



**The Commission for
Victims & Survivors**

Annual Report and
Accounts 2016-17

THE COMMISSION FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Annual Report and Accounts 2016-17

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 by The Executive Office on 3rd November 2017

THE COMMISSION FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

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Foreword

As we face into the current period of political upheaval it is clear that the future of Northern Ireland is inextricably linked with the need for us to deal with the legacy of the past and to address the needs of those who were, and often continue to be, harmed.

Within the Strategy for Victims and Survivors, the Commission is identified as being the primary source of advice to government on victims and survivors issues; having responsibility for the strategic assessment of need and for ensuring that the correct structures are in place to meet those needs and identify gaps in provision. The Commission oversees and provides guidance to government in relation to the three key areas of dealing with the past, improving services and building for the future.

My office provided advice on Dealing with the Past to the First and deputy First Minister back in March 2014. This advice focused on four key areas of need that were common to victims and survivors: Acknowledgement, Truth, Justice and Reparation.

The proposed institutions of the Stormont House Agreement, including not only the Historical Investigations Unit, Independent Commission for Information Retrieval, and Oral History Archive, but also the much needed Pension for those severely injured, the Mental Trauma Service, Advocate Counsellor support and the Implementation and Reconciliation Group represent the most comprehensive set of proposals yet to address victims' needs. These proposals reflect considerable input from the Victims and Survivors Forum and align with the Commission's Advice on Dealing with the Past submitted to Ministers in August 2014. The exclusion of these measures from the Fresh Start Agreement in November 2015 resulted in enormous disappointment for victims and survivors and it remains a priority for the Commission to support progress on these issues in every way that we can.

It is also important to understand that these measures will profoundly impact on a considerable proportion of our population. Research by the Commission indicates that approximately 500,000 people, almost one in three people in Northern Ireland, are victims and survivors of the Troubles. This includes up to 200,000 with mental health problems, 40,000 suffering with injuries and 3,720 families bereaved.

In the light of these numbers it does not come as a surprise to learn that the number of people coming forward for help and support from the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) has been growing for the past five years by more than 20 percent each year. The Commission has worked with the Victims and Survivors Forum, VSS and The Executive Office to develop policy advice on making the Individual Needs Programme sustainable, targeting those most in need and addressing other issues

raised by victims and survivors. We will be working with them and the Victims and Survivors Forum to evaluate the impact of these changes.

The Victims and Survivors Forum plays a critically important role for the Commission and ensures that government policy is developed in collaboration and co-design with victims and survivors. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the outstanding contribution of our Forum members; their willingness to engage in discussion of the most difficult aspects of dealing with our troubled past is an example of leadership that we can all learn from.

We have carried out an open and transparent process to appoint new members to the Forum this year. The Commission has also established for the first time a wider Victims Panel. This will further strengthen the position of victims and survivors in determining how we deal with the past, deliver services to those who have been harmed and build for the future.

In 2017, we have already passed the mid-point of the 2009-2019 Victims and Survivors Strategy and it is important that we take stock of what has been achieved to date. The Commission has completed a review of the implementation of the Strategy and has submitted its report to The Executive Office. This will help to identify the areas that we need to focus on over the remaining years and possibly beyond 2019.

As we move towards a new model to address trauma and mental health and to implement measures for dealing with the past there is an opportunity to build capacity within and across victims' organisations, to ensure victims and survivors are receiving quality services in a consistent way regardless of location. The Commission has been working with the co-design team and with victims groups to deliver revised standards for the delivery of services to victims and survivors. This will be the benchmark for capacity building and will be supported by €17.6 million PEACE IV funding for voluntary and community organisations.

I commend this Annual Report to you and welcome feedback on any aspect of our work in the Commission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith Thompson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Judith Thompson
Commissioner for Victims and Survivors
Date: 13th October 2017

1. Performance Report

Secretary to the Commission's Statement

As Secretary to the Commission, it is my job to support the Commission in its work and also to ensure that the organisation is effective and efficient in the conduct of its business. The performance of the Commission in terms of delivery against business plan targets is one of my key functions. It is important that a focus is kept on this area, ensuring that the best outcomes are delivered in all aspects of our work.

As Accounting Officer, I am also charged by The Executive Office (TEO) to ensure that the operation of the organisation complies with good governance practice and has sound systems of internal control.

I am pleased that the Commission has achieved 94% of its outlined Corporate Objectives.

1.1 Overview

The purpose of this section of the Report is to provide sufficient information to allow understanding of the role of the Commission for Victims and Survivors, the key risks to the achievement of its objectives and how it has performed during the year.

The Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland (the Commission) was established in May 2008 under the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

The Commission is a Non-departmental Public Body (NDPB) of The Executive Office.

Article 5 of the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 establishes the Commissioner's principal aim of promoting the interests of victims and survivors.

Article 6 of the 2006 Order outlines the duties of the Commissioner as:

- Promoting an awareness of matters relating to the interests of victims and survivors and of the need to safeguard those interests;
- Keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice affecting the interests of victims and survivors;

- Keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for the victims and survivors by bodies or persons;
- Advising the Secretary of State, the Executive Committee of the Assembly and any body or person providing services for victims and survivors on matters concerning the interests of victims and survivors;
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that the views of victims and survivors are sought; and
- Making arrangements for a Forum for consultation and discussion with victims and survivors.

Article 7 outlines the general powers of the Commissioner as:

- To undertake, commission or provide financial or other assistance for research or educational activities concerning the interests of victims and survivors or the exercise of its functions;
- After consultation with such bodies or persons as it thinks fit, issue guidance on best practice in relation to any matter concerning the interests of victims and survivors;
- To compile information concerning the interests of victims and survivors;
- To provide advice or information on any matter concerning the interests of victims and survivors;
- To publish any matter concerning the interests of victims and survivors, including the outcome of any research or activities mentioned above and any advice provided by the Commission; and
- To make representations or recommendations to any body or person concerning the interests of victims and survivors.

The Commission produces its Annual Report and Accounts as directed by paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Schedule to the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

The Annual Report and Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the appropriate form and disclosure requirements of the Government Financial

Reporting Manual (FReM) and the Accounts Direction as issued by The Executive Office.

Principal Activities

The Commission's work is based upon:

- The NI Executive's Draft Programme for Government;
- The Executive Office's ten-year strategy for victims and survivors;
- The Commission's statutory duties and powers;
- The Commission's three year Corporate Plan; and
- The Commission's annual Business Plan.

The principal aim of the Commission is to promote the interests of victims and survivors. The mission of the Commission is to address the needs of all victims and survivors by ensuring excellent service provision, acknowledging the legacy of the past and building for a better future.

Risk

The Commission's Risk Register was reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) on a weekly basis and presented to the Board on a monthly basis and to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) on a quarterly basis. The Commission's policy is risk averse/cautious.

During the 2016-17 year, the Corporate Risk Register was reviewed and updated. New risks were identified and the register was updated to illustrate how the Commission performs its core functions and meets its statutory duties. It also highlights the inter-dependency in managing risks from the outset at initial engagement stage.

This year the key risks to the delivery of the Commission's objectives were the continuing reduction in funding, and replenishing a new Victims and Survivors Forum.

Going Concern

On 9 January 2017 the deputy First Minister resigned from office which triggered the dissolution of the Joint Office. There are currently no Executive Ministers in post.

Despite the absence of a Northern Ireland Assembly, the Commission has had its indicative budget allocation for 2017-18 approved by The Executive Office.

The Commission is satisfied that the organisation is a going concern on the basis that there is no reason to believe that The Executive Office's future sponsorship will not be forthcoming to meet the Commission's liabilities in the future. It has accordingly been considered appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of these financial statements. The Commission was to have a triennial review during 2014-15 however The Executive Office delayed this exercise due to the absence of a Commissioner, and the review was undertaken in 2016-17. The Commission expects the review report to be published in 2017-18.

Performance Summary

In 2016/17 there were 32 targets in the Business Plan, with 30 (94%) targets achieved, 1 target (3%) partially achieved and 1 (3%) not achieved.

The Commission reported a total underspend of £2,505 representing 0.3% of the total budget available which is detailed further in the Financial Performance section on page 25.

1.2 Performance Analysis

Non-Current Assets

The Commission does not believe there is any material difference between the market and net book value of its assets.

Interest Rate and Currency Risk

The Commission has no borrowings, relies on The Executive Office for its cash requirement and is therefore not exposed to liquidity risks. It also has no material deposits and all material assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling, therefore it is not exposed to interest rate risk or currency risk

Sustainability

The Commission operates a number of effective schemes in relation to addressing environmental issues:

- Recycling office waste products, plastic and aluminium; and
- Reducing energy consumption through a range of measures such as automated heating systems.

In implementing these measures the Commission has reduced its costs and the adverse environmental impact of the organisation.

Identifying and communicating the Commission's aims, values and objectives

The Commission is required to produce a three-year Corporate Plan and annual Business Plan within the timescales agreed with The Executive Office.

The Corporate Plan outlines the values, aims and objectives the Commission intends to focus on in the next 3 years. This ensures the Commission has a sense of direction within the context of a changing external environment.

