



United Kingdom  
Debt Management  
Office

**Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt**

**Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals  
Service Investment Account**

**Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019**

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under section 45(3) of the  
Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by Schedule 18 Paragraph 34  
of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice  
Functions) Order 2010 by the Department of Justice on behalf of the  
Comptroller and Auditor General

on

**31 July 2019**





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# PERFORMANCE REPORT

## Overview

The purpose of the overview is to provide sufficient information to understand the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account (NICTSIA), its purpose, the key risks to the achievement of its objectives and how it has performed during the year.

These accounts have been prepared by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt (CRND) under a direction issued by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland in accordance with section 45 of the Administration of Justice Act 1982 (the Act) as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

## Purpose and principal activities of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account

The NICTSIA receives funds from the deposit and investment accounts operated by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), which are available for suitors' funds paid into Court in Northern Ireland. It also contains funds due to the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland.

By virtue of rules made under section 82(1) of the Judicature (Northern Ireland) Act 1978, on each day that the Accountant General of the Supreme Court of Judicature of Northern Ireland (the Accountant General) has excess cash in his account he remits the excess amount to CRND for investment in the NICTSIA; whilst on each day that the balance in his account is insufficient to meet demands, he makes a withdrawal from the NICTSIA to make good the shortfall.

Section 39(1) of the Act authorises the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland to make regulations setting out the range of investments in which CRND may invest money transferred to them by the Accountant General. Currently, investment is restricted to securities specified in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 9A of Part II of Schedule 1 to the Trustee Investments Act 1961 in line with regulations set out by HM Treasury prior to April 2010. The interest or dividends received on investments held by CRND is reinvested in authorised securities in the NICTSIA until required to meet payments.

Section 39(2) of the Act requires the payment into the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland of any surplus interest or dividends received in any accounting year by CRND and section 39(3) provides for any deficiency of interest or dividends to be made good out of the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland. The amount of any surplus or deficiency is obtained by deducting from the interest and dividends received by CRND the sum of:

- 1 the interest due to be paid or credited on funds in court;
- 2 the sum required by the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland in respect of administering funds in court;
- 3 the sum required by CRND in respect of expenses; and
- 4 any sum the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland requires to be set aside for depreciation in the value of securities.

In December 2003, in view of the NICTSIA's deteriorating solvency position, HM Treasury agreed that the NICTSIA need not pay over to the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland more than £25,000 of its surplus interest in respect of any financial year from 2004-2005. This arrangement has continued under the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland.

Section 39(5) of the Act provides a guarantee by the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland of the capital paid to CRND by the Accountant General in an instance when the Commissioners are unable to pay a sum due to the Accountant General.

## **Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt**

CRND's main function is the investment and management of major government funds. The investment powers differ from fund to fund.

The Secretary and Comptroller General and Assistant Comptroller, who are appointed by and act on behalf of the Commissioners, make the day-to-day decisions. There is no legislation that determines the specific responsibilities of the Secretary and Comptroller General and the Assistant Comptroller. However, in practice the role of the Secretary and Comptroller General is considered analogous to acting as the Accounting Officer for CRND. Therefore, the Secretary and Comptroller General takes responsibility for preparing and signing the accounts on behalf of the Commissioners.

The arrangements made between CRND and the NICTS in respect of the investment service provided by CRND are set out in a Memorandum of Understanding, which describes how CRND intend to achieve the agreed investment objectives.

### **Performance summary**

CRND's strategy of investing in the Debt Management Account was maintained throughout 2018-2019. This strategy enabled the NICTSIA to earn a rate of interest very closely correlated with prevailing short-term sterling interest rates, whilst protecting its capital position and access to liquidity at all times.

### **Performance analysis**

During 2018-2019, total income from funds invested was £637k (2017-2018: £386k). The increase in income was primarily due to a rise in average interest rates on the NICTSIA's investments with the Debt Management Account, which offered rates that corresponded to the official Bank Rate. Overall, the NICTSIA generated a surplus of £25k (2017-2018: £19k surplus) after taking into account CRND's management expenses, interest payable on funds in court and the NICTS's cost of administering funds in court.

As at 31 March 2019, the total value of investments held by the NICTSIA was £105 million (31 March 2018: £97 million). This increase was due to a net deposit of funds by the NICTS during the year.



**Jo Whelan**

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

25 June 2019

## **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

The accountability report comprises two sections: a corporate governance report and a parliamentary accountability and audit report. The corporate governance report includes the following information: the responsibilities of the Secretary and Comptroller General; the composition, responsibilities and actions of the Managing Board and Audit Committee and how they have supported the Secretary and Comptroller General and enabled the objectives of the NICTSIA; the key risks faced by the NICTSIA and how it seeks to manage them. The parliamentary accountability and audit report includes a formal opinion by the NICTSIA's external auditor to certify that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the NICTSIA's affairs for the year and that they have been prepared in accordance with all relevant rules.

