADR NI), the Agency has continued to make notable strides in developing linked de-identified datasets and make these available safely to enable research for policy driven needs. A number of data linkages have been developed to support research in the areas of education, earnings and employment as well as the economy. NISRA has also completed or collaborated on a number of research projects to further existing evidence in a range of areas including Irish and Ulster Scots language knowledge, and chronic disability and economic inactivity.

This year the NISRA Technology and Support Lab (Tech Lab) has continued to deliver a range of projects covering automation of statistical production processes and the visualisation of data including development of dashboards and a new Census Area Explorer. Feedback from the NISRA teams benefiting from Tech Lab support has been very positive. An evaluation of the Tech Lab exemplar projects completed over the 18 month 'pilot' confirmed the need for a dedicated centralised technical resource to support and enable innovation across NISRA.

NISRA staff who are out posted across the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) have continued to support their host departments /organisations by providing the vital evidence base needed to inform policy development and evaluation. Some examples of this work are the development of a Northern Ireland Pharmacy Needs Assessment tool by statisticians in Business Services Organisation (BSO), analysis by DfE statisticians to assess the NI High Street Scheme and development of indicators which can be used to monitor the 10X Strategy and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) statisticians who launched a new Greenhouse Gas Inventory dashboard.

Oversight and accountability for the work carried out by NISRA staff rests with the Chief Executive who is directly responsible to the DoF Minister, through the Department, for the management of the Agency's performance and operations. The relationships between the Agency, the Department and the Minister, as well as internal NISRA governance arrangements, are set out in the NISRA Framework Document, which was reviewed in 2019-20. This was followed later in the year by a review of our Concordat arrangements, which covers the supply of statistical staff to other departments and host organisations for the purposes of delivering their research and analytical services.

In closing, 2022-23 saw the delivery of many significant outcomes that NISRA can be exceptionally proud of, particularly given the challenging circumstances and constrained resources that have prevailed. This was only possible through the highly collaborative and innovative approach that has been taken which, we believe, leaves us well positioned to face both the opportunities and the challenges that 2023-24 is set to bring.

## General Register Office (GRO) Operations

Between April 2022 and March 2023, the GRO processed 115,248 certificates, with 99.98% of priority certificate applications and 99.96% of standard certificate applications, fulfilled within target timescales (one and five working days respectively).

Additionally, GRO processed 3,415 Casework Cases including re-registrations, adoptions, name changes, corrections, approval of religious and belief officiants. All were completed within the target timescale of fifteen working days.

Following COVID-19 restrictions, the public search room re-opened in March 2022 and remained open between April 2022 and March 2023. During this period 742 members of the public visited the GRO public search room, with 48,048 recorded searches conducted from the GRO terminals. In addition to this, in the period between April 2022 and March 2023, there were 9,352 searches of GRO records from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) terminals.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, Registrars carried out 2,756 civil marriages. There were also 4,657 religious marriages and 972 belief marriages carried out in the same period. Registrars carried out 42 civil partnership registrations, 14 same sex and 28 opposite sex couples and there were 27 conversions of Civil Partnerships to Marriage.

GRO registered 11,428 new accounts on the Family History website. There were 985,240 searches carried out, the most popular being the free index search which accounted for 865,151 searches.

## Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Audit and Risk Committee

### Non-Executive Directors' Report 2022-23

NISRA Audit and Risk Committee members are Elizabeth Ensor, John Smyth and myself as Chair of the Committee.

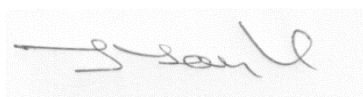
During the fiscal year we met on four occasions on the 25 May, 21 June, 19 October, and 1 February with forward planned Agendas, to ensure we reviewed all relevant issues which included:

- Reports detailing the financial position of NISRA on both Revenue and Capital budgets;
- Official Statistics update;
- Issues relating to the management of the Coronavirus Pandemic;
- Progress with the successful 2021 Census;
- Mid-year and Annual Governance Statements;
- NISRA Corporate Risk Register issues and mitigating actions;
- Internal Audit Reports including Direct Award Contracts;
- External Audit Reports including the Annual Report & Accounts; and
- Monitoring of NISRA progress in clearing both Internal and External audit recommendations

We are satisfied that any issues of concern were reported to the Departmental Audit & Risk Committee.

Before all meetings we conducted Independence Reviews with both Internal and External Auditors so that we could discuss privately any concerns which they may have had.

The Committee also completed an Audit Committee Self-Assessment Exercise which was presented to the Committee.



Tom Taylor  
NISRA Chair Audit and Risk Committee  
23 June 2023



## PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

A Balanced Scorecard set out our objectives for 2022-23, using an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) methodology to develop the Outcomes, Indicators and Performance Measures. Performance against the NISRA Balanced Scorecard is summarised in pages 12 to 22. NISRA is also represented in the DoF Business Plan 2022-23, these are shown in the NISRA DoF Performance Measures section below.

### NISRA DoF Performance Measures

The Agency had two business area departmental performance measures for the year 2022-23 (Census 22a to 22c and PCOS 22d), as well as three departmental performance measures which NISRA contributed to (People Survey 9, Citizen facing services 20c and Shared services 21f). The results are shown below, these are subject to review by Internal Audit as part of its work plan for 2023-24.

Target No.	Priority	Target	Measurement	Timescale	RAG Status	Comment that supports the status chosen	Business Area	Owner
9	Priority 2: A Well-led, High Performing Civil Service	Develop 2022 People Survey Action Plan.	Conduct the 2022 Civil Service People Survey, report key findings and develop action plan including a programme of DoF staff engagement activities and events.	31 March 2023	Unable to be achieved	The 2022 People Survey has been postponed until Spring 2023 following discussion at Permanent Secretary group.	DoF Wide	All DoF Directors
20c	Priority 4: Excellent Public Services	Deliver high quality citizen facing services.	Achieve 90% green rating on Divisional/Agency business plans Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relating to citizen facing services.	31 March 2023	Will not be achieved	The NISRA Customer Survey 2022 showed an overall satisfaction rate of 89%. Customers were shown to have a very positive view of NISRA Staff: knowledgeable, courteous and treat customers with respect (both 96%), respond to queries promptly and are helpful (both 93%).	NISRA	Philip Wales
21f	Priority 4: Excellent Public Services	Provide high quality shared services to government departments.	Achieve 90% green rating on individual business plans KPIs relating to shared services to government departments.	31 March 2023	Unable to be achieved	During 2022-23, NISRA branches carried out a range of user engagements events such as consultations, user group meetings, surveys, media briefings, newsletters, statistical press releases and social media posts, however the survey to quantify this information was postponed due to resource issues.	NISRA	Philip Wales

Target No.	Priority	Target	Measurement	Timescale	RAG Status	Comment that supports the status chosen	Business Area	Owner
22a	Priority 4: Excellent Public Services	Provide high quality statistical information to support public policy.	Publish 2021 Census results;	31 May 2022	Achieved	Headline population and household statistics were published in May 2022.	NISRA	Philip Wales
			• headline population and household statistics.					Philip Wales
22b	Priority 4: Excellent Public Services	Provide high quality statistical information to support public policy.	• demography, ethnicity and equality statistics including statistics for local areas.	30 November 2022	Achieved	Main Statistics Phase 1 were published in September 2022 (ethnicity, identity, language and religion statistics).	NISRA	Philip Wales
22c	Priority 4: Excellent Public Services	Provide high quality statistical information to support public policy.	• high level qualification, labour market and communal establishment statistics.	31 March 2023	Achieved	Remaining Main Statistics Phases 2 & 3 were published in December 2022 and March 2023 respectively. Phase 2 covered health & housing while phase 3 covered qualifications, labour market, communal establishment and sexual orientation.	NISRA	Philip Wales
22d	Priority 4: Excellent Public Services	Provide high quality statistical information to support public policy.	Maintain the high percentage of the general public who state they trust statistics produced by NISRA from the Public Awareness of and Confidence in Official Statistics survey.	30 November 2022	Achieved	PCOS 2022 survey suggest 85% of respondents trusted NISRA statistics a great deal or tended to trust them. Similar to 2021 (86%). Trust levels were higher among those respondents who had heard of NISRA, 93%. Finalised official statistics will be published Autumn 2023.	NISRA	Philip Wales

## NISRA's Balanced Scorecard 2022-23 and Performance

Note: The Performance Measures are colour coded (OBA Card Ref) to indicate which quadrant of the OBA card they are applicable to. Where a Performance Measure fits into more than one quadrant it is marked with both colours.

Outcomes Based Accountability Report Card	
How much did we do? (N)	How will did we do it? (%)
Is anyone better off?	
Accomplishments	

	OUTCOMES		INDICATOR	OBA Card Ref	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE REVIEW	RAG Status
1	Well-structured organisation, delivering on agreed priorities.	1	Strong communication within the organisation.	1	NISRA Brief issued 10 times throughout the year.	The NISRA Brief has been issued ten times in the financial year.	Green
				2	Microsoft Teams set up across 100% of NISRA.	Microsoft Teams rollout has been 100% successful and Teams is now meeting NISRA corporate information, dissemination and collaboration needs.	Green
				3	Six Agency Board meetings scheduled for the financial year.	During the financial year 2022-23, six Agency Board meetings were held, one every other month. Eleven Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings and four Audit and Risk Committees (ARC) have been held.	Green
				4	Percentage of staff from the People Survey who feel involved in and understand how they contribution to, the work of the Department.	A decision was taken to postpone the data collection phase of the 2022 Civil Service People Survey until spring 2023, thus results are not available for the 2022-23 reporting period. Information not available to complete RAG status.	
		2	Recruitment stocktake of current staffing issues vs staff required.	5	Percentage of approved staff vacancies filled within 6 months of notification (including temporary appointments).	During the financial year NISRA has filled 71% of vacancies within 6 months of notification. Most of the vacancies are at the Deputy Principal (DP) Statistician grade. A DP Statistician competition has been logged on the Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resource (NICSHR) Tracker.	Amber
				6	The number of working days lost due to sickness absence of staff per year.	Working days lost due to sickness absence are not available until end of June 2023. Information not available to complete RAG status.	
				7	Business Areas assessing if their functions are being delivered by staff in the right discipline.	The majority of NISRA Branches agree work programmes with key customers which determines the composition of staff required to fulfil this programme. Some vacant posts were temporarily filled by Statistical Officers or through Temporary Promotion (TP). Technology and Support	Amber

					Lab (Tech Lab) have made significant efforts to bring in Information Technology (IT) staff or staff with digital, data and technology skills.		
		3	The Agency will remain within allocated budget.	8	Remain within agreed budget	The Agency recorded a net resource underspend (excluding non-cash expenditure, depreciation and impairment charges) of £290k.	Green
		4	Provide high quality statistical information to support public policy.	9	Publish 2021 Census results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headline population and household statistics by May 2022</li> <li>Demography, ethnicity and equality statistics including statistics for local areas by Autumn 2022</li> <li>High level qualification, labour market and communal establishment statistics by spring 2023.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headline population and household statistics were published in May 2022</li> <li>Main Statistics Phase 1 were published in September 2022 (ethnicity, identity, language and religion statistics)</li> <li>Remaining Main Statistics Phases 2 &amp; 3 were published in December 2022 and March 2023 respectively. Phase 2 covered health &amp; housing while phase 3 covered qualifications, labour market, communal establishment and sexual orientation.</li> </ul>	Green
						Central Survey Unit (CSU) continued to deliver fieldwork on social surveys using the Knock to Nudge (K2N) telephone method. K2N fieldwork continues to yield 90%-100% of pre-pandemic targets across surveys. From July 2022, the option of in-home interviewing was provided to interviewers working on Labour Force Survey (LFS), Family Resources Survey (FRS) and Continuous Household Survey (CHS).	
		1	NISRA staff work collaboratively.	1	Number of collaborative* projects ongoing in the financial year.	Response below.	Green
2	Inspired people empowered to work collaboratively.	NISRA encourages collaboration in everything that it does, projects have involved collaborative working with colleagues across branches in NISRA, in the NICS more widely, with statistical colleagues throughout the UK and Ireland, with IT professionals and with other partners from the public, private and third sector. Collaboration projects have been wide ranging in nature and have included such topics as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Services Organisation (BSO) collaborated with Secure Anonymised Information Linkage Databank hosted by Swansea University and Health Data Research UK on use of the Secure Electronic Research Platform (SeRP) as the secure data environment for the Honest Broker Service. This allows remote access to data and enables Health and Social Care (HSC) to take part in four nation research.</li> <li>CSU collaborated with Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) and Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the development of a new Transformed Labour Force Survey (LFS). They collaborated with several NI Departments, Department of Health (DoH), Department of Justice (DoJ), Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Economy (DfE), Department of Education (DE), Department of Infrastructure (Dfi), and The Executive Office (TEO) in the development and implementation of the 2022 Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey.</li> <li>DfE collaborated with DE and NISRA in the Longitudinal Education Outcomes.</li> <li>Dissemination Branch worked collaboratively with branches on the transition from Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) to the Data Portal.</li> <li>DoH collaborated with Departmental policy and Public Health Agency (PHA) colleagues on a number of different policy / strategy working, steering and task and finish groups. These cover strategies and policies relating to drugs and alcohol, tobacco / smoking, physical activity, obesity, Coronavirus Infection Survey, gambling module within the Health Survey NI and other public health topics.</li> <li>DoJ collaborate with Prisons and Probation Board of Northern Ireland (PBNI) on resettlement of performance measures and with Prisons, Vital Statistics and Administrative Research and Support Branch (VARs) and General Register Office (GRO) exploring mortality within the offending population. With</li> </ul>					