Measuring the performance of the Commission against its stated aims and objectives

The Commission uses the following framework for monitoring key performance indicators to measure the Commission's activity against its stated objectives;

- Key Strategic Priorities;
- Key Performance Indicators;
- Resource Allocation;
- Outputs, Results and Impacts; and
- Senior Responsible Officer.

In summary, there were 32 targets in the Business Plan, with 30 (94%) targets achieved, 1 target partially achieved (3%) and 1 (3%) not achieved detailed under each corporate objective in the tables below.

Corporate Objective 1 – To ensure excellent service provision to all victims and survivors

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
1.1. Forum contribution to improved services	Forum Report to Commissioner produced by end of March 2017.	✓		
	Service issues discussed at 3 meetings of the Forum.			
	Forum Services Working Group to meet and engage with Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) on 3 occasions.			
1.2. Service Reporting	4 quarterly reports completed and submitted during 2016-17.	✓		
	Monthly tri-lateral meetings with the VSS and The Executive Office (TEO).			
	Quarterly meetings between Chair of the VSS Board and the Commissioner.			
	Review of steady state of VSS - to agree appropriate arrangements for the delivery of client services.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
1.3. Co-design and planning for future service delivery	Meet with TEO officials on a monthly basis as part of the Co-design process.	✓		
	Participation in the Co-design Mapping group for the duration of the project.			
	Progress/monitor implementation of the recommendations contained in the Personalised Budget Pilot Evaluation Report.			
	Produce update paper for the Victims and Survivors Update Meeting.			
	Commission produce Policy Advice on eligibility and funding QTR 2 2016.			
1.4. Review of the implementation of the Victims and Survivors Strategy 2009-2019	Finalise the Review of the implementation of the Strategy by September 2016.	✓		
	Progress/monitor implementation of the main findings and recommendation contained in the Victims and Survivors Strategy mid-Term Review Report.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
1.5. Research	Research proposals will be developed following the production of the Strategy Review and a three year Research Programme will be identified.	✓		
	Commission will progress the recommendations of the Advocacy, Resilience and the Children and Young People research reports during 2016/17.			
	The Commission will initiate a population based attitudinal survey during 2016/17.			
1.6. Peace IV Programme	The Commission supports the VSS as Lead Partner in securing €17.6 million of EU funding through the PEACE IV Programme.	✓		
	The Commission provides research to the VSS in preparing and submitting a PEACE IV application to the Managing Authority.			
	If successful, the Commission to provide the policy framework and research priorities for the allocation of PEACE IV.			

Corporate Objective 2 – To raise awareness of the impact of the past on all victims and survivors

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
2.1. Forum contribution to raising the awareness of the impact of the past	Report to Commissioner produced by end of March 2017.	✓		
	6 Forum Meetings to focus on issues of Dealing with the Past.			
2.2. Commission advocates for the implementation of the legacy issues	The Commission advocates for the delivery of the Legacy Issues.	✓		
	Commission and the Forum engages with the two governments and political parties to advocate for the delivery of the Historical Investigations Unit (HIU), Independent Commission for Information Retrieval (ICIR), Oral History Archive and Implementation and Reconciliation Group (IRG).			
	The Commission and the Forum also engage with Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and Department of Justice on the implementation of the HIU.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
2.3. Commission advocates for the implementation on legacy services	Commission works in partnership with the WAVE Injured Group and Queens University Belfast (QUB) in relation to a pension which is subject to political agreement.	✓		
	Commission monitors the implementation of the Mental Trauma Service			
	Commission and Forum engage with Department for Communities on implementation of welfare reform.			

Corporate Objective 3 – To empower and support victims to make a contribution to a better and shared future

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
3.1. Forum contribution to a better and shared future	Report to Commissioner produced by end of March 2017.	✓		
	3 Forum Meetings to focus on issues of Building for the Future.			
	The Building for the Future Working Group to meet on 3 occasions to discuss issues.			
	Commission will work with the Forum in progressing relevant recommendations contained in the Children and Young People Engagement Plan.			
3.2. Building for the Future - Research	Commission will continue to highlight and progress the recommendations contained in the Towards a Better Future Report.	✓		
	Commission will progress Building for the Future (BFF) -related recommendations contained in the Victims and Survivors Strategy Mid-Term Review Report.			

Corporate Objective 4: To raise the profile of victims and survivors through engagement with the Forum, groups and individuals and dissemination of key issues into Government, the media and wider society

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
4.1. Management of the Forum	A process to appoint a Panel to replenish the Victims and Survivors Forum will be completed by June 2016.	✓		
	The Commissioner to appoint a fully representative Forum of up to 24 members in line with the current business case by June 2016.			
	Once appointed the Forum will meet on a monthly basis during the year.			
	Development of a new 2017-19 Business Case in relation to the Forum.			
4.2. Engagement with the Sector	The Commission will hold four quarterly seminars during the year in relation to Services, Dealing with the Past, Building for the Future and respond to live issues.	✓		
	A seminar report will be produced for each event.			
	Where possible, Seminars will be arranged in partnership with the sector and external partners.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
	An Annual Conference will be held on the recommendations of Review of the Strategy Report.			✓ (1)
4.3. Engagement with the Sector (Groups)	The Commission's attendance at group events and meetings across Northern Ireland.	✓		
	Commissioner and staff meet with three groups per month.			
4.4. Commission engages with individual Victims and Survivors	Commission addresses the concerns of individual victims and survivors throughout the year both proactively and in relation to live issues emerging.	✓		
	Commission manages a portfolio of individual issues on behalf of victims and survivors in line with its Memorandum of Understanding with the VSS.			
	Database of issues kept up to date to inform policy development.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
4.5. International Engagements	Commission builds on international links to inform best practice in Northern Ireland.	✓		
	Commission builds on links made within the Basque Country.			
	Commission engages with the latest EU developments in relation to victims and survivors.			
4.6. Implement the Commission's Communication strategy	Develop and approve Communications Plan and Stakeholder Engagement Plan.	✓		
	Review, develop and maintain the Commission's website and social media accounts.			

Corporate Objective 5 - To demonstrate a high level of administrative and financial support within an effective governance framework

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
5.1. To comply with the requirements of the Department in order to manage, monitor and report on the budget.	To effectively manage the Commission's funds within 1.5% of agreed budget, meeting requirements of Department.	✓		
	To respond to Departmental financial returns on a monthly and quarterly basis.			
	Compliance with prompt payment requirements to process 95% of all invoices within 10 days and 100% of all invoices within 30 days.			
5.2. To lay and publish Annual Report and Accounts 2015/16 no later than 2 weeks after they have been audited and signed	Audited and Unqualified Financial Statements.		✓ (2)	
	In house production of Annual Report & Accounts 2015/16.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
5.3. To provide administrative support to the Commission in order to ensure high level quality of service and meet all health and safety requirements	Provide full management of an electronic based diary and act as front line contact for the Commission.	✓		
	To maintain and regularly update the register of the Commission's assets including ICT assets.			
	Manage all contracts with premises services suppliers and ensure that Commission premises and contents requirements of the relevant legislation and Commission policies.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
5.4. Provision of HR services and recruitment to ensure staff are in post and trained with appropriate skills and competencies	Manage internally, or refer to external service provider as appropriate, any internal HR operational issues that may arise through the lifecycle of employment from recruitment to resignation or dismissal.	✓		
	Management of Service Level Agreement for Provision of HR Services.			
	Maintain Sick Leave target in accordance with NICS target of 8.5 days.			
	Complete recruitment as required.			
	Complete induction and requisite training of new staff.			
	Corporate, team and individual development undertaken in line with the Commission's training plan and budget.			
	Complete pay award as required in accordance with pay remit process.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
5.5. To provide secretariat support to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)	4 meetings of the ARAC held and report in the forms of minutes provided.	✓		
	Provide reports to the Board of meetings in the form of minutes provided.			
	1 Annual Report completed.			
	1 self-assessment meeting of the ARAC completed.			
	Complete appointment and induction of new ARAC members.			
5.6. To monitor Business Plan and develop new plan for 2017-2018	To monitor delivery of the 2016/17 Business Plan and provide updates at monthly Board meetings and at quarterly ARAC meetings and Accountability meetings.	✓		
	To develop, consult upon and submit 2017/18 Business Plan to the Department by 31/01/17.			
5.7. To develop new Corporate Plan for 2017-20	Public consultation to be completed.	✓		
	Complete final draft and submit to Department.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
5.8. To maintain a robust and fit for purpose Risk Register	Risk Registers on a monthly basis to the SMT and Board.	✓		
	Risk Registers on a quarterly basis to the ARAC.			
5.9. To keep under review and update when necessary corporate governance and risk management procedures in line with Internal Audit recommendations	Facilitate Internal Audit to undertake reviews as required by the approved Strategy for Internal Audit in 2016/17.	✓		
5.10. To maintain a Register of Interests and confirm no conflict of interests on ongoing basis by Board (monthly) and ARAC (quarterly)	To review and update the Register of Interests for Commissioner and Senior Management on an annual basis.	✓		
	To record and update the Declaration of Interests for Board members on a monthly basis.			
	To record and update the Declaration of Interests for ARAC members on a quarterly basis.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
5.11. To prepare for the Review of the Commission to be undertaken in 2015/16 by the Department	Ensuring work programme is fully deliverable.	✓		
	Ongoing governance reviews to ensure best practice.			
5.12. To undertake policy screening, annual reviews or provide Annual Progress Reports as required in order to ensure compliance with legislation and equality guidelines	Submit Equality Scheme Annual Progress Report to ECNI by 31 August 2016.	✓		
	To review and/or develop relevant Commission policies to ensure best practice is adhered to in relation to equality and good relations.			
5.13. To process all Departmental returns and requests for information within the required timeframe	All complaints processed in accordance with Commission procedures.	✓		
	All Departmental returns and requests for information (including AQs) responded to within the required timeframe.			
	All requests for information under Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act returned within set timescales.			
	Board, ARAC and Department advised as required.			