These two sections contribute to the NICTSIA's accountability to Parliament and comply with best practice in relation to corporate governance norms and codes. In particular, the corporate governance report seeks to do so by describing the key mechanisms the NICTSIA employs to ensure it maintains high standards of conduct and performance. This includes the statement of Secretary and Comptroller General's responsibilities which describes her accountability to Parliament for the NICTSIA's use of resources and compliance with rules set by HM Treasury to ensure best practice in financial management. The governance statement reflects the applicable principles of the Corporate Governance Code for Central Government Departments. The parliamentary accountability and audit report confirms that expenditure and income of the NICTSIA have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and confirms that information in the parliamentary accountability disclosures has been audited and approved by external auditors.

### **Corporate governance report**

#### **Directors' report**

Operationally, the CRND is part of the DMO and its staff are employees of the DMO. The CRND therefore has no staff of its own. The structure of the CRND is described on page 5.

#### **Directors' conflicts of interest**

In 2018-2019, no material conflicts of interest were declared by DMO Managing Board members.

#### **Reporting of personal data related incidents**

The NICTSIA had no protected personal data related incidents during 2018-2019.



**Jo Whelan**

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

25 June 2019



## **Statement of Secretary and Comptroller General's responsibilities**

Section 45(2) of the 1982 Act requires the Commissioners to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the accounts direction as determined by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the NICTSIA, its income and expenditure, statement of financial position and cash flows for the financial year.

The Commissioners have appointed the Secretary and Comptroller General to discharge their statutory responsibilities, a role that is analogous to acting as an Accounting Officer. Therefore the Secretary and Comptroller General has responsibility for preparing the annual accounts and for transmitting these to the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland.

In preparing the accounts, the Secretary and Comptroller General is required to observe the applicable accounting standards and be consistent with the relevant requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM), and in particular to:

- observe the relevant 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 have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going-concern basis; and
- confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable, and take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining they are fair, balanced and understandable.

As the role of the Secretary and Comptroller General is analogous to acting as an Accounting Officer, it is considered that the responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, as set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland published by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland, apply to the Secretary and Comptroller General. These include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Secretary and Comptroller General is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the NICTSIA's assets.

### **Disclosure to auditors**

Section 45(1) of the Act requires the Commissioners to send accounts prepared by them to the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland.

Under section 45(3) of the Act, the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland examines, certifies and reports on the accounts and lays copies of them with this report before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

As the Secretary and Comptroller General, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the NICTSIA'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**

As Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt (CRND), I am responsible for ensuring the operation of a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of CRND's targets, policies and objectives in managing client investment portfolios whilst safeguarding the public funds for which I am accountable, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me.

CRND is a separate business entity managed within the control framework of the DMO. While I am responsible for CRND's system of internal control, the Accounting Officer of the DMO is responsible for the wider control framework within which CRND is managed. In discharging my own control responsibilities I take assurance on the continued sound maintenance of the wider control framework from the governance statement for the DMO, although I understand that only reasonable and not absolute assurance can be given that risks have been controlled.

It is also my responsibility to ensure that all CRND fund management activities are conducted with due regard to value for money and operated in line with client instructions. I have put arrangements in place to ensure that there is a proper evaluation of the balance of cost and risk in our operations.

CRND is committed to the highest standards of corporate governance and is guided by the Corporate Governance Code for central government departments (the Code) and the following principles laid down in that Code:

- Parliamentary accountability;
- The role of the Board;
- Board composition;
- Board effectiveness; and
- Risk management.

CRND does not conduct any part of its business with or through arm's length bodies (ALBs) and therefore has not applied principle six which covers departmental governance arrangements with ALBs.

### **Managing Board**

The Secretary and Comptroller General was supported during 2018-2019 by the DMO Managing Board (the Board) which, in addition to the Secretary and Comptroller General, is comprised of:

Sir Robert Stheeman

DMO Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Jim Juffs

Chief Operating Officer

Jessica Pulay

Co-Head of Policy and Markets

Richard Hughes

Non-executive HM Treasury representative

Brian Duffin

Non-executive director – Brian Duffin was Chief Executive of Scottish Life from 1999 to 2007 and Executive Director of Royal London Mutual from 2001 to 2007.

Paul Fisher

Non-executive director - During a 26 year career at the Bank of England, Paul Fisher served as a member of the Monetary Policy Committee from 2009 to 2014, the interim Financial Policy Committee from 2011 to 2013 and the PRA Board from 2015 to 2016. He has a number of current roles including Chair of the London Bullion Market Association.

Non-executive directors are appointed by the DMO Accounting Officer following a formal process and have fixed terms defined in their contracts of service. All non-executive Board members receive an induction on joining and have access to additional information and training where it is considered necessary for the effective discharge of their duties.