		<p>Courts, Public Prosecution Service NI (PPSNI) and Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) on the domestic abuse publication arising as a legal requirement following passing of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELMS collaborative projects included the Labour Market Report with ONS and CSU, Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC) for the Business Data for Research project, DfE Database for Trade and Economic Research and DfE and Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and Fraser of Allander Institute collaborating on an Economic Data Innovation Fund project to assess socio-economic data gaps in NI.</li> <li>• All Innovation Lab (iLab) and Tech Lab project work is done in collaboration with the client who commissions them.</li> <li>• Legal Services Agency (LSA) collaborated with colleagues in DfC to measure and monitor the levels of fraud and error in the NI Legal Aid system.</li> <li>• PSNI collaborated with colleagues in DoJ, Northern Ireland Safeguarding Board, the Road Safety Partnership, and counterparts in Welsh Government.</li> <li>• PPSNI worked collaboratively with criminal justice organisations to progress domestic abuse, committal reform.</li> <li>• Statistical Co-ordination Branch (SCB) worked collaboratively with TEO and Tech Lab to produce the wellbeing dashboard.</li> <li>• Statistical Support Branch (SSB) works collaboratively across many work areas with NISRA Branches, the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and the wider Government Statistical Service (GSS), for example to find solutions to issues relating to official statistics or compliance with the Code of Practice / Office for Statistics Regulation.</li> <li>• TEO collaborated with Programme for Government (PfG) Analytics and SCB on the Wellbeing in NI report; with PfG Analytics, SCB and the Tech Lab on the Wellbeing dashboard; and with Tech Lab to produce a RAP (Research and Analysis Project) for the Good Relations Indicators publication.</li> <li>• VARS collaborated with English Health Statistics Steering Group (EHSSG) on Health Statistics (drugs, mortality, and alcohol), Administrative Data Research UK (ADR UK) and Administrative Data Research NI (ADR NI) (Queens and Ulster University) through forums to ensure Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) investment is being used effectively. DfC on research related to disability and employment, DoH on COVID-19 mortality and equality groups, other collaborative work has included DfC, DoJ, DE, ELMS, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and Census.</li> </ul>				
	2	Induction process is highly rated.	2	All new staff (number / %) take part in the NISRA induction process.	Of the 45 new starts all have been sent details on the induction process.	Green
	3	Training and Development supports delivery of business objectives.	3	Technical Training / Development requested in training survey (number / %) implemented (where demand is adequate).	Of the 243 staff who applied for 182 topics, 100% of all training requests have been signposted to free online resources for self-paced/self-directed learning. This included free online materials / videos, support materials from product supplier, LinkedIn Learning Licences, affiliated sites such as ONS and in-house materials. Staff Development Team assigned Linked In Learning licences to users based on defined need. Staff Training Channel on NISRA TEAMS heavily populated to signpost staff to in-house learning material, free online resources etc. Staff Training Team provided logistical support to other in-house course delivery partners.	Green
4			Percentage of all NISRA staff indicating they have deployed training in their day to day work.	A decision was taken to postpone the data collection phase of the 2022 Civil Service People Survey until spring 2023, thus results are not available for the 2022-23 reporting period. Information not available to complete RAG status.		
5			Percentage of staff with PPA / PDP completed on time.	This material is no longer available through Human Resource Consultancy Services (HRCS) as this is part of the Management Information produced by HR Connect which is currently unavailable. Information not available to complete RAG status.		

		4	Staff achieve work / life balance.	6	Number of wellbeing events organised.	Twenty wellbeing events have been held in the financial year 2022-23, some examples are Sleep Awareness Session, Diabetes Awareness Session, AwareNI - 'Mood Matters' Workplace Session, Diabetes Awareness Session, Steps2Fitness September Challenge, Breast Cancer Awareness Session, HIV Awareness Seminar and National Fitness Day Exercise Class.	Green
				7	New Home Working Policy implemented.	Staff have work style agreements in place and a phased return was carried out over summer 2022. The New Ways of Working Hybrid Policy is implemented by staff.	Green
		5	Staff are engaged.	8	Percentage of overall staff satisfaction.	A decision was taken to postpone the data collection phase of the 2022 Civil Service People Survey until spring 2023, thus results are not available for the 2022-23 reporting period. Information not available to complete RAG status.	
				9	Percentage of employee engagement.		
				10	Percentage of level of staff wellbeing.		
		6	Develop 2022 People Survey Action Plan.	11	Conduct the 2022 Civil Service People Survey, report key findings by March 2023.		

3	Add Value to Society.	1	The public is aware of and trusts NISRA.	1	Percentage of general public that state they trust statistics produced by NISRA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisional figures from the Public Awareness of and Trust in Official Statistics (PCOS) 2022 survey (September to December 2022) suggest that 85% of respondents trusted NISRA statistics a great deal or tended to trust them. This is similar to 2021 (86%).</li> <li>Trust levels were higher among those respondents who had heard of NISRA: 93% trusted NISRA statistics a great deal or tended to trust them in 2022.</li> <li>Finalised figures will be published as official statistics in Autumn 2023: <a href="https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/public-awareness-and-confidence-trust-official-statistics-pcos">https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/public-awareness-and-confidence-trust-official-statistics-pcos</a>.</li> </ul>	Green
				2	Percentage of awareness of NISRA amongst the general public.	PCOS 2022 survey (September to December 2022) suggest that 49% of respondents had heard of NISRA prior to being contacted about the survey. This is lower than in 2021 (55%) and 2020 (58%) but higher than in 2019 (35%).	Amber
	Engage and inform the public and customers.	2	NISRA customers are satisfied.	3	Awareness of NISRA among customers (%).	The NISRA Customer Satisfaction Survey methodology was changed for 2022, resulting in 771 valid and fully complete survey responses, a response rate of 40%. This means it is no longer possible to directly compare results to previous NISRA Customer Satisfaction Surveys. One change was that awareness question was removed, as generally only those who knew of NISRA completed the survey. Information not available to complete RAG status.	
				4	Percentage of customers reporting satisfaction with NISRA outputs; and percentage reporting improved satisfaction.	Within the Customer Satisfaction Survey, 89% reported being satisfied with the service(s) provided by NISRA, while 38% of customers reported their level of satisfaction with NISRA outputs have improved.	Green
				5	Percentage of customers who state	Within the Customer Satisfaction Survey 81% of customers reported	Green



				NISRA releases enhance insight on my business area.	statistical releases produced by NISRA provided them with an enhanced insight on their business areas.	
			6a	Agree/ disagree ratings (%): - NISRA staff are knowledgeable. - NISRA staff respond to my query promptly. - NISRA staff are helpful. - NISRA staff are courteous and treat customers with respect. - In my dealings with NISRA I am made to feel valued. - I am satisfied with NISRA's level of user engagement.	Customer satisfaction Survey results regarding NISRA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are knowledgeable 96%.</li> <li>Staff respond promptly to my queries 93%.</li> <li>Staff are helpful 93%.</li> <li>Staff are courteous and treat customers with respect 96%.</li> <li>I am made to feel valued 83%.</li> <li>Staff engage with their customers and stakeholders 88%.</li> </ul>	Green
			6b	- It is easy to find/ locate NISRA report/ data - NISRA reports are easy to understand.	Customers indicating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is easy to find/ locate NISRA report/ data 75%.</li> <li>NISRA reports are easy to understand 87%.</li> </ul>	Green
			7	Percentage of customers indicating they have used NISRA statistics in the policy/ decision making process.	Within the Customer Satisfaction Survey 70% of customers indicated they have used NISRA statistics in the policy / decision making process.	Green
	3	Customers use and recommend NISRA services.	8	Percentage of customers, using NISRA information for: - Educational Purposes - Academic Research - Personnel research - Business decision making - Other	Customer indicating % using NISRA information for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational Purposes 11%.</li> <li>Academic Research 6%.</li> <li>Personnel research 9%.</li> <li>Business decision making 49%.</li> <li>Other 13%.</li> </ul>	Green
			9	Percentage of Customers who would recommend NISRA products and / or services to colleagues.	Customer indicating they are likely to recommend NISRA products and / or services to colleagues 91%.	Green
	4	User engagement activities by NISRA.	10	NISRA staff will be proactive in engaging with their customers and stakeholders. - number of user engagement activities undertaken; and number of user engagement activities which are new / revamped - number of suggestions received from users; and number: (i) implemented, (ii) considered for future implementation, and (iii) explanation provided where the	NISRA embeds user engagement into the heart of its business; in line with the code of practice for official statistics. NISRA believes that users should be at the centre of statistical production; their needs should be understood, their views sought and acted on, and their use of statistics supported.  Over the financial year there has been significant user engagement work undertaken across the agency. This engagement can be categorised as; internal stakeholder work; customer engagement, public consultations, public communications to promote key outputs, working groups, and many more. The extent to which user engagement takes places throughout NISRA makes quantifying it extremely difficult as it is woven into daily working across the agency. Two examples for NISRA are the	Green

					suggestion could not be implemented.	<p>Census and GRO, the Census produced further outputs for the General Public, held press briefings with national and local news outlets, had ongoing engagement with schools and universities and actively engaged with the academic research network. GRO produced 115,248 certificates between April 2022 and March 2023.</p> <p>NISRA are proactive in social media posts via Twitter and Facebook to promote publications through both Census and NISRA accounts.</p>	
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4	Enhance Insight into NISRA Products and Services.	1	NISRA releases are accessible.	1	100% NISRA releases will comply with the new accessibility regulations / legislation rules.	<p>The majority of NISRA releases comply with the accessibility requirements.</p> <p>Dissemination Branch provide guidance and support to NISRA branches to help make publications accessible. The recently launched Data Portal supports users to create both accessible spreadsheets and HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) publications.</p>	Amber		
					2	NISRA releases and publications are of high quality.	2	Number of Official Statistics publications with corrections (including major corrections and minor errors).	In 2022-23, two publications were revised due to major corrections (a small error which affected a large number of tables) and five were re-issued due to minor errors.
		3	Number of Official Statistics publications.	In 2022-23, NISRA published 268 Official Statistics outputs (or repeated outputs), 106 of which were National Statistics.			Green		
		4	Number of National Statistics publications.				Green		
		5	Number of Social Science research reports published.	In 2022-23, NISRA published 19 Social Science research reports (some of which were quarterly or weekly reports).			Green		
		3	NISRA outputs are quality assured.	6	Percentage of Official Statistical outputs with process documentation.	81% of recurring NISRA outputs published in 2022-23 have complete process documentation, with a further 16% having partial process documentation.	Amber		
				7	Percentage of Official Statistical outputs with a documented quality assurance process.	98% of recurring NISRA outputs published in 2022-23 had either fully or partially documented quality assurance processes.	Green		
				8	Number of breaches of the Code of Practice for Statistics (broken down by IT vs non-IT).	There were two breaches of the Code of Practice reported to the OSR in 2022-23; both were the result of human error (non-IT).	Amber		
		5	We will lead as an Innovative Organisation.	1	NISRA activities are legislatively compliant.	1	Confirmed number of reported breaches of Data Protection Act (DPA) / General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).	No Data Protection / General Data Protection Regulation breaches have occurred during this period for DoF NISRA.	Green
						2	Subject Access Requests (SAR) processed on time (number / %).	NISRA DoF received two SARs, all processed on time. The NISRA team in PSNI received four SAR requests, all of which were processed on time.	Green



			3	NISRA DoF Freedom of Information (FOI) requests processed on time (number / %).	In NISRA DoF, 48 FOIs were received during this period, all of which were processed on time.	Green	
			4	Confirmed number of breaches of Digital Economy Act (DEA).	No breaches of DEA.	Green	
	2	New products or services are developed.	5	Examples of new products and services within NISRA.	Response below.	Green	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSO produced an Exemplar dashboard to display pharmaceutical information, a RAP project to interactivity and accessibility of National Statistics publications, a pilot programme to create medicines adherence register and Honest Broker Data Use Register.</li> <li>• DAERA assisted in developing their National Statistics into dashboards using the R dashboard developed with Tech Lab.</li> <li>• DE developed a prototype of a System Evaluation Framework to provide a narrative of the education system.</li> <li>• DfC produced a Data Automation and Visualisation Strategy, five publications in HTML format and a new Liquor Licencing publication to meet legislative need.</li> <li>• DfE produced statistics relating to Skills for Life and Work, a new DfE training programme and Analysis of NI High Street Scheme report.</li> <li>• DfI produced new releases on Public Transport Statistics and analysis pieces on processing times for major and local planning applications, broken down by individual Planning Authorities.</li> <li>• The Data Portal has been made public by the Dissemination Branch.</li> <li>• DoH converted nine key products to HTML format, produced a Power Business Intelligence (Power BI) dashboard for the annual Mental Health &amp; Learning Disability inpatient data, new LGD time series analyses from Health Survey NI, interactive (R based) dashboard delivered to supplement Raw Disease Prevalence release and new Quarterly Workforce Statistics Bulletin published.</li> <li>• DoJ produced a new report for Courts team, a new infographic style bulletin of DoJ's key official statistics, a new quarterly Domestic Abuse data report, a remand data dashboard and a new version of a Prisoner Needs Profile report for internal NIPS use.</li> <li>• ELMS published the Northern Ireland Quarterly Retail Sales Index for the first time in June 2022, they made a range of datasets available on the PxStat data portal, some examples include NI Economic Trade Statistics, Construction Output Statistics, Business Register and Employment Survey and Quarterly Employment Survey Tourism Statistics.</li> <li>• HRCS has a new approach to Pay Award modelling.</li> <li>• Land and Property Services (LPS) introduced NI House Price Index animation.</li> <li>• LSA produced a new MI monthly dashboard, developed real time KPI App, KPI's for performance against targets and sensitivity analysis on budget availability and introduced two new methodologies to support Fraud and Error programme.</li> <li>• SCB worked with TEO and TL to produce a wellbeing dashboard.</li> <li>• SSB developed a suite of Induction Courses covering the UK Statistical System, Code of Practice and Use of Management Information for new Assistant Statisticians, Statistical Officers &amp; Placement Students, and specific training for economists on the Code of Practice Awareness.</li> <li>• Tech Lab developed a new RAP skeleton to support branches developing their publications.</li> <li>• TEO produced Wellbeing in NI report and dashboard, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Experiences and Attitudes of 16 year olds in Northern Ireland and Power BI dashboard looking at asylum seekers in contingency (or hotel) accommodation.</li> </ul>					
	3	Standardisation of Data Analysis and analytical toolset.	6	A review of the range of software tools, both licensed and 'free to air', currently utilised across NISRA and their application with a view to determining their appropriateness and efficacy and make recommendations	A review of software in use took place in 2018 and showed a wide variety of software products were in use across NISRA branches; an update to this review took place at the end of the financial year 2023. A Grade 5 has been appointed to drive forward work in this area for 2023-24. The Tech Lab projects delivered to date have enabled a small number of	Red	