Objectives	Key Actions	Performance Assessment		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
5.14. To manage all new and existing Contracts for professional services in accordance with best practice guidelines	Issue contracts.	✓		
	Monitor and evaluate performance.			
	Provide reports on management of contracts to SMT, Board and ARAC as required.			
5.15. To manage Commission assets in line with the revised Departmental Asset Management Strategy	Review Departmental Asset Management Strategy and implement Commission's objectives within Asset Management Plan.	✓		

Explanation for non-achievement of Key Objectives

	Key Objective	Comments
(1)	4.2 Engagement with the Sector	Not Achieved Due to the political situation, planning for the Conference in March 2017 on legacy issues was postponed.
(2)	5.2 To lay and publish Annual Report and Accounts 2015/16 no later than 2 weeks after they have been audited and signed	Partially Achieved The Annual Report and Accounts was laid before the Assembly on 23 December 2016, and published in hard copy, and on the Commission's website, at the end of March 2017.

Financial Performance

The Commission is sponsored by The Executive Office. In year pressures and easements are reported to TEO through the process of quarterly monitoring rounds.

The opening resource budget allocation for 2016-17 was £859,000, with a non-cash depreciation budget for 2016-17 of £5,000. During the 2016-17 year the Commission was allocated an additional £1,000 of depreciation funding.

Actual expenditure per the audited accounts against the budget is shown below:

Expenditure Heading	Budget 2016-17	Actual 2016-17
Salaries & Commissioner's Fees	565,000	572,342
Overheads & other	176,000	165,501
Programme (excluding staff costs)	118,000	119,163
Total Recurrent	859,000	857,006

Actual non cash depreciation commitment per the audited accounts against the budget is shown below:

Depreciation	6,000	5,489
Total Budget	865,000	862,495

In summary, the Commission reported a total underspend of £2,505 representing 0.3% of the final budget available.

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure is set out in the Financial Statements with supporting notes in the pages that follow.

Long Term Expenditure Trends

Expenditure Heading	Actual 2014/15	Actual 2015/16	Actual 2016/17
Salaries & Commissioner	£461,128	£475,467	£572,342
Overheads & other	£288,144	£219,658	£165,501
Programme (excluding staff costs)	£185,667	£165,978	£119,163
Capital	£8,916	£16,923	£0
Total:	£943,855	£878,026	£857,006

2017-18 Financial Year

The Commission has received indicative funding of £843,000 including ring-fenced funding for depreciation and impairments. This equates to a reduction of 2.5% from 2016-17.



John Beggs
Accounting Officer
Date: 13th October 2017

2. Accountability Report

2.1 Corporate Governance Report

This report explains the composition and organisation of the Commission's governance structures and how they support the achievement of the organisation's objectives.

2.1.1 Directors' Report

The Directors' Report details all those who have had responsibility for the Commission during the year, including the composition of the Board and those who influence the decisions of the Commission as a whole. It also details any significant interests held by members of the Board which may conflict with their management responsibilities and any information on personal data related incidents.

Details of Directors

The term Director is interpreted within the Commission as the Commissioner.

Commissioner & Board

The Commission is legally defined as a 'Body Corporate' which would normally be comprised of a Board of Directors. However, as a single appointment, the Commissioner solely fulfils the role of the Board. The Board is attended by the Secretary to the Commission, Head of Corporate Services, Head of Policy & Research, and the Head of Communications and Engagement.

The Board has overall responsibility for delivering on the strategic priorities of the Commission as agreed with The Executive Office. The Commissioner is accountable to the Ministers.

In September 2015, Ms Judith Thompson was appointed as the sole Commissioner for an initial period of four years.

There were 11 Board meetings up to 31 March 2017.

Secretary to the Commission & Accounting Officer

Mr John Beggs was appointed as Secretary to the Commission on 5 August 2013 and was appointed as Accounting Officer effective from 14 October 2013.

Senior Management Team

The Secretary is supported by a Senior Management Team comprising:

- Mr Craig Gartley - Head of Corporate Services.
- Mr Adrian McNamee - Head of Policy Development and Research (left the Commission on 24/4/17 and Patricia Stewart is to commence her appointment on 30/10/17).
- Ms Tina McCann – Head of Communications and Engagement.

Register of Interests

The Commissioner and the Secretary to the Commission are required to register all interests, direct or indirect, which members of the public might reasonably think could influence their judgement. An up to date Register of Interests is maintained and is available for inspection at the Commission's offices at Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP or on the Commission's website at www.cvsni.org.

Auditors

The financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) in accordance with the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The Comptroller and Auditor General is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and he and his staff are wholly independent of the Commission. He reports his findings to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The audit of the financial statements for 2016-17 resulted in an audit fee of £10,520 which is included in the Operating Costs within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. An audit fee of £15,121 was charged for the audit of the financial statements for 2015-16.

There was no non-audit work undertaken, and therefore no remuneration for non-audit work paid to the auditors in 2016-17. (2015-16, nil)

Charitable Donations

The Commission made no charitable or political donations during this period. (2015-16, nil)

Important Events occurring after the year-end

There have been no other significant events since the year-end which would affect this Report and Accounts.

Payments to Suppliers

The Commission is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the British Standard for Achieving Good Payment Performance in Commercial Transactions (BS7890). Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days of the receipt of the goods or services, or presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand, whichever is later.

In the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 the Commission paid 100% of invoices within 30 days (2015-16: 100%) and 98% within 10 days (2015-16: 97%).

Personal data

The Commission reported no personal data breaches in 2016-17 (2015-16: nil).

2.1.2 Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

Under the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, The Executive Office has directed the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland 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 Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland and of its net expenditure, application of resources, changes in taxpayers' equity and cashflows 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:

- Observe the Accounts Direction issued by TEO including relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;

- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts; and
- Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer of TEO has designated the Secretary to the Commission for Victims and Survivors as Accounting Officer for the Commission.

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 the Commission for Victims and Survivors' assets are set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland published by Department of Finance.

Statement of disclosure of information to the auditors

The Accounting Officer can confirm that:

- So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Commission's auditors are unaware; and
- The Accounting Officer has taken all steps, including making enquiries of the Commissioner and the auditors and any other steps required by the Accounting Officer's duty to exercise due care, skill and diligence, that he ought to have taken in his duty as an Accounting Officer in order to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Commission's auditors are aware of that information.

As Accounting Officer I can confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable and that I take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

2.1.3 Governance Statement

Introduction

This statement is given in respect of the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland for 2016-17. It outlines the Commission's governance framework for directing and controlling its functions and how assurance is provided to support me, in my role as Accounting Officer for the Commission.

The Commission's governance structures are developed in line with Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI), and other requirements and guidance to comply with the Commission's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum.

As Accounting Officer I have responsibility for ensuring the fulfilment of statutory responsibilities, aims and objectives including promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources. As Accounting Officer I have to satisfy myself that the Commission has adequate governance systems and procedures in place to promote the effective, efficient conduct of its business and to safeguard financial propriety and regularity.

I was appointed as Secretary to the Commission on 5 August 2013, and as Accounting Officer effective from 14 October 2013. I have been in post throughout the 2016-17 year.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Commission is directed and controlled, and the activities through which it accounts to, and engages with the public and other stakeholders.

It enables the Commission to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate and value for money services and facilities.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically.

The Governance Framework was in place throughout the 2016-17 year.

Governance Framework

In compliance with the *Governance Framework* the Commission has established key organisational structures which support the delivery of Corporate Governance;

- The Accounting Officer;
- The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC);
- The Internal Audit function; and
- The External Audit function.

These key organisational structures within the Commission's Corporate Governance Framework, along with an overview of their responsibilities and performance in year, are explained in detail in the relevant sections below.

In addition to this there are key elements and processes which contribute to the Commission's Governance Framework. These include:

- Identifying and communicating the Commission's aims, value and objectives;
- Measuring the performance of the Commission against its stated aims and objectives;
- Developing, communicating, and embedding a Code of Conduct and standards of behaviour for Commissioner and staff; and
- Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations and internal policies and procedures.

These are also explained in detail in the relevant sections below.