One of the roles of the Board is to advise the Secretary and Comptroller General on any key decisions affecting CRND.

An executive sub-committee of the Board generally meets weekly and supports the Secretary and Comptroller General on operational decisions.

The Board has put in place a formal process to self-evaluate its performance on a regular basis. The Board undertook a self-evaluation of its performance in 2017 and concluded that it has operated effectively in delivering the objectives set out in its Terms of Reference, and that the information used by the Board was accurate and relevant. The Terms of Reference underwent a review by the Board in 2018.

### 2018-2019 Managing Board activities

Board meetings were held throughout 2018-2019 and covered regular agenda items, including risk management, staffing and progress against the operational business plan.

Board and Audit Committee attendance is outlined in the table below:

<b>Managing Board</b>		<b>Audit Committee</b>		
	Possible	Actual		
Sir Robert Stheeman	8	8		
Jo Whelan	8	8		
Jim Juffs	8	8		
Jessica Pulay	8	8		
Richard Hughes	8	4	Possible	Actual
Brian Duffin	8	8	5	5
Paul Fisher	8	8	5	5
Caroline Mawhood	n/a	n/a	5	5

### Audit Committee

The Secretary and Comptroller General was supported during 2018-2019 by the Audit Committee on matters relating to risk, internal control and governance. The members of the Audit Committee during 2018-2019 were:

Brian Duffin (Chairman)

Paul Fisher

Caroline Mawhood – Caroline Mawhood was an Assistant Auditor General at the National Audit Office until 2009 and President of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy for 2008-2009. She is a non-executive member of Audit Committee of the Corporation of London and its Performance and Resource Management Sub (Police) Committee and one of three external members of the Audit Progress Committee of the European Commission. She is also a trustee of the Wimbledon Guild charity.

Although a departure from the Corporate Governance Code for central government departments, the Audit Committee Chairman's membership was extended by an additional year to 31st December 2019 in view of the need for continuity and to retain knowledge during a period of considerable change both externally (in particular, the implications of the UK leaving the EU) and also internal to the DMO (including the Trading Systems Replacement project).

Audit Committee meetings are typically attended by the DMO Accounting Officer, the Secretary and Comptroller General, the Co-Heads of Policy & Markets, the Chief Operating Officer, the Head of Internal Audit, the Head of Finance and the National Audit Office.

One of the Audit Committee's objectives is to give advice to the Secretary and Comptroller General on:

- The overall processes for risk, control and governance and the governance statement;
- Management assurances and appropriate actions to follow from internal and external audit findings, risk analysis and reporting undertaken;
- The financial control framework and supporting compliance culture;
- Accounting policies and material judgements, the accounts and the annual report and management's letter of representation to the external auditors;
- Whistleblowing arrangements for confidentially raising and investigating concerns over possible improprieties in the conduct of the DMO's business;
- Processes to protect against money laundering, fraud and corruption; and
- The planned activity and results of both internal and external audit.

During the period under review the Audit Committee paid particular attention to the following areas:

- Trading Systems Replacement (TSR) Project;
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR);
- Dispute Resolution Policies and Staff Conduct;
- Operational Risk Framework Risk Registers;
- Pension Contributions;
- Critical Suppliers – Use of Subcontractors;
- Business Continuity Management;
- Cyber Security;
- Disclosure of Market Sensitive Information;
- User Access and Permission Rights;
- International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 9; and
- Programme Management.

The Audit Committee covers a regular programme of agenda items, together with other current topics, and met five times during the year.

The Secretary and Comptroller General has also been informed by the following operational committees throughout the period under review:

#### *Fund Management Review Committee*

The Fund Management Review Committee monitors CRND activity relating to the performance of the government funds under management, including any reporting on compliance activities undertaken in relation to the funds.

The Fund Management Review Committee met four times in 2018-2019.

#### *Business Delivery Committee*

The Business Delivery Committee reviews the status of the delivery of DMO's business and work plan as a collective cross-functional body, resolving emerging issues in a timely way, and agreeing priorities to ensure the plan stays on track. The most significant initiative monitored by the Business Delivery Committee during the year was the project to implement a trading systems replacement including those used to process CRND transactions.

The Business Delivery Committee met regularly (typically weekly) throughout 2018-2019.

#### *Risk Committees*

The Secretary and Comptroller General is informed by three risk committees covering credit and market risk, operational risk and risk control. More detail on the roles, responsibilities and activities of these committees can be found in the sections below.

### **Risk management and internal control**

The Secretary and Comptroller General is responsible for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of CRND's targets, policies and objectives in managing client investment portfolios whilst safeguarding the public funds for which she is accountable, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to her.