				for a standard set.	branches to become less reliant on propriety software. Tech Lab will seek to continue to consolidate the use of free software products such as R, R Shiny, Power BI and R Flex Dashboard in future projects.	
			7	How many viable projects have been submitted to the Tech Lab?	63 projects have been submitted to the Tech Lab.	Green
			8	How many viable projects has the Tech Lab started / delivered?	30 projects have been started and 19 delivered.	Green
	4	Use of new and emerging software applications is optimised.	9	What developments has the Tech Lab made towards better data management, data visualisation, automation and reprogramming?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catalyst to start Teams R / Structured Query Language (SQL) / Power BI channels.</li> <li>One coffee and coding session carried out.</li> <li>Scrollytelling template created for NISRA staff use.</li> <li>Accessibility exemplar created for NISRA staff use.</li> <li>RAP Skeleton created for NISRA staff.</li> </ul>	Green
			10	Examples of new software and where utilised.	Response below.	Green
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BSO used Power BI for dashboard development, they utilised Tableau, R, Git and Rmarkdown and RAP techniques to develop National Statistics publications.</li> <li>CSU used C# in Visual Studio to develop an interviewer interface for social surveys.</li> <li>DAERA used R to develop, 'kniit' and publish Greenhouse Gas dashboard and use Power BI to produce their dashboards.</li> <li>DE used Power BI to develop a prototype Education System Evaluation Framework and to create infographics. R to create HTML bulletins and FileZilla published on the DE website. They use R to convert XML (Extensible Markup Language) data collection returns (census, leavers, attendance) to CSV (Comma Separated Values).</li> <li>DfC used Tableau software for a variety of projects, one of the new projects was the development of monthly performance dashboards for Departmental Groups and a Resource Planning Tool using NICSHR data to assist vacancy management and succession planning. They used R Studio and R Markdown to develop an RAP and create a HTML document for publication.</li> <li>DfE used Python.</li> <li>DfI has new publications in R / HTML and is in the process of transferring existing reports in R / HTML. Transferring data to the new data portal to benefit from the functionality this delivers.</li> <li>DoH used R, R Markdown and Power BI in products on an ongoing basis and developed interactive content to supplement Primary Care Quality and Outcomes Framework releases.</li> <li>DoJ established a Power BI and R working group, they worked with Tech lab developing an HTML version of the annual Reoffending publication.</li> <li>Full RAP pipeline developed in R to produce the NI Economic Trade Statistics, including publication HTML and data tables for the PxStat data portal.</li> <li>ELMS developed new HTML Labour Market Report and associated tables, produced in R and using RAP. They have started using LibreOffice Draw which is a free open source version of Microsoft Visio used for creating flow charts/process maps.</li> <li>HRCS used R in Tech Lab project for automation of Pay Report.</li> <li>ILab used miro as their collaborative software.</li> <li>LSA used SQL instance procured to develop anonymised database for retention of data outside of the Departmental Retention and Disposal policy. Qlik Sense used to obtain real-time access to admin case management system.</li> <li>Tech Lab used Svelte, Visual Studio Code, GitHub in the area-explorer application.</li> </ul>		

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TEO used Power BI, R Markdown and Tableau to create reports and dashboards across a number of policy areas.</li> </ul>			
	5	Data management and visualisation, automation and programming processes are utilised.	11	INSIGHT Events progressed.	Two Temporarily Promoted (TP) Grade 5s have been appointed and part of their role is to drive forward the INSIGHT projects.	Amber

*\*The definition of collaborative is a project involving a project with participants outside the branch / department; this includes inter-departmental collaboration and all policy analytical support*

## INFORMATION ASSURANCE

NISRA is fully committed to complying with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 / UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Within the meaning of the Act, the Department of Finance is the organisational Data Controller for NISRA.

NISRA has processes in place to ensure that all employees, contractors, agents, consultants and other parties who have access to personal information held by or on behalf of NISRA are fully aware of and abide by their responsibilities under the Act. In line with Departmental guidance, NISRA has an Action Plan in place to ensure Agency compliance with the above legislation, which includes the following:

- NISRA have in place an Information Asset Owner (IAO) / Support Information Manager (SIM) in each branch, with a Business Area Information Manager (BAIM) in post for DoF NISRA;
- NISRA builds accountability and privacy by design into all aspects of the business planning process;
- NISRA communicates and raises awareness of DPA / UK GDPR with all staff through emails, aide-memoirs, Data Protection Guidance Notes (DPGNs), Departmental Intranet updates, Departmental / Team briefs etc.;
- IAO's and relevant staff attend DP / UK GDPR Awareness Sessions delivered by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Departmental Data Protection Officer (DPO);
- Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information (EIR) Regulations training is completed annually for specific staff;
- NISRA has robust policies in place which support UK GDPR in line with Departmental guidance;
- Guidance is issued to all DoF NISRA staff i.e. Data Protection Impact Assessments, Data Breach Management Plan, Data Sharing Agreements, Contracts & Records Management etc.;
- Data Protection Essentials online training is completed annually by all staff, including Agency staff;
- Cyber Security online training is completed by all staff, including Agency staff;
- Content Manager (CM) training and refresher training is available to all staff;
- NISRA ensures that all holdings of personal data are compliant with UK GDPR requirements, identifying the lawful basis for processing;
- NISRA branches regularly review the Departmental online Information Asset Register, with approval by respective IAO's;
- NISRA branches regularly review their procedures for handling personal information;
- Privacy Notices for NISRA and Civil Registration Services are produced and published on the internet, supported by Privacy Information Statements as required and are reviewed annually;
- Procedures are in place to detect, report and investigate data breaches;
- NISRA Retention and Disposal Schedule has been reviewed and updated, to ensure NISRA complies with the requirements of the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 and the Disposal of Documents Order (S.R. & O. 1925 No.167);

- NISRA Fileplan classifications have been reviewed within NICS Records Management system;
- Correct safeguards are in place to protect personal data held on Information Technology (IT) systems;
- Correct safeguards are in place in all cases where personal data is shared with other organisations, with completion of Data Sharing Agreements, with details logged in the Department's Data Sharing Agreement register; and
- Data Protection induction documentation has been provided to all new staff, including Agency staff, with records of completion retained.

There were no reportable data breaches between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

NISRA's IAOs provide annual input to the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) on the security and use of their information asset and provide Information Assurance Stewardship Statements twice yearly, which are recorded in the NISRA Governance Statement.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

NISRA's net expenditure for the three most recent financial years is outlined below:

	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
	£000	£000	£000
Revenue from contracts with customers	(19,825)	(19,179)	(17,811)
<b>Total operating income</b>	<b>(19,825)</b>	<b>(19,179)</b>	<b>(17,811)</b>
Staff costs	26,783	28,628	26,518
Purchase of goods and services	2,989	3,231	3,378
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,895	1,505	1,565
Provision expense / (credit)	50	(47)	80
Other operating expenditure	5,457	6,681	9,451
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>	<b>37,174</b>	<b>39,998</b>	<b>40,992</b>
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>	<b>17,349</b>	<b>20,819</b>	<b>23,181</b>

The net resource expenditure for the year excluding non-cash expenditure was £12.24m against the closing excluding non-cash budget position of £12.53m. The Agency recorded a net resource underspend (excluding non-cash expenditure, depreciation and impairment charges) of £290k which was mainly due to a continued increase in income generated by the General Register Office (GRO) as income returned to pre-pandemic levels

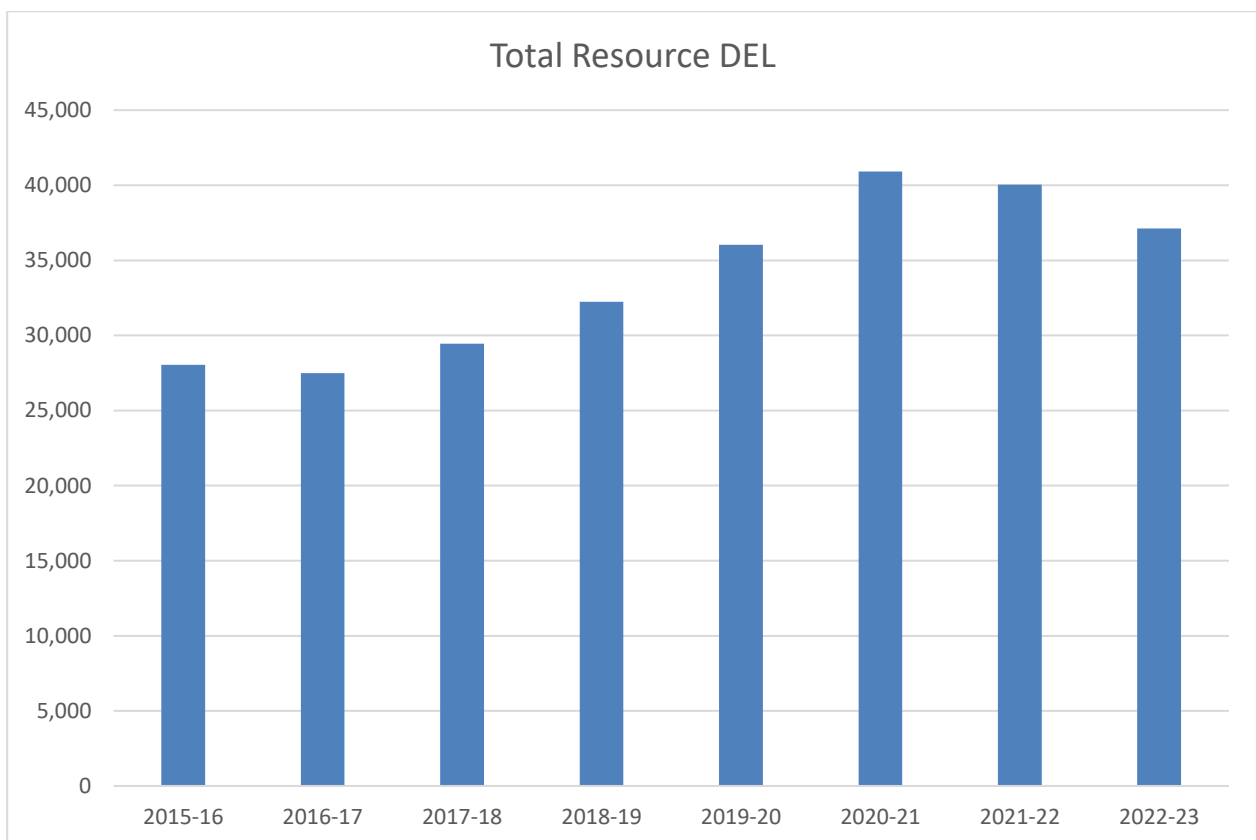
Other operating expenditure (excluding non-cash items, see note 3 in the Financial Statements section) has decreased to £2,240k (2021-22: £3,666k) because of continued cost reductions with the completion and scale-back of operations associated with Census 2021.

The Agency employed an average of 559 staff during the financial year and total staff costs were £26,783k (2021-22: £28,628k). Salary costs have decreased because Census field staff were not employed in 2022-23.

The Agency has been allocated an indicative opening budget (excluding non-cash) of £11.14m for 2023-24.

## LONG TERM EXPENDITURE TREND

	2015-16 Outturn £000	2016-17 Outturn £000	2017-18 Outturn £000	2018-19 Outturn £000	2019-20 Outturn £000	2020-21 Outturn £000	2021-22 Outturn £000	2022-23 Outturn £000
<b>Total Resource DEL</b>	<b>28,049</b>	<b>27,495</b>	<b>29,447</b>	<b>32,239</b>	<b>36,034</b>	<b>40,912</b>	<b>40,045</b>	<b>37,124</b>
Of which:								
Staff costs	20,356	19,210	20,437	22,412	25,010	26,518	28,628	26,783
Purchase of goods and services	2,715	2,493	2,646	2,610	2,590	3,378	3,231	2,989
Other operating expenditure	3,889	4,496	5,055	5,780	6,785	9,451	6,681	5,457
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,089	1,306	1,309	1,527	1,649	1,565	1,505	1,895
	<u>28,049</u>	<u>27,505</u>	<u>29,447</u>	<u>32,329</u>	<u>36,034</u>	<u>40,912</u>	<u>40,045</u>	<u>37,124</u>
<b>Total Resource AME</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>(47)</b>	<b>50</b>
Of which:								
Provision expense	-	-	45	-	-	80	(47)	50



Figures in £000

The general increase in Resource DEL is mainly due to the build-up and preparation for the March 2021 decennial Census with subsequent decrease on Census completion.

## AUDITORS

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. She is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO); she and her staff are wholly independent of the Agency and she reports her findings to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The audit of the financial statements for 2022-23 resulted in a notional audit fee of £17,886 (2021-22: £17,475) and is included in the operating expenditure in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

During 2022-23 the Agency did not purchase any non-audit services from its auditor (2021-22: none).

## EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There have been no significant events since the year-end that would affect the accounts.

## PAYMENT TO SUPPLIERS

The Agency's policy is to pay bills from all suppliers within 10 working days of receipt of the goods or performance of the services 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 89% (2021-22: 88%) of invoices paid to suppliers within 10 working days. The Agency achieved an average of 92% (2021-22: 96%) of invoices paid within 30 calendar days.

During this period NISRA did not make any interest payments under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest Act 1988).

## SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

NISRA embraces the direction provided by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in relation to sustainability and will continue to support and supplement the work in progress by its parent Department, (DoF) in all aspects of its sustainability strategy: social, economic and environmental.