Governance Responsibilities and Performance

Accounting Officer

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives. I also have responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances voted to the Commission and for safeguarding the public funds and assets, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

In my role as Accounting Officer, I provide support to the Commission Board. This includes highlighting to the Board specific business implications or risks and, where appropriate, the measures that could be employed to manage these.

Commission Board

The Commission is legally defined as a 'Body Corporate' which would normally be comprised of a Board of Directors. However as a single appointment the Commissioner solely fulfils the role of the Board.

The Commissioner has overall responsibility for delivering on the strategic priorities of the Commission as agreed with The Executive Office. The Commissioner is responsible to the Ministers and, as outlined within the MSFM (3.4.6), will:

- Establish its overall strategic direction within the policy and resources framework determined by The Executive Office;
- Ensure that The Executive Office is kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of the Commission or on the attainability of its targets, and determine the steps needed to deal with such changes;
- Ensure that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with; that it operates within the limits of the statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with The Executive Office, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds; and that, in reaching decisions, he/she takes into account all relevant guidance issued by DoF and The Executive Office;
- Ensure that it receives and reviews regular financial information concerning the management of its staff and resources; is informed in a timely manner about any concerns about the activities of the Commission's office; and provides details of these concerns and positive assurance to The Executive Office that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns; and
- Ensure that high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times, including using the independent audit committee to help the Commission address the key financial and other risks facing the Commission.

The Commissioner supports the delivery of effective Corporate Governance and operates within best practice guidelines set out in Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013.

The Commissioner is responsible for establishing and overseeing the Commission's Corporate Governance arrangements. In addition to this, all tiers of management have commensurate responsibilities for ensuring that good governance practices are followed at an organisational level.

The key aspects of the Commissioner's role include:

- Setting the strategic direction for the Commission, including its vision, values and strategic objectives, and overseeing the implementation of the Commission's Corporate Plan and annual Business Plan, and measuring and evaluating its performance;
- Developing, promoting and overseeing the implementation of policies and programmes in line with the Commission's strategic direction;
- Leading and overseeing the process of change and encouraging innovation, to enhance the Commission's capability to deliver;
- Monitoring performance via the Commission's Corporate Plan, annual Business Plan, budgets and targets, and assessing and managing the strategic risk to delivery;
- Overseeing the strategic management of the Commission's staff, finance, information and physical resources, including setting training and health and safety priorities;
- Establishing and overseeing the implementation of the Commission's corporate governance arrangements, including risk management; and
- Overseeing and monitoring the Commission's progress against all of its equality of opportunity, good relations and human rights obligations.

The Commissioner is supported by the Commission Secretariat, which is responsible for organising the agenda for monthly Board meetings and ensuring it is provided with timely information to support full discussion at each meeting.

In 2016-17 there were 11 meetings of the Board, with full attendance at all meetings.

The operational procedures of the Commission Board are in line with best practice and are kept under continuous review. As a single appointment the Commissioner solely fulfils the role of the Board.

The Board received monthly reports on the delivery of Business Plan objectives; financial management and budget monitoring; performance of individual areas of work; HR priorities; and resilience of security and information assurance, contingency planning and business continuity planning.

All reports and papers conformed to a standard layout to ensure the appropriate focus on key issues. Financial and performance data was extracted from the accounting and operational systems and was therefore subject to regular, planned internal quality assurance checks and independent audits.

The Board considered the information provided to be sufficient to allow it to discharge its strategic planning and corporate governance responsibilities.

The Board is required to undertake assessment of its own effectiveness and its compliance with the Corporate Governance Code. The Commissioner undertook an assessment of the performance of the Board in 2016-17 and was content with its performance.

Commission Audit and Risk Committee

The Board is supported and advised in its role by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The membership of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) is independent of the Commission.

The purpose of the ARAC is to support the Accounting Officer in monitoring Commission risk, control and governance systems (including financial reporting) in the Commission. Additionally, the Committee will give advice to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of coverage of audit arrangements (internal and external) to provide the required assurances.

The membership of the ARAC was renewed in year following an external appointment process and in 2016-17 comprised:

April 2016 – June 2016

- Chairman (Mr Richard Buchanan);
- Member (Mr Patrick Farry); and
- Member (Ms Mary Mclvor).

July 2016 – March 2017

- Chair (Ms Mary Mclvor);
- Member (Mr Brian McDonald); and
- Member (Mr Gerry O'Neill)

The membership of the new committee were appointed for a fixed term of three years ending on 31 August 2019 with the option of extension for a further three years.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings are normally attended by the Accounting Officer, the Head of Internal Audit, a Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) representative, a Departmental representative and members of the Secretariat. However, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may ask any other Commission officials to attend to assist it with its discussions on any particular matter.

The Committee met 4 times during 2016-17. All members of the ARAC attended all of the 4 meetings and all meetings were deemed quorate.

In line with best practice set out in the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) March 2014, the chair of the ARAC set an agreed core programme of work for each of its meetings, which included:

- The strategic processes for risk, control and governance and the Governance Statement;
- The accounting policies, the accounts, and the Annual Report of the organisation, including the process for review of the accounts prior to submission for audit, levels of error identified, and the Accounting Officer's letter of representation to the Comptroller and Auditor General;
- The planned activity and results of both internal and external audit;
- Adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity, including external audit's Report to those Charged with Governance;
- Assurances relating to the corporate governance arrangements for the organisation;
- Proposals for tendering for Internal Audit services and any changes as to the arrangements for external audit;
- Anti-fraud policies, whistleblowing processes, and arrangements for special investigations;
- Arrangements for financial and performance reporting within the Commission
- The ARC will also periodically review its own effectiveness and report the results of that review to the Commission;
- Staffing matters referred to it under section 10 of the Code of Conduct; and
- Any other matter, when requested to do so by the Board.

The Commission provided regular reports to the ARAC on the annual Business Plan and risk management and assurance in the Commission.

On a quarterly basis the ARAC produces minutes, and on an annual basis produces a report on the work of ARAC throughout the year and on the main governance issues the Committee has considered. Each year the ARAC conducts a self-assessment against the guidelines issued by the National Audit Office. The findings of the self-assessment are presented to the ARAC for action as appropriate. In 2016-17 the ARAC recorded total compliance with good practice.

Internal Control and Risk Management

All relevant internal control considerations, including any issues of risk, are taken into account with regard to the achievement of Commission policies, aims and objectives, and where necessary, are brought to the attention of the Board, ARAC and The Executive Office.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives, it can therefore only provide reasonable, and not absolute, assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to:

- Identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Commission policies, aims and objectives;
- To evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised; and
- To manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has been in place in the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2017 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, and is in accordance with DoF guidance.

To assist in the Risk Management Process, the Commission has developed a Corporate Risk Register which was reviewed at weekly SMT meetings and updated at monthly Board meetings and at quarterly ARAC meetings.

The Risk Register:

- Identifies the Commission's high level risks; and
- Analyses the risks related to the current Business Plan

It also identifies the Risk Owner for each of these risks and reinforces the inextricable link between risk management and the Business Plan planning process.

The Corporate Risk Register is endorsed by the Accounting Officer and Commission Board and is subject to regular revision, through scrutiny by the Audit and Risk Committee and lessons learned from the previous reporting year. In 2016-17 new risks were identified and the register was updated to illustrate how the Commission performs its core functions and meets its statutory duties. It also highlights the inter-dependency in managing risks from the outset at initial engagement stage.

There are also a number of other processes which contribute to corporate governance in the Commission:

- The Corporate and Business Plan planning process, including the associated performance monitoring and reporting system throughout the Commission;
- The Performance Management System;

- HR policies designed to ensure the Commission complies with employment law and has the appropriate numbers of staff with suitable skills to meet its objectives;
- Budgets & Priorities setting and In Year Monitoring process; and
- The Commission's Anti-Fraud Policy and Response Plan, incorporating arrangements for Whistleblowing, details responsibilities regarding the prevention of fraud and the procedures to be followed in the event of a fraud being detected or suspected.

In terms of Information Risk, safeguarding the Commission's information, and its subsequent effective use, supports the Commission in the delivery of its objectives. Central to achieving this is the effective management of information risk.

As part of an ongoing process to identify and control risks to information, the Commission is continuing to review and enhance its Information Assurance arrangements and practices, and to provide a comprehensive framework to address risks. I am Senior Information Risk Owner and continue to lead in this important work.

There were no known breaches in relation to Information Security in 2016-17.

Review of Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the Internal Audit Service and Senior Management within the Commission, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal framework. I also consider the comments made by the NIAO in its management letter and other reports.

I have taken note of the NIAO's priority 1 recommendation concerning the quality of the 2015-16 accounts and journals processing and the implications this has for the internal control system. In response I conducted an internal review taking account of NIAO's recommendation and this has been addressed in 2016-17 with additional measures and checks in place during the year, and in respect to the preparation for the Annual Report and Accounts.

On an ongoing basis I continue to review, and to be advised, by the Commission Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Sources of Independent Assurance

The Commission obtains Independent Assurance from the following sources:

- Internal Audit; and
- Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit Service provides independent assurance by giving an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Commission's system of internal control to the Accounting Officer and Audit and Risk Committee.