CRND is managed within the wider DMO system of internal control which is based upon what the DMO Accounting Officer, with the support of the Board, considers to be appropriate, taking account of the DMO's activities, the materiality of risks inherent in those activities and the relative costs and benefits of implementing specific controls to mitigate those risks. The DMO's position differs to that of a commercial organisation in that it must always be in a position to transact the underlying business required to meet its remit. As a result the risks associated with this activity cannot be avoided and the system of internal control can only provide reasonable assurance against failure to achieve aims and objectives.

### **The Risk and Control Framework**

The Board has designed and put in place a formal risk management framework covering all the activities conducted and overseen by the DMO. This Framework helps ensure that the DMO Accounting Officer is appropriately informed and advised of any identified risks and also allows the management of risks to be monitored. The risk management framework covers both regular operations and new business initiatives, and evolves as the range and nature of the DMO's activities change. The Framework is supported by a clear 'three lines of defence' model:

#### ***First line of defence:***

Day-to-day management of risk is the responsibility of management staff within business areas. The DMO considers effective risk management to be central to its operations and fosters a risk aware culture in which all members of staff, including Board members, are encouraged to understand and own the risks that are inherent in those operations. In particular the DMO seeks to promote an environment in which staff feel comfortable to identify

new risks and changes in previously identified risks, as well as weaknesses so that these may be assessed and appropriate mitigating actions put in place.

Mitigating actions typically include segregation of duties, staff training, clear lines of management delegation and robust business continuity arrangements.

### ***Second line of defence:***

Oversight of risk is provided by the Board and risk committees, whose role is to provide regular and systematic scrutiny of risk issues which lie within their remit and to support the DMO Accounting Officer in exercising his overall responsibility for risk management.

The DMO considers that the principal risks it faces arise in three broad areas: credit risk, market risk and operational risk. It has established committees to meet regularly to review the changing risk pattern for each of these areas and to set up appropriate responses. The work of these committees is described in more detail below.

#### *Credit and Market Risk Committee*

The Credit and Market Risk Committee (CMRC) meets on a regular basis, with more frequent meetings held when required, for example during times of market stress. The CMRC monitors and reviews the management of market, credit, and liquidity risk. It sets limits across a range of exposures including counterparties, countries, and instruments held as collateral as well as setting absolute limits on net daily flows across the DMA. The CMRC met eight times during 2018-2019.

#### *Operational Risk Committee*

The Operational Risk Committee (ORC) meets regularly to monitor operational risks and to review significant risk issues. The ORC is responsible for reviewing risk incidents identified through the DMO's risk incident reporting process, and considering whether planned mitigating action is appropriate. The ORC also reviews and tracks the progress of actions identified by Internal Audit. The ORC's scope includes issues relating to information risk, IT security, business continuity, anti-fraud and key supplier risks.

The ORC has advised the DMO Accounting Officer and the Board, during the year, on significant operational risk concerns, significant risk issues and trends as well as actions to mitigate such risks. The ORC has focused this year on supplier risk, data protection, IT and data security and business continuity planning. The ORC met seven times during 2018-2019.

#### *Controls Group*

The Controls Group meets periodically to review issues affecting the DMO's system of internal control and to analyse material changes to the control environment. The Controls Group recommends actions to management to implement changes where appropriate. The Controls Group consists of representatives from Finance, Risk, Compliance and Internal Audit.

The Controls Group has advised the DMO Accounting Officer, the Board and senior management on any significant risk concerns stemming from the introduction of new business activities as well as risks relating to other change management activities. The Controls Group has also advised the DMO Accounting Officer on suitable mitigating action where appropriate.

During the year the Controls Group review work has covered the design, building and testing of the trading system replacement, including CRND process improvements.

#### *Risk Management Unit*

The risk committees are supported by the DMO's Risk Management Unit (RMU) which ensures key risk issues arising from these committees are communicated to the DMO Accounting Officer and senior management on a regular basis, with additional ad hoc reporting if an emerging issue requires it. The RMU also supports the formal risk reporting

processes with defined outputs, including regular detailed risk reports which are reviewed by the Board and senior management.

As well as supporting the risk committee structure, the RMU provides control advice on risks. As part of the second line of defence the RMU is separate from, and independent of, the DMO's trading operations. The RMU conducts risk analysis and provides market, credit and operational risk capability for the DMO.

The identification, monitoring and mitigation of operational risk is facilitated by the RMU via quarterly consultations with heads of business units and functional teams. Significant risk issues are assessed for materiality and probability of occurrence. New risks, and risks to which exposure is increasing, are highlighted and actions are taken to ensure effective management of all risks. The DMO has Senior Risk Owners (SROs) who undertake a cross-functional moderation process to promote better prioritisation of operational risks across the organisation. The RMU maintains a central exception log to record all risk incidents raised, in order to identify control weaknesses and assign actions to improve controls.