The Department of Finance has carried out a review of its entire office estate and has initiated a five year plan. The plan will help the NICS to reduce its office and carbon footprint over the next five years and will aim to deliver a modern, fit for purpose and right-sized office estate that supports the needs of our business areas and people by:

- promoting the growth and quality of agile office layouts and NICS-wide shared office facilities;
- helping to embed new ways of working;
- supporting departments to make more effective use of office space and technologies;
- aligning with PfG objectives: NICS People, digital strategies and Net Zero Carbon;
- exploring opportunities for delivery through collaboration with wider public sector.



At an Agency level this is recognised through actions taken to minimise waste, to promote resource efficiency and through reduction in the use of single use plastics. Receptacles have been made available to facilitate recycling of paper, cans, plastic containers, paper towels, envelopes, magazines, and empty printer cartridges. Dry recyclable materials are kept separate from standard domestic waste for collection and recycling by the Department's waste recycling service provider. The quantity of office materials collected for recycling in recent years has considerably reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and this has remained the case for 2022-23 as office occupancy remains reduced.

Environmental Sustainability is promoted by DoF through the inclusion of common minimum standards, promoting sustainability within Government construction contracts to reduce the consumption of water and energy, as well as reducing waste and carbon. At Colby House, NISRA continues to implement a waste management regime which focuses on paper as the dominant waste stream. A number of measures have been implemented including: discouraging routine printing of emails, avoiding the procurement and use of single use plastics, promoting full usage of the NICS record management system, encouraging double sided and monochrome photocopying and printing (where necessary) and using recycled paper.

NISRA's parent Department, DoF, is aware of its obligations under the Climate Change Act 2022. The Department is represented on the cross-departmental Senior Officials group chaired by DAERA and has established an internal DoF working group to identify current policies and explore proposals for inclusion in the draft Climate Action Plan for 2023-2027 and beyond. The Department is also engaged with the Climate Change Technical Advisory Group which examines the methodologies for establishing a carbon baseline and quantify emissions. The Department is working closely with colleagues in DAERA in developing the 'Green Test'.

**This Performance Report is approved and signed**



**Dr Philip Wales**  
Accounting Officer  
23 June 2023

## **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

## OVERVIEW

The Accountability Report comprises the following:

### **Corporate Governance Report**

The purpose of the corporate governance report is to explain the composition and organisation of the Northern Ireland Statistics Research and Agency's (NISRA) governance structures and how they support the achievement of NISRA's objectives.

### **Remuneration and Staff Report**

The remuneration and staff report sets out NISRA's remuneration policy for directors, reports on how that policy has been implemented and sets out the amounts awarded to directors. In addition, the report provides detail on pension arrangements, staff costs, staff numbers and staff policies.

### **Assembly Accountability and Audit Report**

The Assembly Accountability and Audit report brings together the key Assembly accountability documents within the annual report and accounts. It includes sections on the Regularity of Expenditure (losses and special payments), the Assembly Accountability Disclosure (fees and charges), Remote Contingent Liabilities and the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT

### DIRECTORS' REPORT

#### Introduction

NISRA presents its Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

#### Management

The Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of NISRA, having duly consulted with and satisfied NISRA's sponsor Department (DoF) on matters of significance, is directly responsible to the DoF Minister for the management of the Agency's performance, operations and finances. During the 2022-23 reporting period this role was shared by Siobhan Carey, Brian Green and Philip Wales.

NISRA's Corporate Governance Framework sets out the system of direction and control within the agency. The key organisational structures which support the delivery of Corporate Governance within NISRA include the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Agency Board (AB).

#### Senior Management Team

The NISRA Senior Management Team is the primary formal management unit for the Agency and consists of:

Ms S Carey	Chief Executive and Registrar General (April to November 2022)
Dr P Wales	Chief Executive and Registrar General (from February 2023)
Mr B Green	Director of Economic Statistics (Temporary Chief Executive December 2022 to February 2023)
Dr D Marshall	Director of Social Statistics
Dr T Power	Director of Analysis (retired June 2022)
Mrs N Fisher	Director of Analysis and Research (from September 2022)
Mr A Fitzpatrick	Director of Statistical Coordination & Analysis (from September 2022)
Mrs K Walker	Deputy Registrar General (Temporary Registrar General from December 2022 to May 2023)
Mr C McKiernan	Business Development Manager (from January 2023)

The following officers also attend SMT meetings to provide resource management information and advice that will aid routine decision making, though they are not formal members: Head of Agency Corporate Services, DoF Finance Business Partner and the NICSHR Business Partner.

Excepting those issues identified as being specifically within the role of the Chief Executive, the SMT's function is to advise and support the Chief Executive on a variety of strategic management issues, including:

- setting and agreeing policy and strategic objectives through assessment of needs, risks and opportunities;
- determining organisational strategy and appropriate delivery mechanisms;
- directing implementation of strategy;
- evaluating corporate performance against objectives;
- prioritising allocation of available resource; and
- promoting the organisation to key stakeholders and key customer groups.

## Agency Board

The Board is the second tier of formal management and reflects the breadth of wider Agency activity. It consists of the NISRA members of the SMT and all Grade 6 statisticians representing the various NISRA business areas.

Excepting those issues identified as being specifically within the role of the SMT, the Board's function is to:

- advise the Chief Executive on the development of central NISRA policy and support its implementation;
- set business objectives to support delivery of Agency functions;
- lead on the implementation of activities designed to deliver the strategic outcomes described in the Corporate Plan;
- manage the implementation of change strategy;
- evaluate business area performance against objectives;
- utilise allocated resources effectively to meet business objectives and customer needs; and
- engage with key customer contacts and stakeholders to promote Agency policy and objectives.

The Agency Board members during the year were as follows:

Role	Name
Chief Executive and Registrar General	Ms S Carey (retired November 2023)
Chief Executive and Registrar General	Dr P Wales (appointed February 2023 Registrar General role to commence June 2023)
Director of Economic Statistics	Mr B Green (Temporary Chief Executive December 2022 to February 2023)
Director of Social Statistics	Dr D Marshall
Director of Analysis	Dr T Power (retired June 2022)
Director of Analysis and Research	Mrs N Fisher (from October 2022)
Director of Statistical Co-Ordination and Analysis	Mr A Fitzpatrick (from October 2022)
Deputy Registrar General	Mrs K Walker (Temporary Registrar General December 2022 to May 2023)
Head of Central Survey Unit	Mr B Morgan (April 2022 to November 2022)
Head of Central Survey Unit	Mr A McCormick (from January 2023)
Head of Survey Modernisation and Population Statistics	Mrs G McCrory (from January 2023)
Head of EU Exit and Statistics of Trade	Mr C Ganley (from January 2023)
Head of Information and Analysis Directorate (DoH)	Dr E Mooney
Head of Technology Laboratory	Mrs M Crawford (retired January 2023)

Head of Technology Laboratory	Mrs M Brolly (from January 2023)
Head of Census Office	Mr A Fitzpatrick (to August 2022)
Head of Census Office	Mr R Elliott (from October 2022)
Head of Information and Registration Unit (BSO)	Mr M Mayock
Head of Analytical Services Unit (DfE)	Mrs N Fisher (to August 2022)
Head of Analytical Services Unit (DfE)	Mrs C Blair (from October 2022)
Head of Economic and Labour Market Statistics	Mr G Colgan (from October 2022)
Head of Statistics and Research Unit (TEO)	Mrs O Bateson (from October 2022)
Head of Demographic Statistics	Ms D Lyness
Head of Statistics and Research Unit (DE)	Mrs P Donnan (from February 2023)
Head of Analytical Services (DfC)	Mr P McKillen
Head of Business Development	Mrs G McCrory (to December 2022)
Head of Business Development	Mr C McKiernan (from January 2023)

A Senior Management Forum (SMF), comprising the Agency Board and Grade 7 Statistical and Administrative Heads of Branches support the SMT and Agency Board in the delivery of the Corporate Plan and strategic outcomes and Balanced Scorecard objectives. The SMF provides the membership of issue specific review groups reporting to the Agency Board.

### Arrangements for external challenge

The composition, role and remit of the NISRA Audit and Risk Committee are documented in detail throughout this report and the three Non-Executive Directors judiciously review Agency Corporate Governance decision making. In addition to this, NISRA is committed to complying with the principles of the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics. The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) is an independent body at arm's length from government and has the statutory objective of promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that 'serve the public good'. NISRA's statistical outputs are monitored and assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), which is the regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority. Together the ARC and the UKSA (incorporating OSR) provide external and independent challenge roles with regard to NISRA's corporate governance / strategic management, operational activities and statistically trustworthy products.

### Register of Interests

A Register of Interests is maintained by the Agency and no significant interests are currently held by board members which may conflict with their management responsibilities.

### Pension Liabilities

The treatment of pension costs and liabilities is disclosed in the Remuneration and Staff Report and in the Accounting Policies note in the financial statements (Note 1.9).

## **Personal Data**

The Agency remains fully committed to complying with the Data Protection Act 2018 / UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). The Agency acts in accordance with a number of Departmental policies to ensure the safe handling of personal information. All of these policies can be found in the DoF Data Protection and Information Management hub. There were no reportable data breaches between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 within DoF or NISRA.

## **Reporting of Complaints**

NISRA is committed to providing a high quality service and as such, welcomes all feedback, both positive and negative, which is used to assist in the improvement of our services.

The Agency keeps a register of complaints received and ensures that these are investigated in line with the Departmental Complaints Procedure and that appropriate responses are issued to the complainant. The Agency also evaluates 'lessons learned' from individual cases to see if improvements can be embedded into existing operating procedures.

The NISRA Complaints Procedure is published on the NISRA website. Complaints can be made in the first instance to the Head of the Branch occasioning the complaint. Internal unresolved complaints can then be made to the NISRA Chief Executive. Continued dissatisfaction can then be brought to the Office of the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

In 2022-23 NISRA dealt with 3 complaints (2021-22: 22); one regarding vital events registration procedures and two in respect of the pursuance of survey interviews.

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (NI) 2001, the Department of Finance has directed NISRA to prepare, for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the 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 the Department of Finance, 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 financial statements;
- 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 Department of Finance has appointed the Chief Executive of NISRA as Accounting Officer of the Agency.

The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding NISRA's assets, are set out in the Accounting Officers' Memorandum issued by the Department of Finance and published in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

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 NISRA'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

### Scope of Responsibility

NISRA is an Executive Agency within the Department. It was established on 1 April 1996 under the Government's Next Steps Initiative. The Agency incorporates the General Register Office (GRO) for NI.

The Agency governance model contains a number of responsibilities:

- The Accounting Officer is responsible to the Minister of Finance for the Agency's performance and operates in accordance with the NISRA Framework Document and NISRA Business Plan.
- The Accounting Officer has responsibilities for the overall day-to-day leadership and management of the Agency, making regular reports to the Permanent Secretary on performance and progress.
- The Agency Board is responsible for reviewing the strategic direction of the Agency, monitoring performance at the corporate level and ensuring that adequate governance controls are in place. The Agency Board comprises the Chief Executive (Grade 3), four Grade 5 Statisticians, thirteen Senior Principal Statisticians and two Administrative Senior Principals.

The Agency Board members are listed in the Directors' Report on page 32-33. The Agency Board met six times during the year and was attended as follows:

	April 2022	June 2022	September 2022	October 2022	December 2022	March 2023
Ms S Carey	•	•	•	•	•	
Dr P Wales						•
Mr B Green	•	•	•	•	•	•
Dr D Marshall	•	•	•			•
Dr T Power	•					
Mr A Fitzpatrick	•	•		•	•	•
Mrs N Fisher	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mrs K Walker	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mr B Morgan (July 2022 to January 2023)	•		•			
Mr A McCormick (from January 2023)			•	•	•	•
Mrs G McCrory (from April 2022)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mr C Ganley (from January 2023)						•

Dr E Mooney						
Mrs M Crawford (retired January 2023)		•				
Mrs M Broily (from January 2023)	•		•	•	•	•
Mr R Elliott (from October 2023)				•	•	•
Mr M Mayock	•	•	•	•	•	
Mrs C Blair (from October 2022)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mr G Colgan (from October 2022)				•		
Mrs O Bateson (from October 2022)			•	•	•	•
Ms D Lyness	•		•	•	•	•
Mrs P Donnan (from February 2023)						
Mr P McKillen	•	•		•	•	•
Mr C McKiernan (from January 2023)						•

• attended the Agency Board meeting during this month

The Governance Statement, which has been agreed by the Agency Board, sets out how these responsibilities have been discharged throughout the year to 31 March 2023.

## Context

The overall aim of the Department is ‘to help the Executive secure the most appropriate and effective use of resources and services for the benefit of the community’ within a Programme for Government (PfG) focused on achieving outcomes of societal wellbeing.

The work the Agency undertakes makes a significant and positive difference to the everyday lives of all the citizens of NI supporting public services, by:

- providing Government departments and agencies with statistics and research services which help inform the policy, process and delivery of their objectives and actions;
- continuing to address the needs of a wide range of users, producing high quality statistics and research, ensuring the quality of those statistics and disseminating information to its users efficiently and effectively;
- providing official information on NI’s population and socio-economic conditions, the statistics produced by the Agency not only inform the policy process within Government, but also inform academic research and contribute to debate in the wider community; and
- providing the GRO function, which offers a civil registration service to the public and produces summary statistics relating to life events.

## Financial Management

NISRA regularly reviews actual income and expenditure against budget to form the basis of collective Agency Board decisions regarding the allocation and use of resource to ensure that the NISRA financial management target of avoiding overspend is met.

## Budget Position and Authority

The Northern Ireland Budget Act 2023 was passed by Parliament and received Royal Assent on 8 February 2023 which authorised the cash and use of resources for all departments and other bodies for the full 2022-23 year, and also included a Vote on Account for the early months of the 2022-23 financial year. This will be followed by a further Budget Bill which the Secretary of State will bring to Parliament in due course, following the 2022-23 Northern Ireland Budget which he set in his Written Ministerial Statement on 27 April 2023.

