

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

**Annual Report and Accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

*Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly
under section 11(3) (c) of the Government Resources
and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001
by the Department of Finance (DoF)
on
30 June 2022*



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PERFORMANCE REPORT

OVERVIEW

Our organisation

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

The Agency is the principal source of Official Statistics and social research on Northern Ireland. These statistics and research not only inform public policy but also academic and private sector research, and contribute to debate in the wider community. The insight we provide guides the decisions of others. The decennial Census of Population and Housing was conducted in March 2021 so this year the focus has been on processing the huge volume of data from the electronic and paper returns in preparation for publication of the first results on May 24th 2022. The Census is used by central and local government, health and education authorities and other organisations to plan and provide future services which will form the basis of the wide-range of upcoming reports. Less publicly, we provide our services to a wide range of Government Departments and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to assist the policy development process and the delivery of their business objectives.

Our statisticians also make an important contribution to the Programme for Government (PfG) process, with the development of population indicators based on official data and assisting policy colleagues and other stakeholders in developing report cards at performance level.

Our purpose

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

Our mission

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

Our vision

We aspire to:

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

Our values

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

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

Risks and Uncertainties

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

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

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

The Committee met on 4 occasions during the course of 2021-22. The Corporate Risk Register was provided to all meetings and the Committee reviewed, in detail, risks in relation to:

1. The 2021 Census;
2. Census preparations;
3. Meeting customer needs and expectations;
4. Information management and data and cyber security;
5. Business continuity and the impact of COVID-19;
6. Financial control;
7. Application of the Code of Practice for Statistics;
8. Staff absence and recruitment;
9. Production of key Economic Statistics;
10. Modernisation of Statistical Data Collection Infrastructure; and
11. Implementation of Irish registrations.

Chief Executive Overview

This year was again framed in many ways by the course of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which continued to demand of us new ways of working and flexibility in meeting data needs amid a continuing heightened public consciousness of the importance of statistics and data. The General Register Office continued to operate under pandemic regulations and procedures for electronic transmission of documentation and remote registration for the registering of the deaths which sadly occurred. The decennial Census which was conducted in March 2021 achieved high coverage of the population and has been processed in preparation for publication of the first results, which were published on May 24th. The public response to the invitation to complete their census return was 97%, including a higher than expected proportion (80%) who made their return online. A full report on the conduct of the census was published in January 2022 - [Census 2021 Operational Report](#) . I am very grateful to the public for their co-operation with the invitation to complete a census return.

Once again the performance of NISRA staff during the continuing pandemic has been extraordinary, delivering services in exceptional circumstances with a continuing increase in demand for new analysis and further insight on some very complex topics, all within the context of constrained resource. New analysis on the path of the pandemic and its impact for the economy and society were developed and delivered right across the Agency as well as delivering on New Decade New Approach commitments in relation to registrations in Irish. Again this year NISRA has had numerous products assessed for compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics by the Office for Statistics Regulation. Where there were recommendations made they were dealt with quickly and effectively on a collaborative basis as they arose.

NISRA's published five year plan <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/nisra-corporate-plan-2019-24>, which was developed with collaboration from staff right across the Agency, continues to provide us with a compass for where we want to get to and the kind of organisation we want to be. The Agency Board has committed to implementing a Transformational Programme designed to produce the changes our customers, stakeholders and staff have asked for and that are demanded by the environment in which we now work. The Programme encompasses a range of activities grouped under the headings of Culture, People, Structure, Collaboration, Data and Legislation.

Our annual Business Plan in the form of a Balanced Score Card sets out the actions we will take over the next 12 months to make progress against our longer term priorities described in the NISRA Corporate Plan.

The Agency has achieved the key Departmental targets of planning and rolling out the 2021 Census, producing the 2021 Civil Service People Survey and introducing Civil Registration Certificates with English / Irish headings (see page 11). Further detail on NISRA's performance against all of the targets is included in the NISRA Balanced Scorecard Section at pages 12 to 28.