### ***Third line of defence:***

The DMO's Internal Audit function provides the DMO Accounting Officer with independent and objective assurance on the overall effectiveness of the Agency's system of internal control. It does this through a risk based work programme which is presented to the Audit Committee at the start of each year and approved by the Audit Committee at the start of each quarter. All audits make a series of findings relating to control weaknesses. Progress against agreed management actions is monitored on a regular basis to ensure issues highlighted by internal and external audit, and other identified actions to improve the control environment, are managed and progressed within agreed deadlines. The function is independent of the DMO's trading activities and operations and has a direct reporting line to the DMO Accounting Officer. The work of Internal Audit includes assessing the effectiveness of both control design and control performance. With its independence and overall remit, Internal Audit provides a third line of defence against the risks that might prevent the DMO delivering its objectives.

### **Risk policies and procedures**

The DMO's risk policies reflect the high standards and robust requirements which determine the way in which risks are managed and controlled. The DMO Accounting Officer, with the support of the Board, ensures that policies are regularly reviewed to reflect any changes in the DMO's operations and/or best practice. In 2018-2019, this included policies relating to anti-fraud, telephony and voice recording, data protection, health & safety and spreadsheet controls.

Staff are required to signify that they have read and accepted the DMO's rules on personal dealing and the DMO's policy on the use of information systems and technology, and that they are aware of, and will continue to keep up to date with, the DMO's policies on whistleblowing, anti-fraud and anti-money laundering. The DMO ensures that this exercise is undertaken on an annual basis allowing staff to maintain a good level of awareness of the DMO's policies in these areas. All members of staff have job descriptions which include reference to the specific key risks they are expected to manage.

Managers in each business function are responsible for ensuring that the operations within their area are compliant with plans, policies, procedures and legislation.

During 2018-2019 no concerns were raised by staff under the DMO's whistleblowing policy relating to CRND.

## Key Developments

### *UK leaving the EU*

During the year the DMO has continued to work with HM Treasury and other stakeholders to identify, assess and raise awareness of potential indirect impacts on CRND activities resulting from the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union and take mitigating actions where possible.

### *Trading Systems Replacement Project*

The Trading Systems Replacement Project has been a significant multi-year project for the DMO which aims to update its IT systems for deal input, settlement, risk management and accounting, as well as to simplify the current transaction processing architecture. During 2018-2019 focus of the implementation stage of the project has been on the design, build and testing of the new systems and processes. The project has been overseen through an established governance framework in order to maintain the strength and resilience of all operational processes and to make improvements where appropriate.

## Risk Profile

The Secretary and Comptroller General and the DMO Board believe that the principal risks and uncertainties facing CRND are outlined in the table below together with the key actions taken to manage and mitigate them:

### Principal risks and uncertainties

### Mitigation and management

#### IT systems and infrastructure

CRND relies on a number of IT and communications systems to conduct its operations effectively and efficiently.

During the year the DMO has progressed initiatives to further strengthen the resilience and security of its IT network. The Public Service Network (PSN) accreditation was reconfirmed as a result of an IT healthcheck.

The DMO has put in place structured business continuity arrangements to ensure it is able to continue market operations in the event of an internal or external incident that threatens business operations.

#### IT and data security

Through its activities the DMO gathers, disseminates and maintains sensitive information including market sensitive information and personal data about staff and market participants. The DMO seeks to ensure the highest standards of data protection and information management.

The DMO is exposed to risk of an external attack on its IT systems and infrastructure.

The DMO continues to work to maintain the required level of protective security covering physical, personnel and information security and is particularly aware of the growing threat posed by cyber security risk. IT and data security risks continued to be a specific area of focus in 2018-2019 and the DMO's IT team have been enhancing the security environment and appropriateness of transaction systems and processes.

Risks to data and information held by the DMO are owned and managed by designated Information Asset Owners. The DMO has a Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) who is responsible for the information risk policy and the assessment of information risks. The SIRO is a member of the Board and provides advice to Board members on the management of information risk.

The DMO has put in place several layers to defend against external attack and its infrastructure undergoes an annual penetration test. This year particular attention has been paid to ensuring the DMO's policies and processes are compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force in May 2018. This included documenting personal data assets and security arrangements.



### Reliance on third parties

A number of the operational systems and services on which CRND relies are provided or supported by third party suppliers.

To mitigate the risk of failure of a key third party supplier the DMO undertakes regular corporate risk assessments of each key supplier in order to assess a range of factors including its financial strength and operational capacity. The DMO has dedicated relationship managers who meet regularly with key suppliers and monitor performance against agreed Service Level Agreements where appropriate. The procurement manager and the recently formed vendor management group have been working to embed consistent standards of supplier management across account managers by improving visibility of key contracts, sharing best practice to ensure relationships start on a firm footing.