## Risk and Control Framework

Risk management within NISRA continues to be an integral part of the Agency's governance and control framework. The Corporate Risk Register is used to identify, evaluate, assign ownership of and review, planned mitigations of relevant high level risks present in the Agency's operating environment. The Risk Register is regularly reviewed and monitored by the Agency senior team and NISRA's Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The ARC is chaired by one of its three independent members and functions in accordance with best practice contained in the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) 2018 issued under DAO (DoF) 03/18 in March 2018.

The Agency ensures that the risk management and internal controls are regularly reviewed and reported in the following manner:

- all business areas use pre-determined weightings and a standardised approach to risk assessment;
- key risks identified at Agency level are documented on a Risk Register and are reviewed on a formal monthly basis by the Agency senior team during the course of a year;
- NISRA ARC formally reviews risks and controls on a regular basis and assesses the continued proximity of the respective risks and the mitigating actions being taken to manage them. The need to treat, tolerate, transfer or terminate risks is also determined in order to reflect the current business environment;
- Heads of Branches complete stewardship statements at the end of each financial year;
- the Chief Executive provides the NISRA and Departmental ARCs with a mid-year and year end Stewardship Statement; and
- the Agency adheres to and promotes the Department's 'Raising Concerns Policy'.

The Agency had two business area departmental performance measures for the year 2022-23 (Census 22a to 22c and PCOS 22d), as well as three departmental performance measures which NISRA contributed to (People Survey 9, Citizen facing services 20c and

Shared services 21f). NISRA has achieved 4 out of 7 of these targets. This has been confirmed as accurate by DoF Internal Audit.

## Agency Performance

The NISRA Business Plan 2022-23 sets out the Agency's objectives for the year against which performance is reported and monitored. Progress against plan is regularly reported to Agency Board providing details of actual results against target (DoF and NISRA Chief Executive) and a narrative on the actions taken to deliver the expected outcomes. In line with NICS recommended best practice, a NISRA Business Plan for 2023-24 is being developed based on an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach, which sets out our outcomes for the next twelve months, and the indicators and performance measures that we will take towards achieving those outcomes. The plan incorporates NISRA's values and priorities, the outputs of the INSIGHT initiative and NISRA DoF measures. NISRA is an Agency in its own right and therefore requires its own outcomes and indicators. The plan also includes a section for accomplishments, which can be qualitative.

An evaluation of NISRA's achievements at the end of 2023-24 will be set in the context of severe budget reductions and how these influenced our ability to meet our prescribed outcomes.

## Accounting Officer

The NISRA Chief Executive is responsible to the Minister of Finance who determines the policy framework within which the Agency operates. Having been designated by the DoF Permanent Secretary as Agency Accounting Officer, the responsibilities of NISRA's AO includes being accountable to the Minister and the NI Assembly for the Agency's use of resources, ensuring propriety and regularity of the public finances for which an Accounting Officer is answerable as set out in the 'Accounting Officer's Memorandum' issued by DoF and published in 'Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland'. During 2022-23 NISRA has taken cognisance of the guidance on the component streams of functional standards, recognising these as the primary reference documents for improved and consistent ways of working to help the Agency achieve its objectives more effectively and efficiently within the overall fundamental principles of Managing Public Money. In addition to this, the Chief Executive ensures that the Agency observes any general guidance issued by DoF and puts into effect any recommendations by the Public Accounts Committee, other Assembly Select Committees or other relevant authority, which the Executive has accepted.

At the beginning of the financial year, the AO delegated responsibility to each of the Heads of Branches for management of budgets within their respective business areas. The AO receives assurance from each Director on risk management, governance, financial management and delegation within their respective areas of responsibility in the format of Stewardship Statements. Key issues emanating from these statements are reflected in this Governance Statement.

The AO chairs the NISRA Agency Board which met on six occasions in 2022-23. The Agency Board operates in compliance with 'Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013' and directs the strategic management of NISRA by reviewing its strategic options and setting its corporate direction. The Agency Board considered the information received to be fit for purpose.

The Agency maintains a Register of Significant Interests held by Board members which may conflict with their management responsibilities. Board members are requested annually to make a declaration and no such significant interests were declared by members for the Agency Board for the year ended 31 March 2023.

In 2022-23 NISRA also obtained declarations of interest from all other Agency staff. Again no significant interests have been declared which the Agency consider to represent a potential conflict of interest.

The Agency Board also considered and reviewed NISRA risks as detailed in the NISRA Corporate Risk Register. The Agency ARC, which is chaired by an independent Non-Executive Member of the DoF Board, supports the AO and the Agency Board on issues of risk, control and governance. In addition, the ARC provides assurance and advice to the AO on the adequacy of both internal and external audit coverage. The ARC met on four occasions in 2022-23, attended by its Non-Executive Members as follows:

	25 May 2022	21 June 2022	19 October 2022	1 February 2023
<b>Tom Taylor</b>	•	•	•	•
<b>John Smyth</b>	•	•	•	•
<b>Elizabeth Ensor</b>	•	•	•	•

• attended the ARC meeting

## Level of Assurance

The AO has responsibility for ensuring that a robust risk management system is in place, so that risks faced by NISRA are identified and managed accordingly. The Accounting Officer is also responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review is informed by the work of DoF's Internal Audit Team and Departmental Board members who have responsibility for ensuring that the controls and actions recommended are implemented.

The Department's Internal Audit Team reported on the work of the Agency during 2022-23. These reports provide an objective and widespread assessment of the systems of internal control in operation across the Agency, together with prioritised recommendations to strengthen controls and implement further improvements.

Internal Audit completed a programme of audits during 2022-23 and in his Annual Report the Head of Internal Audit provided NISRA with a satisfactory audit opinion. Further details on the Internal Audit output for the year are included in the section 'Significant Internal Control Problems'.

The Agency maintains Information Risk Registers in each Business Area which are linked into the Departmental Risk Register and provide the Departmental Board and the Senior Information Risk Owner with an oversight of corporate and operational information risks.

NISRA is committed to complying with the principles of the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics and its statistical output is monitored and assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), which is the regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority. During the year, five of NISRA's official statistics products were assessed for National Statistics status and three existing National Statistics outputs were checked for compliance with the Code of Practice. All of these statistics, where an outcome was declared within the year, were successfully designated as National Statistics or had the National Statistics designation confirmed. No official statistics products failed to achieve National Statistics designation.

### Fraud Prevention and Assurance

NISRA takes a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and will report all instances of fraud to DoF and the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) as well as to the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI). The Agency complies with the DoF Raising Concerns Policy that sets out staff responsibilities with regard to the prevention of fraud.

Whistleblowing arrangements are in place and can be used to raise concerns about alleged impropriety, wrongdoing, corruption, fraud or malpractice. The Agency has not recorded any instances of suspected or actual fraud, nor any cases of whistleblowing during the year.

### Significant Internal Control Problems

DoF Internal Audit undertook the following audits during 2022-23:

System	Priority Rating	Planned Days	Type of Audit	Timing
Target Validation 2021-22	2	2	Validation	Complete
General Register Office	2	30	Risk Based Internal Audit	Complete - Satisfactory
NIROS (Northern Ireland Registration Office System)	2	10	Risk Based Internal Audit	Complete - Satisfactory
Advisory	-	As required	Consulting	As Required

There were no significant internal control problems identified by Internal Audit.

## Review of Effectiveness

As AO, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the Governance procedures within the Agency. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the Agency who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework and comments made by the external auditors in their 'Report to those charged with Governance' and other reports. I have been advised on the implications of the result of this review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Senior Management Team and the ARC and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

I consider the information presented to the Agency Board in the Corporate Performance report to be of a high quality, accurate and relevant to the internal control systems within the Agency and that the Agency has complied with the Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013 in all respects.

## Conclusion

Taking into account all of the arrangements set out in this Governance Statement, NISRA has an effective governance structure in place and has satisfactory systems of internal control which have operated effectively throughout 2022-23.



**Dr Philip Wales**  
**Chief Executive**  
**23 June 2023**

## REMUNERATION AND STAFF 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 24 November 2022 Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) on the Budget and the NI (Executive Formation) Act receiving Royal Assent on the 6 December 2022, the NI public sector pay policy guidance was published on 8 December 2022.

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 2022-23 has been finalised and is due to be paid in June 2023. The pay award for NICS industrial staff for 2022-23 has been finalised and is due to be paid in July 2023.

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.

### 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 otherwise.

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.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland can be found at <https://www.nicscommissioners.org>.

### Remuneration and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior management of the Agency (Grade 6 and above).



## Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

(the following section is subject to audit)

Officials	Salary £000		Pension Benefits** (to nearest £1,000)		Total £000	
	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22
Dr P Wales (appointed February 2023)	5 – 10 (100-105 FYE)	–	4	–	10-15 (105-110 FYE)	–
Ms S Carey (retired November 2022)	95-100 (105-110 FYE)	100-105	(85)	27	10-15 (20-25 FYE)	125-130
Mr B Green	80-85 (95-100 FYE)	75-80	3	43	85-90 (95-100 FYE)	120-125
Mrs O Bateson (appointed October 2022)	25-30 (60-65 FYE)	–	12	–	40-45 (70-75 FYE)	–
Mrs C Blair (appointed October 2022)	25-30 (60-65 FYE)	25-30 (55-60 FYE)	1	13	30-35 (60-65 FYE)	40-45 (70-75 FYE)
Mrs M Brolly (appointed January 2023)	10-15 (60-65 FYE)	–	(1)	–	10-15 (60-65 FYE)	–
Mr G Colgan (appointed October 2022)	25-30 (65-70 FYE)	30-35 (55-60 FYE)	(13)	25	15-20 (50-55 FYE)	55-60 (80-85 FYE)
Mrs M Crawford (retired January 2023)	55-60 (65-70 FYE)	65-70	(32)	21	25-30 (35-40 FYE)	85-90
Mrs P Donnan (appointed February 2023)	5-10 (65-70 FYE)	–	3	–	5-10 (65-70 FYE)	–
Mr R Elliott (appointed October 2022)	25-30 (60-65 FYE)	–	4	–	30-35 (65-70 FYE)	–
Mrs N Fisher	70-75	65-70	21	37	90-95	105-110
Mr A Fitzpatrick	70-75	70-75	14	20	85-90	90-95
Mr C Ganley (appointed January 2023)	10-15 (60-65 FYE)	–	5	–	15-20 (65-70 FYE)	–
Ms D Lyness	65-70	65-70	–	36	65-70	100-105
Dr D Marshall	80-85	80-85	(8)	39	70-75	120-125
Mr M Mayock	65-70	65-70	(16)	42	50-55	110-115
Mr A McCormick (appointed January 2023)	10-15 (70-75 FYE)	–	6	–	20-25 (75-80 FYE)	–
Mrs G McCrory	60-65	–	38	–	95-100	–
Mr C McKiernan (appointed January 2023)	10-15 (60-65 FYE)	–	6	–	15-20 (65-70 FYE)	–
Mr P McKillen	60-65	60-65	8	16	65-70	75-80
Dr E Mooney	70-75	120-125	(27)	51	45-50	175-180
Mr B Morgan (TP April 2022 to November 2022)	35-40 (60-65 FYE)	–	27	–	65-70 (85-90 FYE)	–
Dr T Power (retired June 2022)	15-20 (70-75 FYE)	75-80	(147)	40	(130)-(135) [(70)-(75) FYE]	115-120
Mrs K Walker	65-70 (70-75 FYE)	70-75	17	44	85-90 (90-95 FYE)	110-115

\* 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.  
(FYE – Full Year Equivalent)

## 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 employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. None of the Agency Board members received any benefits in kind in 2022-23 or 2021-22.

## Pay Ratios

(the following section is subject to audit)

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.

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in NISRA in the financial year 2022-23 was £105,000 - £110,000 (2021-22: £120,000 - £125,000). The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation's workforce is disclosed below.

<b>2022-23</b>	<b>25th percentile</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>75th percentile</b>
Total remuneration (£)	32,328	33,459	42,639
Pay ratio	3.3:1	3.2:1	2.5:1

<b>2021-22</b>	<b>25th percentile</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>75th percentile</b>
Total remuneration (£)	32,893	33,459	42,639
Pay ratio	3.7:1	3.7:1	2.9:1

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 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile were £32,328, £33,459 and £42,639 respectively.

In 2022-23 and 2021-22: no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director.

Remuneration ranged from £19,000 to £110,000 (2021-22: £19,000 to £125,000).

### 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 NISRA 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.

Percentage change for:	2022-23 v 2021-22	2021-22 v 2020-21
Average employee salary and allowances	(1.75)%	2.23%
Highest paid director's salary and allowances	(12.24)%	19.51%
Average employee performance pay and bonuses	(100%) <sup>1</sup>	(100%) <sup>1</sup>
Highest paid director's performance pay and bonuses	n/a <sup>2</sup>	n/a <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Northern Ireland Civil Service special bonus scheme was withdrawn with effect from 31 March 2021.

<sup>2</sup> No performance pay or bonuses were payable to the highest paid director in these years.