Assessing the completeness and effectiveness of the Commission's corporate governance arrangements forms part of the Internal Audit Plan and in 2016-17 the Commission's internal audit services were provided by ASM. In March 2017, following a tender process, ASM were awarded the contract for the provision of Internal Audit services at the Commission in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

The Accounting Officer and the Board are independently advised by the Head of Internal Audit who operates in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The primary role of Internal Audit is to provide the Accounting Officer and the Board with an independent and objective opinion on risk management, control and governance, by measuring and evaluating their effectiveness in achieving the Commission's agreed objectives.

Internal Audit has played a crucial role in the review of the effectiveness of risk management, controls and governance in the Commission by:

- Focusing audit activity on the key business risks;
- Being available to guide managers and staff through improvements in internal controls;
- Auditing the application of risk management and control as part of internal audit reviews of key systems and processes; and
- Providing advice to management on internal governance implications of proposed and emerging changes.

Internal Audit's output for this year included:

- Complaints and Freedom of Information Handling – Satisfactory Assurance;
- HR Performance Management – Satisfactory Assurance;
- Programme and Performance Management – Satisfactory Assurance; and
- Work Programme Performance Management – Satisfactory Assurance.

Internal Audit has provided an overall Satisfactory Assurance rating for the period 2016-17 covering governance, risk and controls.

Northern Ireland Audit Office

The Commission is also subject to independent scrutiny from the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The Audit Office is independent of Government and is tasked by the Assembly to hold publicly funded bodies to account for their use of public money. The Comptroller and Auditor General works closely with the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee which can require Accounting Officers and senior officials to account for their actions in relation to the management of public funds.

A representative from the Northern Ireland Audit Office attends Commission Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings at which corporate governance and risk management matters are considered.

Governance and Accountability

Governance is fundamental to the Commission. In fulfilling its objectives the following key governance arrangements are in place;

- Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM);
- Accountability Meetings;
- Performance Management;
- Stewardship Statements; and
- Budgets and Priorities setting and In Year Monitoring process.

As an Arms Length Body the Commission is both publicly accountable, and is accountable to The Executive Office, in terms of performance and the use of resources. This is detailed within the Commission's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) which determines;

- The purpose and responsibilities of the Commission;
- The legal framework of the Commission; and
- The environment in which the Commission operates.

The MSFM also includes clear information about the following;

- Shared aims and mutual responsibilities, including a management framework and potential rewards and sanctions for meeting or missing performance targets within an agreed tolerance;

- Arrangements for reporting and consultation in order to ensure that the Departmental Board receives information enabling it to monitor;
- Mechanisms to provide the Department with assurance on information provided by the Commission on performance;
- Roles and obligations of both the Department and the Commission, along with expectations of support from the other party; and
- Process for making Board and senior management appointments in the Commission.

By complying with the parameters detailed within the MSFM the Commission ensures it continues to be business-like and operates according to recognised precepts of good governance in business namely:

- Leadership;
- Effectiveness;
- Accountability; and
- Sustainability.

Accountability and Liaison meetings are held on a quarterly basis. The meetings are structured to cover all relevant governance issues affecting the organisation and provide an accountability mechanism to support this Governance Statement.

Quarterly Assurance Statements on Internal Control from the Commission are completed by the Accounting Officer and are reviewed by The Executive Office sponsor team and Corporate Governance Branch.

The Commission provides reports on the Budget at weekly Senior Management Team meetings and Board meetings on a monthly basis and on a quarterly basis at ARAC meetings, for monitoring and to provide early identification of any issues.

The Commission also provides monthly consumptions reports and quarterly Arms Length Body Performance Reports to The Executive Office.

In 2016-17 the Commission has been subjected to continued budget reductions.

The Commission has been informed by The Executive Office of potential budget cuts in the coming years and is cautious that such impact upon the Commission's budget may well impact its ability to fulfil its statutory functions in future years.

In response to this continuing budget uncertainty the Commission has continued to develop and manage an efficiency savings plan, including ongoing vacancy management and capitalising on the savings generated by a premises move in November 2015.

Collectively these actions provide the Commission with assurance that it is effectively discharging its functions and that public money is being properly used to deliver the objectives and targets set, while ensuring compliance with the requirements of regularity, propriety and value for money. With these arrangements in place I can therefore provide assurance that the Commission is compliant with the Corporate Governance Code.

Developing, communicating, and embedding a Code of Conduct and standards of behaviour for Commissioner and staff

Board Members and officers are bound by the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Code of Conduct.

The Commission has an approved Anti-Fraud Policy which covers the prevention, detection and management of fraud and/or corruption and fair dealing in those matters. It aims to raise the awareness of fraud and its prevention, and to give guidance to the reporting and investigation of fraud.

The Commission has an approved Whistleblowing Policy which ensures all staff can confidentially raise concerns, which relate to improper or illegal behaviour at the Commission without putting their positions at risk.

The Commission has a Gifts and Hospitality Policy in place and collates a Gifts and Hospitality Register on a monthly basis. The policy outlines how staff and Board Members should avoid putting themselves in a position where their integrity is called into question because of a financial, or other obligation, either in actuality or appearance.

The Commission operates a Conflict of Interest Policy and maintains a Register of Interest which is updated as required, or on an annual basis. There were no actual or potential Conflicts of Interest identified in year, however, a process is in place to manage any conflicts if required.

Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations and internal policies and procedures

The Commission operates under a system of policies and financial procedures to which all staff must adhere. There are clearly defined guidelines for expenditure, procurement and human resources management. Employees are provided with guidance and information on the Commission's financial procedures as part of the induction process.

The Commission applies value for money principles in all of its practices and during the tendering exercises for the procurement of goods and services. The Executive Office has a Service Level Agreement with Central Procurement Directorate regarding the use of their services in procurement and the Commission falls under its remit.

The Commission has an approved External Complaints Procedure for dealing with complaints from members of the public, and an approved Internal Complaints Procedure for dealing with internal complaints. If required, the Commission seeks legal advice.

Ministerial Directions

There were no Ministerial Directions sought nor given in year 2016-17. (2015-16, nil)

Internal Governance Divergences

There were no Internal Governance Divergences in year.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act (the Act) came into effect on 1 January 2005 creating a general right of access to information held by all public authorities including the Commission. The Act gives any individual the right to request information from the Commission.

The Commission adopted a Publication Scheme, following consultation. The Scheme details are available on the Commission's website at www.cvsni.org. The Commission also has processes and practices in place to ensure that it is able to fully meet responsibilities under the Act and deal effectively with requests for information.

During the period 2016-17 the Commission:

- Processed 2 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and
- Proactively published new information including Board and Audit and Risk Committee meeting minutes.

Further information on this area of work can be obtained from the Commission.

Complaints against the Commission

The policy for dealing with complaints made against the Commission is published on the Board's website. The Commission received no complaints during this financial year. (2015-16: one)

Conclusion

The Commission has a rigorous system of accountability on which I rely, as Accounting Officer, to form an opinion on the probity and use of public funds, as detailed in Managing Public Money NI.

Having continued to review the governance framework within the Commission, and in conjunction with assurances given to me by the Commissioner, the Audit and Risk Committee, Internal Audit and Senior Management of the Commission, I am content that the Commission has operated a sound system of internal governance during the period 2016-17.

I will, of course, continue to review the Commission's Governance Framework against new and emerging guidance to identify any areas for improvement and ensure that they are implemented in a timely manner.

2.2 Remuneration & Staff Report

Remuneration Policy

The current and future remuneration of the Commissioner is approved by the Minister of Finance who approves the pay remit for Senior Civil Service (SCS) staff. The SCS remuneration arrangements are based on a system of pay scales for each SCS grade containing a number of pay points from minima to maxima, allowing progression towards the maxima based on performance.

In 2012, upon creation, there were 11 points on each scale. The minimum point has been removed in each year from 2014 to 2016 (the scales now have 8 pay points) to allow progression through the pay scales within a reasonable period of time.

The remuneration of the other members of the Senior Management Team is made in accordance with the pay awards as set out by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Remuneration is assessed by the Secretary to the Commission, using the formal appraisal system adopted by the Commission for Victims and Survivors. Therefore there is no requirement to have a Remuneration Committee.

Service Contracts

The appointment of the Commissioner(s) for Victims and Survivors is made by the First Minister and deputy First Minister under Article 4 of the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as amended by Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and in accordance with the code of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The terms and conditions are as set out in the Schedule to the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as amended.

From 1 September 2015 Ms Judith Thompson was appointed Commissioner for Victims and Survivors for a period of 4 years.

Mr John Beggs was appointed as Secretary to the Commission on 5 August 2013 and was appointed as Accounting Officer effective from 14 October 2013. The Secretary to the Commission's appointment is open ended and early termination other than for misconduct would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the civil service compensation scheme.

Salary and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioner and the Accounting Officer.