The supplier of the new trading system will become a key long-term partner. During the year more focus has been given to understanding where key suppliers are themselves reliant on sub-contractors to supply business critical services to the DMO and this is an area where greater assurance will be sought in future procurements.

### Transaction processing

CRND relies on its operational processes to successfully execute a significant number of high value transactions on a daily basis. Reliance on the accurate execution of processes exposes CRND to operational risk arising from process breakdown and human error.

A key component of CRND's control framework is the segregation of duties to ensure independent checking and reconciliation, and to avoid concentration of key activities or related controls in individuals or small groups of staff. In particular, segregation of duties takes place between front and back office activities.

All teams, including CRND, have documented procedures for their main activities and there are clearly defined authorisation levels for committing the DMO externally.

The RMU conducts regular control and compliance testing of CRND activities, providing the executive sub-committee of the Board with assurance on the effectiveness of operational controls and compliance with relevant Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority rules in the dealing and settlement areas.

The DMO also maintains a strong audit and control environment which includes a well embedded incident reporting procedure which extends to cover CRND. This promotes early identification and resolution of risk incidents and provides visibility to the DMO Accounting Officer and Board.

The main focus of improvements to transaction processing has been the trading system implementation which covers the full trade life-cycle. The implementation is focussed on maintaining control standards and improving processes and resilience.

### People risk

The DMO, including CRND, relies on maintaining a sufficiently skilled workforce at all levels of the organisation in order to operate effectively and efficiently, and to deliver its strategic objectives.

The DMO is exposed to an increased risk of operational failure if it is unable to compete for, and retain, sufficiently skilled staff over time. Competition for skilled staff is generally against employers from the private financial services sector which is not subject to public sector remuneration policies and which have historically offered higher remuneration than either the private sector in general or the public sector.

DMO recruitment policies help ensure that individuals with the appropriate level of skill and experience are appointed at all levels within the organisation. This helps mitigate the level of human error resulting in process failures.

The DMO's Training and Development policy is designed to help ensure that staff have the right skills to meet it objectives.

The DMO has a formal recruitment and selection process to help ensure vacancies are filled quickly by appropriately skilled candidates.

The DMO has a formal performance appraisal process and all staff are given clear and achievable objectives. Where appropriate, staff are encouraged to engage in activities which promote development and the DMO provides regular training opportunities and support for professional studies to enhance the skills base of its employees. The DMO also provides cross-training for different roles to help improve staffing flexibility and reduce turnover pressure.

Salaries are reviewed annually, taking account of benchmarks derived from equivalent private sector pay levels. During the year particular consideration has been given to the issues faced by staff working increased hours and weekends on the programme to strengthen IT infrastructure. The DMO has a policy to recognise those staff who have performed well in their roles through the payment of one-off performance related awards. Any awards are assessed annually by the DMO Pay Committee, are determined by individual performance and criteria associated with the DMO's performance management process and are aligned to the policy for public sector pay.

A Staff Council has met regularly throughout the year and enabled an open exchange of ideas and views between management and staff representatives and has been an effective conduit for wider communication and consultation with all staff.

On an annual basis all DMO staff are encouraged to take part in the Civil Service employee engagement survey and any issues raised, including mitigating action if required, will be considered by the DMO Accounting Officer and Board.

The DMO was reaccredited as an Investor in People in 2017.

### **Review of effectiveness**

I have reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control and confirm that an ongoing process designed to identify, evaluate and prioritise risks to the achievement of CRND's aims and objectives has been in place throughout 2018-2019. This review included an assessment of any material risk and control issues identified and reported during the relevant period.

My review has been informed by the advice of the risk committees and by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the DMO, who have been delegated responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports.

In my role as Secretary and Comptroller General I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Board and the Audit Committee.

In 2018-2019, no ministerial directions were given and no material conflicts of interest have been noted by the Board or Audit Committee members in the Register of Interests.

In my opinion, CRND's system of internal control was effective throughout the financial year and remains so on the date I sign this statement.



**Jo Whelan**

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

25 June 2019

## **Parliamentary accountability and audit report**

### **Regularity of expenditure**

The investments, income and expenditure of the NICTSIA were applied to the purposes intended by Parliament.

The above statement has been audited.

### **Fees and charges**

The NICTSIA received no fees or charges during the year.

The above statement has been audited.

# **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 Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account for the year ended 31 March 2019 under the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Income, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Client Funds; and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. 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 Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account's affairs as at 31 March 2019 and of the net income for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 and the Department of Finance directions issued thereunder.

## **Opinion on regularity**

In my opinion, in all material respects the income and expenditure 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 of opinions**

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate. Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2016. I am independent of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit and the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

I am required to conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern. I have nothing to report in these respects.