### Pension Benefits - Officials

(the following section is subject to audit)

Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/23 (or date of leaving if earlier) and related lump sum £000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000	CETV at 31/03/23 £000	CETV at 31/03/22 £000	Real increase in CETV £000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account (nearest £100)
Dr P Wales	0-5	0-2.5	2	0	1	n/a
Ms S Carey	40-45 plus a lump sum of 180-185	0 plus a lump sum of 37.5-40	966	970	(76)	n/a
Mr B Green	35-40 plus a lump sum of 95-100	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	815	743	(8)	n/a
Mrs O Bateson	15-20 plus a lump sum of 25-30	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	271	248	6	n/a
Mrs C Blair	15-20	0-2.5	190	185	(3)	n/a
Mrs M Brolly	20-25 plus a lump sum of 35-40	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	361	358	(3)	n/a
Mr G Colgan	20-25 plus a lump sum of 35-40	0 plus a lump sum of 0	387	374	(11)	n/a
Mrs M Crawford	25-30 plus a lump sum of 80-85	0 plus a lump sum of 32.5-35	411	402	(31)	n/a
Mrs P Donnan	20-25 plus a lump sum of 45-50	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	426	420	2	n/a
Mr R Elliott	20-25	0-2.5	259	247	2	n/a
Mrs N Fisher	25-30 plus a lump sum of 45-50	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	412	361	8	n/a
Mr A Fitzpatrick	30-35 plus a lump sum of 55-60	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	622	555	3	n/a
Mr C Ganley	10-15	0-2.5	117	113	2	n/a

<b>Officials</b>	<b>Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/23 (or date of leaving if earlier) and related lump sum £000</b>	<b>Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000</b>	<b>CETV at 31/03/23 £000</b>	<b>CETV at 31/03/22 £000</b>	<b>Real increase in CETV £000</b>	<b>Employer contribution to partnership pension account (nearest £100)</b>
Ms D Lyness	20-25 plus a lump sum of 40-45	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	367	336	(8)	n/a
Dr D Marshall	30-35 plus a lump sum of 55-60	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	602	556	(19)	n/a
Mr M Mayock	30-35 plus a lump sum of 60-65	0 plus a lump sum of 0	619	574	(24)	n/a
Mr A McCormick	25-30 plus a lump sum of 40-45	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	414	403	3	n/a
Mrs G McCrory	15-20 plus a lump sum of 30-35	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	263	217	20	n/a
Mr C McKiernan	10-15	0-2.5	132	129	2	n/a
Mr P McKillen	20-25	0-2.5	295	266	(3)	n/a
Dr E Mooney	30-35 plus a lump sum of 85-90	0 plus a lump sum of 0	674	653	(34)	n/a
Mr B Morgan	25-30 plus a lump sum of 50-55	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	508	478	19	n/a
Dr T Power	20-25 plus a lump sum of 145-150	0 plus a lump sum of 65-67.5	616	709	(121)	n/a
Mrs K Walker	35-40 plus a lump sum of 85-90	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	796	697	11	n/a

## 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. At that time, members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age did not move to Alpha (full protection) and those who were within 13.5 years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to Alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age (tapered protection).

### McCloud Judgment

In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the 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 are being taken by the Department of Finance to remedy those 2015 reforms, making the pension scheme provisions fair to all members. Some active members will have seen changes from April 2022.

The remedy is made up of two parts. The first part was completed last year with all active members now being members of Alpha from 1 April 2022, this provides equal treatment for all active pension scheme members.

The second part is to put right, 'remedy,' the discrimination that has happened between 2015 and 2022. We are currently working on new scheme regulations and processes in readiness for this.

It is expected that, in due course, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period. The different pension benefits relate to the alternative schemes e.g., legacy PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' (legacy scheme) or Alpha. Scheme regulations made in March 2022, closed the PCSPS(NI) to future accrual from 31 March 2022, and all remaining active PCSPS(NI) members (including partially retired members in active service) moved to 'Alpha' from 1 April 2022. This completed Phase One to remedy the discrimination identified by the Courts. Any pension benefits built up in the legacy scheme prior to this date are unaffected and PCSPS(NI) benefits remain payable in accordance with the relevant scheme rules. Phase Two will see the implementation of the Deferred Choice Underpin. That is, giving eligible members a choice between legacy scheme and Alpha scheme benefits for service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. 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>.

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**

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%.

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may 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 membership of Premium or joining the Partnership Pension Account.

Benefits in Classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years' pension is payable on retirement. For Premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike Classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic Plus is essentially a variation of Premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per Classic.

### **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 the age of 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:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/civil-service-pensions-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 2022 was 10.1% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2023.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 are as follows:

#### **Scheme Year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

<b>Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands)</b>		<b>Contribution rates – All members</b>
<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>From 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023</b>
£0.00	£25,049.99	4.60%
£25,050.00	£56,999.99	5.45%
£57,000.00	£153,299.99	7.35%
£153,300.00 and above		8.05%

#### **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 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 be due when pension benefits are taken.



CETV figures are calculated using the guidance on discount rates for calculating unfunded public service pension contribution rates that was extant at 31 March 2023. HM Treasury published updated guidance on 27 April 2023; this guidance will be used in the calculation of 2023-24 CETV figures.

### **Real increase in CETV**

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

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

(the following section is subject to audit)

The Agency did not make any payments for loss of office during 2022-23.

### **Payments to Past Directors**

(the following section is subject to audit)

The Agency did not make any payments to past directors during 2022-23.

## STAFF REPORT

### Number of senior civil service staff (or equivalent) by band

The number of staff serving as senior civil servants (or equivalent) based on a full year equivalent as at 31 March 2023 is as follows:

Pay Band*	2022-23	2021-22
£70,000 - £74,999	4	-
£75,000 - £79,999	-	2
£80,000 - £85,000	1	1
£95,000 - £100,000	1	-
£100,000-£104,999	1	-
£105,000-£109,999	1	1

\* Based on full year equivalent.

### Staff costs

(the following section is subject to audit)

Staff costs comprise:

	2022-23	2022-23	2022-23	2021-22
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Wages and salaries	17,049	2,714	19,762	21,603
Social security costs	1,836	-	1,836	1,836
Other pension costs	5,185	-	5,185	5,189
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>24,070</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>26,783</b>	<b>28,628</b>
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(11,999)	-	(11,999)	(11,700)
<b>Total net costs</b>	<b>12,071</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>14,784</b>	<b>16,298</b>

The total excludes £769k (2021-22: £358k) of salary costs which have been charged to capital.

### Pension arrangements

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

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

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

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

Following completion of the consultation process the 2016 Valuation has been completed and the final cost cap determined. Further information, including a copy of Unpause Cost Cap Valuation Report, can be found on the Department of Finance website:

<https://www.financeni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-pension-scheme-valuations>.

A case for approval of a Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) was laid in the Assembly to extend the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill (PSP&JO) to Northern Ireland. Under the LCM agreed by the NI Assembly on 1 November 2021 provisions are included in the Act for devolved schemes in NI. A second LCM was laid in the Assembly to implement the CCM changes in the Westminster Bill for devolved schemes. The second LCM, as agreed by the Assembly on 31 January 2022, ensured the reformed only scheme design and the economic check will now be applied to the 2020 scheme valuations for the devolved public sector pension schemes, including the NICS pension scheme. The PSP&JO Act received Royal Assent on 10 March 2022. The UK Act legislates how the government will remove the discrimination identified in the McCloud judgment. The Act also includes provisions that employees will not experience any detriment if the adjusted valuation costs breach the set cost cap ceiling but any breaches of the cost cap floor (positive employee impacts) in the completed valuations will be honoured.

For 2022-23, employers' contributions of £5,377,183 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2021- 22 £5,255,193) 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 £14,786 (2021-22: £15,495) 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% (2021-22: 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 £535, 0.5% (2021-22: £527, 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.

### Ill-health retirement

There was one ill-health retirement during the year (2021-22: £NIL). The total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £NIL (2021-22: £NIL).

### Average number of persons employed

(the following section is subject to audit)

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

	2022-23	2022-23	2022-23	2021-22
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
NISRA Board	20	-	20	16
NISRA Employees	436	-	436	476
Other Staff engaged on capital projects*	-	103	103	66
	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>558</b>

\* The Agency does not employ any staff exclusively on capital projects

## Staff composition

The gender analysis of permanent Agency staff as at 31 March 2023 was as follows.

	2022-23			2021-22		
	Female staff	Male Staff	Total Staff	Female staff	Male Staff	Total Staff
Agency Board	6	8	14	5	7	12
Senior Civil Service	2	4	6	2	2	4
Other NISRA Employees	231	208	439	232	204	436
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>452</b>

[Figures include NISRA staff out-posted to other government departments and seconded to other organisations]

## Sickness absence

The Agency had an overall sickness absence rate of 7.4 days lost per employee in 2021-2022. Annual sickness absence figures can be found in the "Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021-22 report at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/sickness-absence-northern-ireland-civil-service-202122>. Figures for the 2022-23 financial year will be published in due course.

## Staff Policies

### Employment, training and advancement of disabled persons

The NICS values and welcomes diversity and is committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace for all. The NICS Diversity Champions Network was established in 2015 and continues to drive diversity and inclusion across the service.

The NICS Disability Champion is supported by the NICS Disability Working Group, a consultative group that works to promote disability equality and inclusion across the service.

The NICS applies the recruitment principles as set out in the Recruitment Code of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland, appointing candidates based on merit through fair and open competition. Panel members must complete mandatory recruitment and selection training prior to participating on any selection panel. This training includes specific learning on equality and diversity, relevant legislation and reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates. Unconscious bias training is available to all staff.

The NICS continues to be a lead partner of Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) and is committed to the employment and career advancement of disabled people. A range of activities to encourage and promote Civil Service career opportunities to the disability sector were delivered during 2022-23; including positive action advertising, targeted advertising and outreach information sessions for large volume recruitment competitions. The NICS continues to have a permanent presence on EFDNI's Jobs Bulletin Board which is an online career opportunities service circulated to disability organisations.

The NICS operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) which applies to all external NICS recruitment competitions (at any grade and any discipline) where appropriate. This 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. For more information refer to the "Information for disabled applicants" section of the NICS recruit website.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the NICS Work Experience Scheme for Disabled People remained closed to applications until November 2022. The NICS continued its' participation in International Job Shadow Day (IJSD) by facilitating 13 work placements in 2022. This initiative provides work experience for disabled people of all ages.

During this year the nine-month placement work placement opportunities under the Job Start Scheme pilot within the Department for Communities (DfC) for 15 young disabled people (aged 16-24) concluded. As a result of an amendment to Recruitment Code merit principle approved by the Civil Service Commissioners, nine of the successful participants were made permanent offers of appointment in the NICS. Another three placement workers successfully obtained employment with other employers.

In June 2022, the Northern Ireland Executive, in partnership with the Harkin Institute, hosted the Harkin International Summit 2022. The event brought together leaders and activists across Business, Government, Philanthropy, the Third and Voluntary Sector, and Academia to highlight and address disability employment issues, showcase best practice and success, build relationships and challenge for change. The NCS as an employer participated, attended and supported the summit to promote its commitment to disability inclusion.

To maintain and promote a disability inclusive workplace, the NICS has policies in place to support reasonable adjustments to working practices or the work environment as required by disabled persons. During the year a programme of awareness training was available to all staff.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

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

Our 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+.

We deliver an ambitious diversity and inclusion programme of work through the implementation of an annual NICS Diversity Action Plan, which sets out our 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 on the NICS' commitment to equality of opportunity 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 NICS Human Resources Statistics section of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)'s website.

The annual "Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service" reports work force composition and trends over time and where appropriate, makes comparisons with the wider labour market and the Civil Service in Great Britain.

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 Reviews.

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 Agency's equality scheme is available on the Department of Finance website at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk>.

## **Other Employee Matters**

### *Health & Safety*

The Department has a Health & Safety Policy which complies with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation (NI) 2000, and all other relevant legislation. The Agency regards it as an integral part of its duties and objectives to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work and of all other persons who may be affected by the Agency's undertakings.

### *Employee Consultation and Trade Union Relationships*

The Department of Finance is responsible for the NICS Industrial Relations Policy. NICSHR 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.

### *Human Capital Management*

The NICS is committed to career development, acknowledging that skilled and engaged staff are an essential resource in meeting current and future business needs.

This NICS Career Development Policy emphasises that career development is a collaborative process between individual staff members, line managers, and departments, and takes account of the NICS Competency Framework and Performance Management System. As well as the individual's role in managing their career development, the NICS provides opportunities to enhance the skills, capabilities and performance of staff so that they, in turn, can contribute to achieving corporate objectives.

### *Learning & 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 NICSHR\*. Training is delivered using a variety of learning delivery channels (including online, webinars), 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 of the NICS People Strategy and highlights the importance of the development conversation between managers and staff, with a number of resources already available within the existing 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.

*\*NICSHR is the NICS' centralised human resources operational delivery function, falling under the responsibility of the Department of Finance*

### *Application of Business Appointment Rules*

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 by Civil Servants after leaving 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.

Summary information in respect of applications from Senior Civil Service Grade 5 and above, including equivalent grades, and Special Advisers can be found at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk>.

### *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.

*\*HR policy and Industrial Relations policy for the NICS is centralised within People & Organisational Development, in the Department of Finance*

### **Employee Engagement**

During the year, DoF delivered a wide-ranging programme of staff engagement including a series of virtual events for over 2,000 DoF staff led by the Permanent Secretary and members of the senior leadership team. Topics covered include New Ways of Working, Pay and departmental priorities. In addition, the Department delivered over 30 NICS Live Online events, with a strong emphasis on mental and physical health and wellbeing, to more than 13,000 staff across the NICS.

### **Staff Engagement Scores**

The Head of the NI Civil Service issued a message on 7 November 2022 indicating that the launch of the next People Survey would be postponed until spring 2023 and so no survey was conducted in 2022. The results of the survey conducted in 2023 were not available in advance of finalising the Annual Report and Accounts. However, the full survey is expected to be made available in summer 2023 at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/nics-people-survey-results>.

### **Expenditure on consultancy and temporary staffing**

There was £NIL NISRA expenditure on external consultancy in the financial year 2022- 23 (2021-22: £NIL).

NISRA spent £2,713k during the year on temporary staffing (2021-22: £4,577k).

## Staff Turnover

	Departmental Turnover Rate		General Turnover Rate	
	Turnover Rate	Turnover Percentage	Turnover Rate	Turnover Percentage
NISRA	0.090	9.0%	0.046	4.6%

The NISRA Staff Turnover percentage (the total number of people that have left the Agency including those who have moved within the NICS) for 2022-23 is 9.0% (2021- 22, 7.7%) and the general turnover percentage (the people who have left the Agency and have not gone elsewhere in the NICS) is 4.6% (2021-22: 4.4%). This has been calculated by NICSHR based on the Cabinet Office Guidance on calculations for Turnover in the Civil Service.