Bonuses

There were no bonuses in 2016-17. (2015-16, nil)

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements (Audited)

	2016-17				2015-16			
Name	Salary £'000	Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits** (to nearest £1000)	Total (£'000)	Salary £'000	Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits** (to nearest £1000)	Total (£'000)
Commissioner Judith Thompson Start date 1 September 2015	70-75	-	29	95-100	40-45 (70-75 full year equivalent)	-	17	60-65
Secretary to the Commission Mr John Beggs Start date 5 August 2013	55-60	-	28	80-85	55-60	-	27	80-85
Band of Highest paid Director's Total Remuneration	£70,000-75,000				£70,000-75,000			
Median Total Remuneration	£31,180				£30,081			
Ratio	2.33				2.41			

**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.

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

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in the Commission in the financial year 2016-17 was £70,000 - 75,000 (2015-16, £70,000 - 75,000). This was 2.3 times (2015-16, 2.4) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £31,180 (2015-16, £30,081). The changes in ratio between the current year and the previous year are due to the Commissioner being in post for the full year in 2016-17, whereas in 2015-16 the Commissioner was in post for 7 months.

In 2016-17, nil employees (2015-16, nil employees) received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director. Annual remuneration scales ranged from £18,946 to £75,000 (2015-16, £20,284 to £75,000).

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Salary

Salary includes gross salary; overtime; 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 gratia payments.

The Commission for Victims and Survivors was under the direction and control of The Executive Office during the financial year.

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. The Commissioner and Secretary to the Commission did not receive any benefits in kind during the period ended 31 March 2017 (or during the period ended 31 March 2016).

Bonuses

Bonuses are based on performance levels attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. Bonuses relate to the performance in the year in which they become payable to the individual. No bonuses were paid in the period ended 31 March 2017 (or during the period ended 31 March 2016).

Pension Entitlements 2016-17 (Audited)

Name	Accrued pension at pension age at 31/3/17 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31/3/17 £'000	CETV at 31/3/16 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000
Commissioner Judith Thompson	2.5-5 plus lump sum of 0	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0	40	14	20
Secretary to the Commission, Mr John Beggs	15-20 plus lump sum of 0	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0	155	137	10

There are no partnership pension arrangements within the Commission.

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). Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' defined benefit arrangements (classic, premium and classic plus). These arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by the Assembly each year. From April 2011 pensions payable under classic, premium, and classic plus are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Prior to 2011, pensions were reviewed in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index (RPI). New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining a good quality 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account). New entrants joining on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a partnership pension account. Nuvos is 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 rate is 2.3%. CARE pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living.

A new pension scheme, alpha, was introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The majority of existing members of the NICS pension arrangements have also moved to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age will not move to alpha and those who were within 13.5

years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age. Alpha is also a 'Career Average Revalued Earnings' (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate will be 2.32%. CARE pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living.

Increases to public service pensions are the responsibility of HM Treasury. Pensions are reviewed each year in line with 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 2016 was 1% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2017.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018 are as follows:

Scheme Year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands)		Contribution rates – Classic members or classic members who have moved to alpha	Contribution rates – All other members
From	To	From 01 April 2017 to 31 March 2018	From 01 April 2017 to 31 March 2018
£0	£15,000.99	4.6%	4.6%
£15,001.00	£21,422.99	4.6%	4.6%
£21,423.00	£51,005.99	5.45%	5.45%
£51,006.00	£150,000.99	7.35%	7.35%
£150,001.00 and above		8.05%	8.05%

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

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

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**. The normal pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/civil-service-pensions-ni>.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 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.

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 (Audited)

There was no compensation for loss of office in 2016-17. (2015-16, nil)

Payments to Past Directors (Audited)

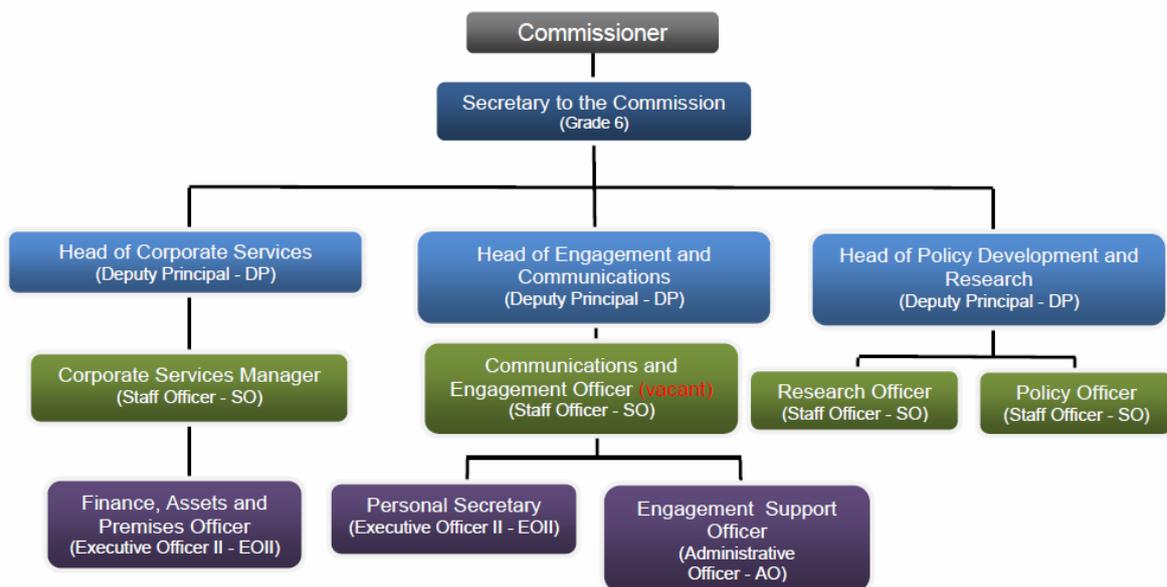
There were no payments to Past Directors. (2015-16, nil)

Staff Report

Staffing the Commission

The Secretary is responsible for supporting the Commissioner and the day to day management of the organisation, including fulfilling the role of Accounting Officer.

The Secretary is supported by three deputies whose responsibilities cover policy and research, corporate services and communications and engagement as illustrated within the organisational structure below:



At 31 March 2017, the staff of the Commission was comprised of 11 direct recruits appointed following public advertisement and one vacancy.

In its recruitment of new staff the Commission is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates irrespective of religious belief, political opinion, gender, disability, age, race, marital status, sexual orientation or whether they have dependents.

The table overleaf provides a breakdown of the number of persons employed by the Commission at the end of the 2016-17 financial year by gender (prior year comparison in brackets) for each of the following groups:

- Directors (Commissioner);
- Senior Managers (Secretary to the Commission, Head of Corporate Services and Head of Policy Development and Research); and
- Other employees.

Commission Staffing Statistics at 31 March 2017 (31 March 2016)

	Gender	
	Male	Female
Directors	0 (0)	1 (0)
Senior Managers	3 (3)	1 (0)
Employees	2 (2)	4 (4)

Equality

The Commission will, in all its actions, conform to both the letter and the spirit of the relevant equality legislation. The Commission will provide equality of opportunity to all persons irrespective of whether or not there are legislative provisions in place. The Commission’s Equality Scheme has been approved by the Equality Commission.

Staff Development

We value our staff and will seek to develop them in ways in which they are able to meet their full potential. Staff are actively encouraged to research and learn about all aspects of their work and the issues important to victims and survivors.

The Commission continues to develop its business planning process and embed it in the development of systems and procedures. The Commission encourages staff to identify training courses and other development opportunities which will enhance the contribution they make to the Commission’s work as well as ensuring their Continuous Professional Development (CPD) requirements are fulfilled.

Employee involvement

The Commission encourages widespread consultation and exchange of information at all levels within the office, through Senior Management, staff and regular team briefings.

Disabled Persons

The Commission for Victims and Survivors is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity and fair participation to all persons regardless of sex, marital status, religious belief, political affiliation/opinion, age, family status, ethnic or racial background, sexual orientation, disability, nationality or trade union membership.

The Commission gives full and fair consideration to applications for employment by the company made by disabled persons, having regard to their particular aptitudes and abilities. The Commission also pledges to continue the employment of, and arrange appropriate training for, employees of the company who have become disabled persons during the period when they were employed by the company. The Commission also provides for the training, career development and promotion of disabled persons employed by the company.

Absence data

Listed in the table below are the sick absence results for the Commission for Victims & Survivors:

Commissioner

	Working days lost 2016-17	Average days lost per WTE member of staff	Absence rate 2016-17
Including long term absence	0	0	0%
Excluding long term absence	0	0	0%
<i>2015-16</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>

Commission Staff

	Working days lost 2016-17	Average days lost per WTE member of staff	Absence rate 2016-17
Including long term absence	8	0.8	0.3%
Excluding long term absence	8	0.8	0.3%
2015-16	18	2	0.8%

Off Payroll Engagements

The Commission made no off payroll payments during this period. (2015-16, nil)

Consultancy Engagements

The Commission made payments totalling £6,498 for consultancy suppliers during 2016-17. (2015-16: £4,259).