## **Responsibilities of the Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Secretary and Comptroller General's Responsibilities, the Commissioners are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

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

My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. 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.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commissioners' internal control.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the consolidated financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

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.

### **Other Information**

The Secretary and Comptroller General as Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises information included in the Report and Accounts, but does not include the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited, the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with my audit of the financial statements, 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, 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:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 and the Department of Finance directions issued thereunder;
- in the light of the knowledge and understanding of the entity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified any material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report; 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 and have been prepared in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

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

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 returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; 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.

### **Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



**KJ Donnelly**  
**Comptroller and Auditor General**

**3 July 2019**

Northern Ireland Audit Office  
106 University Street  
Belfast  
BT7 1EU

# Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account

## Statement of comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 March 2019

	Notes	2019 £000	2018 £000
Interest income		637	386
<b>Total income</b>		<b>637</b>	<b>386</b>
CRND management expenses		(52)	(52)
Interest payable on funds in court		(541)	(335)
NICTS cost of administering funds in court		(19)	-
Receivable from the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland	2	-	20
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>

The notes on pages 25 to 27 form part of these accounts.

# Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account

## Statement of financial position

As at 31 March 2019

	Notes	2019 £000	2018 £000
<b>Assets</b>			
Demand deposits with the Debt Management Account and the National Loans Fund		104,634	96,774
Receivable from the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland	2	-	20
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>104,634</b>	<b>96,794</b>
<b>Liabilities and client funds</b>			
<b>Liabilities</b>			
NICTS cost of administering funds in court		19	-
<b>Client funds</b>			
NICTS funds		104,540	96,744
Reserves*		75	50
		<b>104,615</b>	<b>96,794</b>
<b>Total liabilities and client funds</b>		<b>104,634</b>	<b>96,794</b>

\*These reserves are payable to the NICTS and arise due to annual surpluses as calculated in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

The notes on pages 25 to 27 form part of these accounts.



**Jo Whelan**

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

25 June 2019



# Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2019

	2019 £000	2018 £000
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Interest received on demand deposits with the Debt Management Account and the National Loans Fund	612	367
(Increase)/decrease in demand deposits with the Debt Management Account and the National Loans Fund	(7,835)	10,973
CRND management expenses	(52)	(52)
Receipt from Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland	20	42
<b>Net cash (used in)/from operating activities</b>	<b>(7,255)</b>	<b>11,330</b>
<b>Financing activities</b>		
Funds received from NICTS	34,277	69,509
Funds paid to NICTS	(27,022)	(80,839)
<b>Net cash from/(used in) financing activities</b>	<b>7,255</b>	<b>(11,330)</b>
<b>Increase in cash</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash at the beginning of the year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

The notes on pages 25 to 27 form part of these accounts.

## Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account

### Statement of changes in client funds

For the year ended 31 March 2019

	NICTS funds (excluding reserves) £000	Reserves £000	Total NICTS funds £000
<b>At 31 March 2017</b>	<b>107,739</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>107,770</b>
Surplus for the year	-	19	19
Interest payable on funds in Court	335	-	335
Funds received from NICTS	69,509	-	69,509
Funds paid to NICTS	(80,839)	-	(80,839)
<b>At 31 March 2018</b>	<b>96,744</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>96,794</b>
Surplus for the year	-	25	25
Interest payable on funds in Court	541	-	541
Funds received from NICTS	34,277	-	34,277
Funds paid to NICTS	(27,022)	-	(27,022)
<b>At 31 March 2019</b>	<b>104,540</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>104,615</b>

The notes on pages 25 to 27 form part of these accounts.

## Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018

### 1 Accounting policies

#### (i) Basis of preparation

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with a direction made by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland under section 45(2) of the Administration of Justice Act 1982 in accordance with applicable International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and relevant requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual; and under the historical cost convention and on a going concern basis. In particular, the following standards have been applied:

- IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures
- IFRS 9 Financial Instruments
- IFRS 13 Fair Value Measurement
- IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements (revised 2007)
- IAS 7 Statement of Cash Flows
- IAS 8 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors
- IAS 10 Events After the Reporting Period
- IAS 24 Related Party Disclosures
- IAS 32 Financial Instruments: Presentation
- IAS 36 Impairment of Assets
- IAS 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

The NICTSIA adopted IFRS 9 on 1 April 2018, which replaced IAS 39. IFRS 9 sets out requirements for recognition, measurement, impairment and de-recognition of financial instruments. The impact of the replacement of IAS 39 with IFRS 9 on the financial statements of the NICTSIA is considered immaterial. The NICTSIA's assets were measured at amortised cost under IAS 39 and, as highlighted in Note 1 (ii), the NICTSIA continues to measure its assets at amortised cost under IFRS 9.