## Staff Redeployment

NISRA had no staff redeployed in 2022-23.

## Off-payroll Engagements

The Agency did not have any off-payroll engagements during 2022-23.

## Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages

(the following section is subject to audit)

There were no early retirements or compulsory redundancies in 2022-23 (2021-22: none).

Ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in this section.

## OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT

### Other Assembly Accountability Disclosures

#### Regularity of Expenditure

##### **i. Losses and special payments**

(the following section is subject to audit)

#### Losses statement

The Agency did not make any individual losses in excess of £250,000.

#### Special Payments

The Agency did not make any special payments during the year. (2021-22: £NIL).

##### **ii. Fees and Charges**

(the following section is subject to audit)

#### General Register Office

In setting fees, the General Register Office (GRO) aims to recover 100% of costs directly attributable to estimated volumes of certificates produced and marriage and civil partnership notices and ceremonies. GRO is legislatively required to provide a birth, death, marriage and civil partnership registration service and no costs are charged for this service. In 2022-23 GRO estimated that it would recover £3,104k (2021-22: £ 2,729k) from the supply of certificates and services. The actual cost recovery for the year was £3,512k (2021-22: £3,179k).

#### Central Survey Unit

In 2022-23 the Central Survey Unit (CSU) estimated that it would recover £2,091k (2021-22: £2,403k) from carrying out surveys on behalf of government departments and non-departmental public bodies. The actual cost recovery for the year was £2,135k (2021-22: £2,036k). The information provided in the table below is for fees and charges purposes, not for International Financial Reporting Standard 8 (IFRS 8).

	2022-23 Income £000	2022-23 Full cost £000	2022-23 Surplus/ (deficit) £000	2021-22 Surplus/ (deficit) £000
Registration Services	3,512	(3,215)	297	28
Statistics and Research work carried out by CSU	2,135	(2,194)	(59)	-
Recovery of staff costs for staff outside DoF	11,999	(12,033)	(34)	99
Other services	2,179	(2,117)	62	824
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,825</b>	<b>(19,559)</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>951</b>

The above figures represent services where the full cost of the service is in excess of £1m. For Registration Services, the Statutory Provision is as noted in Article 7 to the Births and Deaths Registration (NI) Order 1976. For other services, NISRA's financial objective was to recover the total cost of those activities for which DoF funding was not provided. This objective was met.

### Remote Contingent Liabilities

(the following section is subject to audit)

Contingent Liabilities requiring disclosure under assembly reporting requirements and not under IAS37

There were no contingent liabilities requiring disclosure under assembly reporting requirements (in addition to within the meaning of IAS 37) for liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability.

**This Accountability Report is approved and signed**



**Dr Philip Wales**  
Accounting Officer  
23 June 2023

## Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

### 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 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for the year ended 31 March 2023 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 their preparation 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 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its net operating 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 Finance 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 this certificate.

My staff and I are independent of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research 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.

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research 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 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research 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 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research 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 report.

### **Other Information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited and my audit certificate and report. The 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 report I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

### **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 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report or in the 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 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;
- such internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- ensuring the annual report, which includes the Remunerations and Staff Report, is prepared in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework; and
- assessing the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research 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 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research 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 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included The Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001;

- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on Northern Ireland Statistics and Research 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 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research 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 following areas: revenue recognition, expenditure recognition, posting of unusual journals and significant transactions;
- 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;
  - 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*  
*30 June 2023*

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

## Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2023

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.

	Note	2022-23	2021-22
		£000	£000
Revenue from contracts with customers	4	<u>(19,825)</u>	<u>(19,179)</u>
<b>Total operating income</b>		<b><u>(19,825)</u></b>	<b><u>(19,179)</u></b>
Staff costs	3	26,783	28,628
Purchase of goods and services	3	2,989	3,231
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	1,895	1,505
Provision expense	3	50	(47)
Other operating expenditure	3	<u>5,457</u>	<u>6,681</u>
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>		<b><u>37,174</u></b>	<b><u>39,998</u></b>
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>		<b>17,349</b>	<b>20,819</b>
<b>Other comprehensive net expenditure</b>			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net loss on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	5	(21)	(8)
Net loss on revaluation of intangible assets	6	<u>(411)</u>	<u>(252)</u>
<b>Comprehensive net expenditure for the year</b>		<b><u>16,917</u></b>	<b><u>20,559</u></b>

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

## Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2023

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

	Note	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	5	550	459
Intangible assets	6	3,815	3,660
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>4,365</b>	<b>4,119</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Trade and other receivables	9	4,330	5,006
Cash and cash equivalents	8	217	198
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>4,547</b>	<b>5,204</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>8,912</b>	<b>9,323</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	(3,767)	(3,018)
Provisions	11	(50)	–
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>(3,817)</b>	<b>(3,018)</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>5,095</b>	<b>6,305</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Provisions		–	(9)
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>–</b>	<b>(9)</b>
<b>Total assets less total liabilities</b>		<b>5,095</b>	<b>6,296</b>
<b>Taxpayers' equity and other reserves</b>			
General fund		4,457	5,886
Revaluation reserve		638	410
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>5,095</b>	<b>6,296</b>

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these financial statements.



**Dr Philip Wales**  
Accounting Officer  
23 June 2023

## Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2023

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	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000 Restated
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net operating expenditure	SoCNE	(17,349)	(20,819)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
Loss on disposal of non-current assets	3	38	–
Notional charges	3	3,179	3,015
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	1,895	1,505
Provision expense	3	50	(47)
Decrease/(Increase) in trade and other receivables	9	676	(866)
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables	10	749	(2,499)
<i>less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</i>	10	(52)	(14)
Use of Provisions	11	(9)	(69)
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>10,823</b>	<b>(19,794)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(267)	(77)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	(1,428)	(1000)
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>(1,695)</b>	<b>(1,077)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Net Assembly Funding - drawn down		12,537	20,855
<b>Net cash flow from financing activities</b>	SoCiTE	<b>12,537</b>	<b>20,855</b>
<b>Net increase/ (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period</b>		19	(16)
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period</b>	8	198	214
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	8	217	198

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

## Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2023

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, 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 2021</b>		<b>2,732</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>2,986</b>
Net Assembly Funding		20,855	–	20,855
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(20,819)	260	(20,559)
Auditor's remuneration	3	17	–	17
Non-cash notional charges	3	2,997	–	2,997
Transfer between reserves		104	(104)	–
<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>		<b>5,886</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>6,296</b>
Net Assembly Funding		12,537	–	12,537
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(17,349)	432	(16,917)
Auditor's remuneration	3	18	–	18
Non-cash notional charges	3	3,161	–	3,161
Transfer between reserves		204	(204)	–
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>		<b>4,457</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>5,095</b>

Notes 1 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

## Notes to the Accounts

### 1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2022-23 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance. The accounting policies contained in 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 that has been judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Agency for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Agency for 2022-23 are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the Accounts.

#### 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 and intangible assets.

#### 1.2 Property, plant and equipment

The Agency's property, plant and equipment includes IT equipment, plant and machinery and fixtures and fittings which are capitalised at their cost of acquisition and installation and are revalued annually using appropriate indices compiled by the Office for National Statistics. The threshold for capitalisation, as an individual or grouped fixed asset, remains at £500 for the Agency for computer equipment, with all other equipment at £1,000.

Where appropriate, surpluses and deficits on revaluation are taken to the revaluation reserve and reductions in the value of non-current assets arising from a clear consumption of economic benefit should be charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

The Agency does not own the property it occupies, but incurs a notional accommodation charge which is included in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

### 1.3 Intangible assets

The Agency's intangible assets include software licences, internally and externally developed software, bespoke systems, databases and a website, which are capitalised at their cost of acquisition and installation. Intangible assets are revalued annually using appropriate indices compiled by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

The threshold for capitalisation, as an individual or grouped fixed asset, remains at £500 for the Agency.

### 1.4 Depreciation and Amortisation

Depreciation/amortisation is provided on a straight line basis in order to write-off the valuation, less estimated residual value, of non-current assets over their estimated useful lives. The estimated useful lives, which are reviewed regularly, are:

- Information technology 3-12 years;
- Plant and machinery 3-30 years;
- Furniture and fittings up to 10 years; and
- Intangible assets 3-12 years.

Depreciation/amortisation, on assets under construction commences when the assets are ready for their intended use.

### 1.5 Operating Income

Operating income is income which relates directly to the operating activities of the Agency. It principally comprises fees and charges for services provided on a full cost basis to other public bodies and citizens. The Agency's income relates directly to three main activities:

- Statistical Research Activities;
- Central Survey Unit (CSU) - charges for statistics and research work carried out for all of the NICS and other public bodies; and
- Registration Services (GRO).

### 1.6 Financial Instruments

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, and only when, the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. A previously recognised financial asset is derecognised when, and only when, either the contractual rights to the cash flows from that asset expire, or the entity transfers the asset such that the transfer qualified for derecognition. A financial liability is derecognised when, and only when, it is extinguished.



The Agency has financial instruments in the form of trade receivables and payables and cash and cash equivalents. In accordance with IAS 39 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement of trade receivables, cash and other receivables are classified as 'loans and receivables'. Loans and receivables are initially measured at fair value and are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Agency assesses at each reporting date whether there is any objective evidence that a financial asset or group of financial assets classified as loans and receivables is impaired. Based on historic experience receivables that are past due beyond 361 days are generally not recoverable.

The Agency measures the amount of the loss as the difference between the carrying amount of the asset and the present value of estimated future cash flows from the asset discounted at the effective interest rate of the instrument at initial recognition.

Impairment losses are assessed individually for financial assets that are individually significant and individually or collectively for assets that are not individually significant. In making collective assessment of impairment, financial assets are grouped into portfolios on the basis of similar risk characteristics. Future cash flows from these portfolios are estimated on the basis of the contractual cash flows and historical loss experience for assets with similar risk characteristics.

Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and the carrying amount of the financial asset or group of financial assets reduced by establishing an allowance for impairment losses. If in a subsequent period the amount of the impairment loss reduces and the reduction can be ascribed to an event after the impairment was recognised, the previously recognised loss is reversed by adjusting the allowance.

When a financial asset is deemed unrecoverable the amount of the asset is reduced directly and the impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent that a provision was not previously recognised.

Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

### **1.7 Value Added Tax (VAT)**

All income and expenditure is stated exclusive of VAT which is recoverable on a departmental basis.

### **1.8 Programme Expenditure**

All of NISRA expenditure is classified as Programme expenditure.

### **1.9 Pensions**

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the NICS Pension Schemes. The defined benefit scheme is unfunded and is non-contributory except in respect of dependants' benefits. The Agency recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the NICS Pension Schemes of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the NICS Pension Schemes. In respect of the defined contribution scheme, the Agency recognises the contributions payable for the year.

### **1.10 Contingent Liabilities**

In addition to contingent liabilities disclosed in accordance with IAS 37, 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.

### **1.11 Employee Benefits**

Under IAS19 Employee Benefits legislation, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken leave as at the year end. The cost of untaken leave has been determined using the data from leave records.

## **1.12 Provisions**

The Agency provides 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. These relate to the settlement of equal pay claims, other potential legal actions and provision for future liabilities in respect of contracts. Where the effect of the time value of money is significant the estimated risk-adjusted cash flows are discounted using the real rate set by HM Treasury.

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

As a result of the uncertainties inherent in all business activities, many items in financial statements cannot be measured with precision but can only be estimated. Where estimates have been required in order to prepare these financial statements in conformity with FReM, management have used judgements based on the latest available, reliable information. Management continually review estimates to take account of any changes in the circumstances on which the estimate was based or as a result of new information or more experience.

## **1.14 Impending application of newly issued accounting standards not yet effective**

The Agency has reviewed new standards, interpretations and amendments to existing standards which have been issued but are either not yet effective, nor adopted early for these accounts. The standards are mandatory for the Agency's accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2022 or later periods.

## **1.15 Financial Reporting – Future Developments**

NISRA has considered the accounting initiatives identified by HM Treasury for which the Standards are under development and considers these changes are not relevant or material to its operations.

## 2. Statement of Operating Costs by Operating Segments

					2022-23
	Note	General Register Office	Central Survey Unit	Other	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross expenditure	3	5,144	4,717	27,313	37,174
Income	4	(3,512)	(2,135)	(14,178)	(19,825)
<b>Net expenditure</b>		<b>1,632</b>	<b>2,582</b>	<b>13,135</b>	<b>17,349</b>
Total assets		1,637	2,129	5,146	8,912
Total liabilities		(1,506)	(147)	(2,164)	(3,817)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>131</b>	<b>1,982</b>	<b>2,982</b>	<b>5,095</b>

	Note	General Register Office	Central Survey Unit	Other	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross expenditure	3	4,745	4,780	30,473	39,998
Income	4	(3,179)	(2,036)	(13,964)	(19,179)
<b>Net expenditure</b>		<b>1,566</b>	<b>2,744</b>	<b>16,509</b>	<b>20,819</b>
Total assets		1,684	1,885	5,754	9,323
Total liabilities		(685)	(90)	(2,252)	(3,027)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>999</b>	<b>1,795</b>	<b>3,502</b>	<b>6,296</b>

### General Register Office (GRO)

Consists of the unit that centrally manages all public births, deaths, marriage and civil partnership records and the District Councils that manage the registrations locally.

### Central Survey Unit (CSU)

Consists of the survey unit that would be the largest income generating unit in NISRA that carries out work for all of the NICS and other public bodies.

### Other

Covers all the other statistical research activities and the out-posted and seconded staff.