Exit Packages (Audited)

There were no exit packages provided by the Commission during this period. (2015-16: nil)

Staff Costs (Audited)

Staff costs comprise:

	2016-17			2015-16	
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Commissioner	Total	Total
Wages and salaries	£325,772	£40,612	£74,976	£441,360	£365,889
Social security costs	£31,831	-	£9,231	£41,062	£26,728
Other pension costs	£70,195	-	£19,725	£89,920	£82,850
Sub Total	£427,798	£40,612	£103,932	£572,342	£475,467
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	-	-	-	-	-
Total net costs*	£427,798	£40,612	£103,932	£572,342	£475,467

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

The Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Commission for Victims and Survivors is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2012. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the Department of Finance (Formerly Department of Finance and Personnel) Superannuation and Other Allowances Annual Report and Accounts as at 31 March 2017.

For 2016-17, employers' contributions of £89,920 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2015-16 £82,850) at one of three rates in the range 20.8% to 26.3% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A new scheme funding valuation based on data as at 31 March 2012 was completed by the Actuary during 2014-15. This valuation was used to determine employer contribution rates for the introduction of alpha from April 2015. For 2017-18, the rates will range from 20.8% to 26.3%. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2016-17 to be paid when the member retires, and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £nil (2015-16 £nil) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2015-16 3% to 14.7%) of pensionable pay. Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable pay.

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

0 persons (2015-16: 0 persons) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £nil (2015-16: £nil).

Average number of persons employed (Audited)

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

Activity				2016-17	2015-16
	Permanent staff	Others	Commissioners	Number	Number
Commissioners	-	-	1	1	1
General Administration	6	1	-	7	7
Management	4	-	-	4	3
Total	10	1	1	12	11

2.3 Assembly Accountability & Audit Report

Regularity of Expenditure

Losses and Special Payments (Audited)

MPMNI advises losses and special payments should be noted where total losses exceed £250,000 and states that individual losses of more than £250,000 should be noted separately.

There were no Losses or Special payments over the reporting limit during 2016-17 (2015-16, nil).

Other notes

Fees and Charges (Audited)

There were no fees and charges for the reuse of any information the Commission holds.

Remote Contingent Liabilities (Audited)

The Commission has no known liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Beggs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop at the beginning and a small flourish at the end.

John Beggs
Accounting Officer

Date: 13th October 2017

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2017 under Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the information in the Remuneration and Staff Report and Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

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. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Commission for Victim and Survivor's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Commission for Victims and Survivors; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition I read all the financial and non-financial information in the Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies I consider the implications for my certificate.

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.

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.

Opinion on financial statements

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland's affairs as at 31 March 2017 and of the net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and The Executive Office directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

- the parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report and the Assembly Accountability Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with The Executive Office's directions made under the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Act (Northern Ireland) 2008; 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

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
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with Department of Finance's guidance.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



KJ Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

20 October 2017

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

	Note	2016-17 £	2015-16 £
Expenditure			
Staff costs	2	572,342	475,467
Other Operating Expenditure	2	284,664	385,636
Depreciation and amortisation	2	5,489	7,647
Net Operating Expenditure		862,495	868,750
Net Expenditure for the year		862,495	868,750
Other Comprehensive Expenditure			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment		-	-
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of Intangible Assets		-	-
Actuarial (gain)/loss on pension scheme		-	-
Items that may be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of investments		-	-
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		862,495	868,750

All amounts above relate to continuing activities.

The notes on pages 65 to 74 form part of these accounts.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2017

	Note	2016-17		2015-16	
		£	£	£	£
Non-current assets					
Property, plant and equipment	3	18,476		23,967	
Intangible assets	4	-		-	
Total non-current assets			18,476		23,967
Current assets					
Trade and other receivables	7	4,015		2,352	
Cash and cash equivalents	8	62,704		106,287	
Total current assets			66,719		108,639
Total assets			85,195		132,606
Current liabilities					
Trade and other payables	9	(62,015)		(105,931)	
Total current liabilities			(62,015)		(105,931)
Total assets less current liabilities			23,180		26,675
Total assets less total liabilities			23,180		26,675
Taxpayers' equity					
General Fund			23,180		26,675
Total equity			23,180		26,675

The financial statements have been reviewed by the Commission's Audit and Risk Committee on the 12th October 2017 and formally approved by the Commission's Board on the 13th October 2017.



John Beggs
Accounting Officer

Date: 13th October 2017

The notes of page 65 to 74 form part of these accounts.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

	Note	2016-17	2015-16
		£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net expenditure		(862,495)	(868,750)
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	7	(1,661)	7,383
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables	9	(43,916)	19,085
Depreciation and amortisation	2	5,489	7,647
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(902,583)	(834,635)
Cash flows from investment activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	3	-	(16,923)
Purchase of intangible non-current assets	4	-	-
Net cash outflow from investment activities		-	(16,923)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Grants from sponsoring department		859,000	913,000
Net financing		859,000	913,000
Net increase/ (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period	8	(43,583)	61,442
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		106,287	44,845
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		62,704	106,287

The notes on pages 65 to 74 form part of these accounts.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAXPAYERS' EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

	General Fund £	Taxpayers' Equity £
Balance at 1 April 2015	(17,575)	(17,575)
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2015-16		
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year	(868,750)	(868,750)
Grants from sponsoring department	913,000	913,000
Balance at 31 March 2016	26,675	26,675
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2016-17		
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year	(862,495)	(862,495)
Grants from sponsoring department	859,000	859,000
Balance at 31 March 2017	23,180	23,180

The notes on pages 65 to 74 form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

NOTE 1 - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2016-17 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance, and the Accounts Direction issued by The Executive Office. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland (the Commission) for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2017 are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts. There have been no changes to accounting policy and disclosure that affect the entity in the year.

1.2 Accounting Convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention. Revaluation of non-current assets has not been applied as this is not considered to be material.

1.3 Funding

The activities of the Commission are fully funded by The Executive Office (TEO). Grant-in-aid received used to finance activities and expenditure which support the statutory and other objectives of the Commission is treated as financing, and credited to the General Fund as it is regarded as contributions from a controlling party giving rise to a financial interest in the residual interest in the reporting entity. The Commission received Grant-in-Aid totalling £859,000 in 2016-17 (2015-16: £913,000).

1.4 Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, Plant and Equipment are fully funded by TEO. Property, Plant and Equipment are capitalised if they are capable of being used for a period which exceeds one year and they:

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

Property, Plant and Equipment are stated at historical cost and are not revalued under IAS 16. Revaluation of non-current assets has not been applied as this is not considered to be material.

Property Plant and Equipment are depreciated at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| • Furniture and fittings | 10 years |
| • Leasehold improvements | 10 years |
| • Office equipment | 3 years |
| • IT equipment | 3 years |

Depreciation is not charged in the year of asset purchase but charged in full in the year of disposal.

1.5 Intangible Assets

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

Intangible non-current assets held for operational use are valued at historical cost and are amortised over the estimated life of the asset on a straight line basis. Software licence is the only class of intangible asset currently held by the Commission. They are amortised over the shorter of: the term of the licence or the useful economic life of the asset. Intangible non-current assets are valued at historical cost and are not revalued as they have a short useful life and are of relatively low value.

1.6 Impairment Costs

The Commission reviews Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Intangible Assets for indications of impairment to ensure they are carried at no more than their recoverable amount. The recoverable amount of all assets is determined by sale proceeds less costs to sell.

1.7 Value Added Tax

In line with paragraph 4.6.5 of Notice 700 The VAT Guide (HMRC) the Commission is funded from grant-in-aid and therefore this income is not the consideration of any supply and is outside the scope of VAT. Therefore, the figures in the accounts are shown inclusive of VAT.

1.8 Pension Costs

The Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Commission for Victims and Survivors Northern Ireland is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2012. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the DoF Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2017.

For 2016-17, employers' contributions of £89,920 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2015-16 £82,850) at one of three rates in the range 20.8% to 26.3% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. The Remuneration Report gives details in relation to the pension costs for 2016-17.

1.9 Operating Leases

Rentals under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in the year in which they arise.

1.10 Administration and Programme Expenditure

The Statement of Net Comprehensive Expenditure is analysed between purchase of goods and services, staff costs, depreciation and amortisation, and other income. Administration costs reflect the costs of running the Commission. Programme costs reflect non-administration costs, including payments of disbursements by the Commission, as well as certain staff costs where they relate directly to service delivery. The classification of expenditure as administration or as programme follows the definition of administration costs set by the Department of Finance. Other income is credited to the Statement of Net Expenditure when receivable.

1.11 Financial Instruments

The Commission applies Financial Instruments Standards IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures, IAS 32 Financial Instruments: Presentation and IAS 39 Financial Instruments: Recognition and measurement.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are recognised on the Statement of Financial Position when the Commission becomes party to the financial instrument contract or, in the case of trade receivables, when the goods or services have been delivered. Financial assets are de-recognised when the contractual rights have expired or the asset has been transferred.

Financial assets are initially recognised at cost which is considered to equal fair value.

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Statement of Financial Position when the Commission becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument or, in the case of trade payables, when the goods or services have been received. Financial liabilities are de-recognised when the liability has been discharged, that is, the liability has been paid or has expired.