Certain IFRS have been issued or revised, but are not yet effective. Those issues or revisions expected to be relevant in subsequent reporting periods are:

- IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements, which has been revised as part of the IASB's 'Disclosure Initiative (Amendments to IAS 1)'. Application is required for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2020. The NICTSIA expects to apply these revisions to IAS 1 in 2020-2021. The application of these revisions, which relate to a revised definition of 'material', are not expected to materially alter the presentation of the financial statements of the NICTSIA.
- IAS 8 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors, which has been revised as part of the IASB's 'Disclosure Initiative (Amendments to IAS 1)'. Application is required for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2020. The NICTSIA expects to apply these revisions to IAS 8 in 2020-2021. The application of these revisions, which relate to a revised definition of 'material', are not expected to materially alter the presentation of the financial statements of the NICTSIA.

A separate income statement, as required by the accounts direction, has not been presented as the content would be identical to the statement of comprehensive income. A statement of comprehensive income is required by IAS 1.

#### (ii) Assets

##### Demand deposits

Deposits with the Debt Management Account and the National Loans Fund are financial assets held by the NICTSIA in order to collect contractual cash flows of principal and interest on specified dates. Therefore these deposits are treated as financial assets measured at amortised cost.

**(iii) Income recognition**

Interest income is recognised using the effective interest rate method. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts or payments through the expected life of the financial instrument or, where appropriate, a shorter period, to the net carrying amount of the instrument.

**2 Deficit receivable from the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland**

Surplus interest, calculated according to section 39(2) of the Administration of Justice Act 1982, is payable to the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland. A deficit is receivable from the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland. Payments of any surplus or deficit are made the following year.

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Interest received in the year	612	367
Interest payable on funds in court	(541)	(335)
CRND management expenses	(52)	(52)
NICTS cost of administering funds in court	(19)	-
<b>Deficit receivable from Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(20)</b>

**3 Risk****(i) Credit risk**

Credit risk is the risk that a counterparty, or security issuer, will fail to discharge a contractual obligation resulting in financial loss to the NICTSIA.

The investments of the NICTSIA comprised deposits with the Debt Management Account and the National Loans Fund. These deposits were considered to have no exposure to credit risk because they are obligations of HM Government.

There were no renegotiated assets or assets considered impaired at 31 March 2019 (31 March 2018: no renegotiated or impaired assets).

**(ii) Market risk**

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk for the NICTSIA was considered to comprise interest rate risk.

The interest returns on deposits were closely linked to the official Bank Rate.

CRND monitored interest rate movements to help inform the NICTS of potential issues and events. The NICTSIA was not subject to active management and thus no formal market risk parameters were in place.

**(iii) Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that the NICTSIA will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with client withdrawal requests.

Assets held by the NICTSIA were highly liquid to enable all client obligations to be met as they fell due.

#### **4 Related party transactions**

CRND is a separate entity within the DMO. CRND client mandates are kept distinct from other DMO business.

During the year, the NICTSIA had a significant number of material transactions with the Debt Management Account, which is operated by the DMO. CRND's client mandates required the bulk of the funds to be invested in gilts or deposited with the Debt Management Account.

During the year, the NICTSIA had a significant number of material transactions with the NICTS due to monies advanced and withdrawn in respect of investments. During the year, the NICTS advanced £7.3 million (net of withdrawals) to the NICTSIA (2017-2018: £11.3 million net withdrawal).

#### **5 Events after the reporting date**

In accordance with the requirements of IAS 10, events after the reporting period are considered up to the date on which the Secretary and Comptroller General authorises the accounts for issue. This is interpreted as the date of the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

**ACCOUNTS DIRECTION GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 45 (2) OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE ACT 1982, AS AMENDED BY SCHEDULE 18 PARAGRAPH 34 OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998 (DEVOLUTION OF POLICING AND JUSTICE FUNCTIONS) ORDER 2010**

1. This direction applies to the **Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account**.
2. The Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt shall prepare accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2019 which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Account at the reporting date and of its income and cash flows for the year then ended.
3. The Accounts shall be prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, and shall be consistent with relevant requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury which is in force for 2018-19.
4. The Accounts shall present an Income Statement, a Statement of Comprehensive Income, a Statement of Financial Position, a Statement of Cash Flows, and a Statement of Changes in Client Funds. The Statement of Financial Position shall present assets and liabilities in order of liquidity.
5. The notes to the Accounts shall include disclosure of assets and liabilities, and of income and expenditure, relating to other central government funds including the National Loans Fund.
6. The report shall include:
  - a brief history of the Account and its statutory background;
  - an outline of the scope of the Account, its relationship to the Department of Finance and other central funds, and its management arrangements;
  - a management commentary, including information on financial performance and financial position, which reflects the relationship between the Account and other central funds; and
  - a governance statement.

**STUART STEVENSON**  
**Treasury Officer of Accounts**