### 3. Programme Costs

	2022-23	2021-22
	£000	£000
<b>Staff costs</b>		
Wages and salaries	19,762	21,602
Social security costs	1,836	1,837
Other pension costs	5,185	5,189
<b>Total staff costs</b>	<b>26,783</b>	<b>28,628</b>
<b>Purchase of goods and services</b>		
Registrar charges	2,812	2,668
Survey costs	167	543
Finance costs	6	17
Bad debts written off	–	1
Exchange losses/(gains)	4	2
<b>Total purchase of goods and services</b>	<b>2,989</b>	<b>3,231</b>
<b>Other operating expenditure</b>		
Accounting and information technology	1,226	1,136
Accommodation, maintenance and utilities	742	1,925
Personnel and training	24	96
Travel, subsistence and hospitality	16	168
Printing, stationery and advertising	92	335
Legal costs	41	–
Other costs	99	6
	<b>2,240</b>	<b>3,666</b>
<b>Non-cash items:</b>		
(Profit)/loss on disposal of non-current assets	38	–
Auditors' remuneration and expenses	18	17
	56	17
Notional charges	–	–
Intra-departmental notional charges:		
Accommodation	736	671
IT Assist	997	813
Finance	463	452
HR	757	792
Corporate Services	208	270
	3,161	2,998
<b>Total other operating expenditure</b>	<b>5,457</b>	<b>6,681</b>
<b>Depreciation and impairment charges</b>		
Depreciation	168	242
Amortisation	1,728	1,262
Impairment of non-current assets	(1)	1
	<b>1,895</b>	<b>1,505</b>
<b>Provision expense</b>		
Provided in year	50	–
Written back in year	–	(47)
	<b>50</b>	<b>(47)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,174</b>	<b>39,998</b>

#### 4. Income

##### Revenue from Contracts with Customers

The Agency charges for a variety of services provided to customers. The largest component is the recovery of salary costs for statistical staff on loan to departments and agencies outside DoF.

					2022-23	2021-22
	Registration Services (GRO)	Central Survey Unit (CSU)	Statistical Research Activities	Recovery of Salary Costs	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Income from NI Departments	10	1,315	670	9,544	11,539	13,812
Income from other NI Public Bodies	1,325	–	234	2,455	4,014	1,308
Income from other UK departments and Public Bodies	132	820	28	–	980	954
Income from external customers	2,044	–	1,248	–	3,292	3,105
	<b>3,511</b>	<b>2,135</b>	<b>2,180</b>	<b>11,999</b>	<b>19,825</b>	<b>19,179</b>

The income is reported based on the operating segments.

## 5. Property, plant and equipment

2022-23

	Information technology	Plant and machinery	Furniture and fittings	Payments on account and assets under construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>					
At 1 April 2022	756	30	591	30	1,407
Additions	198	5	3	54	260
Disposals	–	–	(130)	–	(130)
Revaluation released to SoCNE	1	–	–	–	1
Reclassification	–	–	–	(22)	(22)
Indexation	9	1	25	–	35
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>1,551</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2022	675	22	251	–	948
Charged in year	66	2	100	–	168
Disposals	–	–	(130)	–	(130)
Revaluation released to SoCNE	–	–	–	–	–
Indexation	1	1	12	–	14
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>551</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>459</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>					
Owned	222	11	256	62	551
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>551</b>

## 5. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

2021-22

	Information Technology	Plant and Machinery	Furniture and Fittings	Payments on account and assets under construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>					
At 1 April 2021	707	29	580	135	1,451
Additions	52	–	–	33	85
Revaluation released to SoCNE	(2)	–	–	–	(2)
Reclassification	–	–	–	(138)	(138)
Indexation	(1)	1	11	–	11
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1,407</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2021	615	17	72	–	704
Charged in year	62	4	176	–	242
Revaluation released to SoCNE	(1)	–	–	–	(1)
Indexation	(1)	1	3	–	3
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>948</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>459</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>746</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>					
Owned	81	8	340	30	459
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>459</b>



## 6. Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise bespoke systems and software licences (see note 1.3).

	2022-23			
	Software Licences	Internally Developed Software and Website	Externally Developed Software	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 April 2022	301	7,595	6,984	14,880
Additions	192	841	455	1,488
Disposals	(185)	(337)	(414)	(936)
Reclassification	–	22	–	22
Indexation	41	1,011	199	1,251
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>9,132</b>	<b>7,224</b>	<b>16,705</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>				
At 1 April 2022	231	5,173	5,816	11,220
Charged in year	143	1,096	489	1,728
Disposals	(185)	(337)	(376)	(898)
Indexation	25	721	94	840
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>6,653</b>	<b>6,023</b>	<b>12,890</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>2,479</b>	<b>1,201</b>	<b>3,815</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>2,422</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>3,660</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>				
Owned	135	2,479	1,201	3,815
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>2,479</b>	<b>1,201</b>	<b>3,815</b>

## 6. Intangible assets (continued)

	2021-22			
	Software Licences	Internally Developed Software and Website	Externally Developed Software	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 April 2021	293	6,601	6,208	13,102
Additions	–	495	511	1,006
Reclassification	–	–	138	138
Indexation	8	499	127	634
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>7,595</b>	<b>6,984</b>	<b>14,880</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>				
At 1 April 2021	212	3,897	5,467	9,576
Charged in year	17	941	304	1,262
Indexation	3	334	45	382
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>5,172</b>	<b>5,816</b>	<b>11,220</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2,422</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>3,660</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>2,704</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>3,527</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>				
Owned	69	2,423	1,168	3,660
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2,423</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>3,660</b>

## 7. Impairments

	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000
<b>Charged directly to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure:</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	(1)	1
Intangible assets	–	–
	<u>(1)</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>Taken through the Revaluation Reserve:</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	(21)	(8)
Intangible assets	(411)	(252)
	<u>(432)</u>	<u>260</u>
<b>Total impairment charge for the year</b>	<u>(433)</u>	<u>(259)</u>

## 8. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000
Balance at 1 April	198	214
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	19	(16)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<u>217</u>	<u>198</u>

The following balances at 31 March were held at:  
Commercial banks and cash in hand

<u>217</u>	<u>198</u>
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## 9. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade receivables	469	847
Other receivables	20	7
Prepayments and accrued income	3,842	4,125
VAT recoverable	–	27
	<u>4,331</u>	<u>5,006</u>

There are no amounts falling due after more than one year.

## 10. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
VAT payable	87	–
Trade payables	97	148
Accruals	3,582	2,870
	<b>3,766</b>	<b>3,018</b>

Accruals above include amounts relating to purchase of property, plant and equipment of £NIL (2021-22: £8,219) and intangible assets of £65,608 (2021-22: £5,886).

There are no amounts falling due after more than one year.

## 11. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2022-23 Legal Claims £000	2021-22 Total £000	2021-22 Total £000
Balance at 1 April	9	9	125
Provided in year	50	50	–
Provisions written back	–	–	(47)
Provided utilised in year	(9)	(9)	(69)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>9</b>

	2022-23 Legal Claims £000	2021-22 Total £000	2021-22 Total £000
Not later than one year	50	50	–
Later than one year and not later than five years	–	–	9
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>9</b>

### Legal claims:

Provisions closing balance at 2022-23 relates to legal claims. This represents public liability, employer liability, contract and compensation claims and dilapidations as advised by the business areas within the Department.

Public liability claims include personal injury claims. Employer liability claims include legal costs that will have to be borne by the Department and relate to accidents or injury caused due to faults in the fabric of a departmental building and other damages including fair employment and industrial tribunal cases.

Contract claims are associated with claims made by contractors for unforeseen delays in the completion of projects or cost over-runs, which are outside of their control. The provisions details are based on evaluations made by qualified professional and technical personnel employed by DoF.

A discount rate has not been applied on any of the provisions as the time value of money is not significant

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

The Court of Appeal (CoA) judgment from 17 June 2019 (PSNI v Agnew) determined that claims for Holiday Pay shortfall can be taken back to 1998. However, the PSNI has appealed the CoA judgment to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court hearing was scheduled for the December 2022 but the Supreme Court judgement has not yet been issued. The 2022-23 Holiday Pay provision has been estimated by NICSHR and covers the period from 1998 to 31 March 2020. There are still some very significant elements of uncertainty around this estimate for a number of reasons:

1. The appeal to the Supreme Court (as detail above);
2. Lack of accessible data for years previous to 2011; and
3. Ongoing negotiations with Trade Unions.

## **12. Capital commitments**

	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Property, plant and equipment	–	193
Intangible assets	137	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>193</b>

### 13. Commitment under leases

#### Operating leases

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

	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000
Obligations under operating leases for the following periods comprise:		
<b>Office equipment:</b>		
Not later than one year	1	2
Later than one year and not later than five years	–	3
Later than five years	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

### 14. Other Financial Commitments

The Agency has entered into non-cancellable contracts (which are not leases or Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) and other service concession arrangement contracts), for the NIROS support contract (GRO), Integrated Business Survey IT Systems (IBSS) support (ELMS branch) and for use of an encrypted link with the Office for National Statistics and provision of data from the Business Services Organisation (Census Office). The payments to which the Agency is committed are as follows:

	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000
Not later than one year	3,659	3,810
Later than one year and not later than five years	12,594	10,947
Later than five years	3,010	2,520
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,263</b>	<b>17,277</b>

## 15. Financial Instruments

IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures requires disclosure that enables evaluation of the significance of financial instruments for the Agency's financial position and performance, the nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments to which the Agency is exposed during the period and at the reporting date, and how the Agency manages those risks.

As a result of the nature of its activities and the way in which NISRA is financed, 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 too little credit, liquidity or market risk.

Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset and financial liability are disclosed in Note 1 "Accounting Policies".

### Categories of financial instruments

The Agency's financial assets are classified as loans and receivables and comprise trade receivables and other current assets (Note 9) and cash and cash equivalents (Note 8). The Agency's financial liabilities comprise trade payables and other current liabilities (Note 10). These financial assets and liabilities are held at cost which approximates to fair value because of their short maturities.

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash and demand deposits with banks. As at 31 March 2023, the carrying value of cash at bank approximates its fair value due to its short term nature.

## 16. Contingent liabilities disclosed under IAS 37

### Public Sector Pensions – Injury to Feelings Claim

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 and may have significant 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 for the Agency.

## 17. Related party transactions

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Finance.

The Department of Finance is regarded as a related party with which the Agency has had various material transactions during the year.

The Agency has also had various material transactions with all the other Northern Ireland government departments and other central government bodies. Other central government bodies have included:

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute	Home Office
Cabinet Office	HSC Business Services Organisation
Department for Communities	Invest NI
Department for Infrastructure	Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland
Department for the Economy	Libraries NI
Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs	National Records of Scotland
Department of Education	NI Courts and Tribunals Service
Department of Health	Office for National Statistics
Department of Justice	Office of the Police Ombudsman for NI
Economic and Social Research Council	Police Service of Northern Ireland
Electoral Office for Northern Ireland	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
HM Revenue & Customs	Public Health Agency NI
	Public Prosecution Service

During the year none of the board members, members of the key management staff or other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with the Agency.

## 18. Events after the Reporting Date

There were no events occurring after the reporting date that required disclosure.

## Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised the issue of these financial statements on 30 June 2023.



## Appendix 1: Acronyms

Acronym	Details
AB	Agency Board
ADRC	Administrative Data Research Centre
ADR NI	Administrative Data Research Northern Ireland
ADR UK	Administrative Data Research United Kingdom
ALB	Arm's Length Body
AME	Annually Managed Expenditure
AO	Accounting Officer
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
BAIM	Business Area Information Manager
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
BSO	Business Services Organisation
CARE	Career Average Revalued Earnings
CCM	Cost Cap Mechanism
CETV	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value
CHS	Continuous Household Survey
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CM	Content Manager
CoA	Court of Appeal
CPI	Consumer Prices Index
CSP	Civil Service Pensions
CSU	Central Survey Unit
CSV	Comma Separated Values
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DAO	Dear Accounting Officer Letter
DE	Department of Education
DEA	Digital Economy Act
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit (in accounts)
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DoF	Department of Finance
DoF NISRA	NISRA branches located within DoF
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice
DP	Deputy Principal
DPA	Data Protection Act
DPO	Data Protection Officer
DPGN	Data Protection Guidance Notes
ECNI	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Acronym	Details
EFDNI	Employers for Disability Northern Ireland
EHSSG	English Health Statistics Steering Group
EIR	Environmental Information Regulations
ELMS	Economic and Labour Market Statistics
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FOI	Freedom of Information
FReM	Financial Reporting Manual
FRS	Family Resources Survey
GAD	Government Actuary's Department
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GIS	Guaranteed Interview Scheme
GRO	General Register Office
GSS	Government Statistical Service
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HRCS	Human Resource Consultancy Services
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language
HSC	Health and Social Care
IA	Information Assurance
IAO	Information Asset Owner
IAS	International Accounting Standard
IBSS	Integrated Business Survey IT Systems
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IJSD	International Job Shadow Day
iLAB	Innovation Lab
IT	Information Technology
K2N	Knock to Nudge
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCM	Legislative Consent Motion
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (or Questioning)
LSA	Legal Services Agency
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MPMNI	Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICSHR	Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources
NINIS	Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NIROS	Northern Ireland Registration Office System
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Acronym	Details
NISRA DoF	NISRA branches located within DoF
OBA	Outcomes Based Accountability
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OSR	Office for Statistics Regulation
PBNI	Probation Board of Northern Ireland
PCSPS(NI)	Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland)
PfG	Programme for Government
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PHA	Public Health Agency
PPSNI	Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland
Power BI	Power Business Intelligence
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PSP&JO	Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices
RAG	Red Amber Green Status (Risk Management)
RAP	Research and Analysis Project
SAR	Subject Access Request
SCB	Statistical Co-ordination Branch
SCS	Senior Civil Service
SeRP	Secure Electronic Research Platform
SIM	Support Information Manager
SIRO	Senior Information Risk Officer
SMF	Senior Management Forum
SMT	Senior Management Team
SoCF	Statement of Cash Flows
SoCiTE	Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity
SoCNE	Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure
SoFP	Statement of Financial Position
SQL	Structured Query Language
SSB	Statistical Support Branch
TECH LAB	Technology and Support Lab
TEO	The Executive Office
TP	Temporary Promotion
UK	United Kingdom
UKSA	United Kingdom Statistics Authority
VARS	Vital Statistics and Administrative Research and Support
VAT	Value Added Tax
WMS	Written Ministerial Statement

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