Financial liabilities are initially recognised at cost which is considered to equal fair value.

Financial Risk Management

IFRS 7 requires disclosure of the role that financial instruments have had during the period in creating or changing the risks as a body faces in undertaking its activities. Because of the relationships with OFMDFM, and the manner in which they are funded, financial instruments play a more limited role within the Commission in creating risk than would apply to a non public sector body of a similar size, therefore the Commission is not exposed to the degree of financial risk faced by business entities. The Commission has limited powers to borrow or invest surplus funds and financial assets and liabilities are generated by day to day operational activities rather than being held to change the risks facing the Commission in undertaking activities. Therefore the Commission is exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

Currency Risk

The Commission is principally a domestic organisation with the great majority of transactions, assets and liabilities being in the UK and denominated in Sterling.

The Commission has no overseas operations. The Commission therefore has low exposure to currency rate fluctuations.

Interest Rate Risk

The Commission has limited powers to borrow or invest and therefore has low exposure to interest rate fluctuations.

Credit Risk

As the Commission receives the majority of its funding through its sponsor Department, TEO, which is generally voted through the Assembly, it is therefore not exposed to significant credit risks.

Liquidity Risk

As the Commission receives the majority of its funding through its sponsor Department, TEO, which is generally voted through the Assembly, it is therefore not exposed to significant liquidity risks.

1.12 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards adopted to the year ended 31 March 2017

The Commission has reviewed the standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards that became effective during 2016-17 and which are relevant to its operations.

The Commission anticipates that the adoption of these standards will have no impact on the Commission's financial position or results of operations as they are not relevant to the Commission.

1.13 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective

IAS 8 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors

The IASB issued new and amended standards (IFRS 10, IFRS 11 & IFRS 12) that affect the consolidation Accounting boundary IFRS' are currently adapted in the FReM so that the Westminster departmental accounting boundary is based on ONS control criteria, as designated by Treasury. A similar review in NI, which will bring NI departments under the same adaptation, has been carried out and the resulting recommendations were agreed by the Executive in December 2016. With effect from 2020-21, the accounting boundary for departments will change and there will also be an impact on departments around the disclosure requirements under IFRS 12. ALBs apply IFRS in full and their consolidation boundary may change as a result of the new Standards.

Management has reviewed new accounting standards that have been issued but are not yet effective, nor adopted early for these accounts. Management consider that these are unlikely to have a significant impact on the period of initial application.

NOTE 2 - Other Operating Expenditure

	2016-17 £	2015-16 £
Staff costs:		
Wages & salaries	441,360	365,889
Social security costs	41,062	26,728
Other pension costs	89,920	82,850
Total for Staff Costs	572,342	475,467
Other expenditure:		
Travel & subsistence	4,016	2,291
Staff recruitment	14,119	2,637
Staff training	11,185	4,735
Postage	284	477
Telephone	2,407	7,555
Hospitality	904	756
Audit	15,121	10,520
Internal audit	9,360	9,346
Accountancy fees	900	-
Miscellaneous	-	538
Office consumables	2,155	4,324
Annual contracts	1,520	9,596
IT licences/services	17,800	15,537
Legal costs	678	3,997
Website development	-	14,340
HR Services	2,895	2,563
Equality Services	1,020	3,060
Corporate services	26,540	16,936
ARAC Recruitment	2,901	-
	113,805	109,208
Premises Costs		
Rent - Head Line Building	-	37,719
Rent - Equality House	21,593	17,857
Rates	10,507	20,251
Service charge	1,273	19,277
Electricity	6,186	5,007
R&M buildings	2,319	4,922
Cleaning	9,818	4,175
Insurance	-	1,242
	51,696	110,450
Total Other Expenditure	165,501	219,658
Further analysis of staff costs is located in the Accountability report on page 56.		
Programme Expenditure	2016-17 £	2015-16 £
Engagement with the Sector	11,857	6,709
Forum Replenishment	25,992	19,080
Review of the Victim's Strategy	11,165	16,747
Victims and Survivors Forum	32,781	33,490
Dealing with the Past Conference	-	-
Conference on Review of the Victim's Strategy	-	30,579
Communication Services	22,322	17,904
Communications Strategy	5,850	15,600
Personalised Budget Pilot Evaluation	-	25,037
Infographics Technical Support	2,400	-
Standards Specialist Support	4,669	-
International engagement	2,127	-
Monthly seminars	-	832
	119,163	165,978
Total Other Operating Expenditure	284,664	385,636
Total Operating Expenditure	857,006	861,103

Non Cash Items		
Depreciation and Amortisation	5,489	7,647
Total Non Cash Items	5,489	7,647
Overall total	862,495	868,750

Other expenditure is inclusive of £51,696 (2015-16: £55,576) paid in respect of the Memorandum Of Terms of Occupation (MOTO) agreement for rent. Annual Contracts includes payments in respect of payroll services and

During the year, CVSNI purchased no non-audit services from its auditor.

NOTE 3 - PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

2016-17	Furniture & Fittings £	Equipment £	IT Equipment £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2016	18,738	16,774	57,828	93,340
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2017	18,738	16,774	57,828	93,340
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2016	2,647	16,145	50,583	69,375
Charged in year	1,874	314	3,301	5,489
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2017	4,521	16,459	53,884	74,864
Net Book Value at 31 March 2017	14,217	315	3,944	18,476
Net Book Value at 31 March 2016	16,091	629	7,245	23,965
Asset Financing				
Owned	14,217	315	3,944	18,476
Net Book Value at 31 March 2017	14,217	315	3,944	18,476

2015-16	Furniture & Fittings £	Equipment £	IT Equipment £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2015	13,325	16,774	55,900	85,999
Additions	14,995	-	1,928	16,923
Disposals	(9,582)	-	-	(9,582)
At 31 March 2016	18,738	16,774	57,828	93,340
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2015	8,091	15,337	47,926	71,354
Charged in year	4,138	808	2,657	7,603
Disposals	(9,582)	-	-	(9,582)
At 31 March 2016	2,647	16,145	50,583	69,375
Net Book Value at 31 March 2016	16,091	629	7,245	23,965
Net Book Value at 31 March 2015	5,234	1,437	7,974	14,645
Asset Financing				
Owned	16,091	629	7,245	23,967
Net Book Value at 31 March 2016	16,091	629	7,245	23,967

NOTE 4 - INTANGIBLE NON-CURRENT ASSETS

2016-17	
Cost	Software Licences £
At 1 April 2016	1,595
Disposals	-
At 31 March 2017	1,595
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2016	1,595
Charged in year	-
Disposals	-
At 31 March 2017	1,595
Net Book Value at 31 March 2017	-
Net Book Value at 31 March 2016	-

2015-16	
Cost	Software Licences £
At 1 April 2015	1,595
Disposals	-
At 31 March 2016	1,595
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2015	1,551
Charged in year	44
Disposals	-
At 31 March 2016	1,595
Net Book Value at 31 March 2016	-
Net Book Value at 31 March 2015	44

NOTE 5 - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

As the cash requirements of a non-departmental government body are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by TEO, 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 Commission's expected purchase and usage requirements. The Commission is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

NOTE 6 - IMPAIRMENTS

No impairment losses during 2016/17 (2015/16: £nil)

NOTE 7 - TRADE RECEIVABLES AND OTHER CURRENT ASSETS

	2016-17 £	2015-16 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments and accrued income	4,015	2,352
Balance at 31 March	4,015	2,352

NOTE 8 - CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2016-17 £	2015-16 £
Balance at 1 April	106,287	44,845
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(43,583)	61,442
Balance at 31 March	62,704	106,287

All balances are held with Commercial banks or as cash in hand.

NOTE 9 - TRADE PAYABLES, ACCRUALS AND DEFERRED INCOME

	2016-17 £	2015-16 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Taxation and social security	9,831	9,888
Accruals, and deferred income	44,184	38,248
Trade Payables	8,000	57,795
Balance at 31 March	62,015	105,931

NOTE 10 - COMMITMENTS UNDER LEASES

The Commission has no assets held under finance leases.

The Commission signed a MOTO agreement for premises at Equality House on the 9th November 2015. The MOTO lasts until the 31st August 2019, and has a 9 month termination clause. The MOTO agreement for 2017/18 totals £53,652

NOTE 11 - OTHER FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

	2016-17 £	2015-16 £
Not later than one year	-	78,000
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-
Later than five years	-	-
Total	-	78,000

NOTE 12 - RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Commission is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by TEO. TEO is regarded as a related party. During the year the Commission had various material transactions with TEO and various other bodies for which TEO is regarded as the parent body, as disclosed below.

During the year no Commissioner, member of the Senior Management Team or other related party has undertaken any material transactions with the Commission.

	2016-17 £	2015-16 £
TEO Grant-in-Aid	(859,000)	(913,000)
Equality Commission	69,901	40,756
Department of Finance	15,228	4,725
Information Commissioner's Office	35	35
Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Committee	12	98,113

NOTE 13 - EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There have been no significant events since the balance sheet date that would affect these accounts.

Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised the issue of these financial statements on 20th October 2017

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