Highlights of the Year

A key highlight for the year was running the 2021 Census to plan. During the year, a large-scale field force of around 1,700 enumerators was recruited, invitations to take part were issued to 840,000 addresses and at time of writing around 97% of households had completed their return either online or on paper. This is a higher return rate than 2011 and to achieve this in the middle of a pandemic is clearly a significant success story for the Agency.

This year saw a continued interest in understanding trade following NI's exit from the EU on 31 January 2020 and the subsequent implementation of new trading requirements placed on businesses. This changed the way in which trade data are collected by HMRC and gave rise to a heightened interest on trade between NI and GB, which the Agency has worked collaboratively with colleagues in the Department for the Economy, the Cabinet Office, HMRC, HM Treasury and the ONS to illuminate. The work included the development of an accessible interactive dashboard to facilitate the analysis of NI trade data that is released by Eurostat on a monthly basis. This, along with other initiatives to improve both the range of data that was available and its timeliness was warmly welcomed by users and integral to the decision by the Office for Statistics Regulation to designate NISRA's [Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics](#) as National Statistics – a notable achievement in itself.

Collaborative working was again very much in evidence with NISRA supporting policy colleagues who lead the development of the Skills, Energy and 10X Economy strategies, providing bespoke datasets to underpin the creation of a Circular Economy policy options framework. In addition, work was undertaken to create two de-identified Economic and Labour Market themed datasets which will facilitate independent research and considerably expand the range of data accessible via the Administrative Data Research initiative.

NISRA maintained its support for the new outcome-based accountability draft Programme for Government (PfG) which is highly data dependent and statisticians across the NICS worked collaboratively and with their departmental colleagues to produce both population indicators and performance level report cards as well as progressing a detailed population indicator review in preparation for the next version of the PfG.

The Agency has also carried on its investment in the outworkings of the UK Digital Economy Act which provides for access to administrative data for the purpose of producing statistics and research. Public administration is increasingly delivered digitally, changing the way data are generated and a move to use more administrative data requires new methods, techniques and skills in both analysing and managing these datasets.

The Agency built on the renewed investment from the Economic & Social Research Council as part of the Administrative Data Research Partnership. This recognises the work already achieved via earlier investment but with a more solid focus on meeting the analytical requirements of government. This investment included resources for NISRA to develop analyses using administrative data, allowing our researchers to be responsive to user needs during the pandemic with a range of research products on causes of death (alcohol and drugs), excess deaths and pre-existing conditions associated with COVID-19 deaths to be published.

Another highlight this year has been the setting up of the NISRA 'Tech Lab' designed to harness new technologies through a targeted investment bringing together skilled personnel to provide a centralised dedicated technical resource to the Agency. The Lab is in its infancy but is set now to deliver on a number of exemplar projects to illustrate potential in this area for the future.

Despite the operational and logistical challenges presented by the pandemic, NISRA continued to provide its social survey research service to NI government and the wider public sector. Our team of experienced and committed survey interviewers continued with telephone interviewing and successfully implemented NISRA's "Knock-to-Nudge" strategy in line with government 'stay at home' policy, helping to ensure that key surveys continued to provide key information on a wide range of topics including the labour market, health, crime and well-being. It is commendable that, across the board, participation rates have almost returned to pre-pandemic levels. Additionally, the Agency continued to conduct the COVID-19 Opinion Survey, highlighting how the pandemic was impacting on the day-to-day lives of people. NISRA's Central Survey Unit also continued to provide the infrastructure underpinning the recruitment phase of the UK wide COVID-19 Infection Study, facilitating delivery partners to capture some 8.7 million swab tests and 2.2 million blood tests from 4.6 million household visits across the UK.

NISRA also continued to administer its eleven statutory business surveys which are integral to the functioning of the UK Economic Statistical system and the associated monitoring of the UK, and more specifically, Northern Ireland Economy. We are most grateful to local businesses for their unwavering cooperation and support during the unprecedented circumstances that have continued over the last 12 months. The information provided has been central to informing NI's position on both EU Exit and the NI Protocol and has facilitated the development of policy in respect of the support afforded to Northern Ireland businesses in response to the global pandemic. More than ever, the information secured through these statutory surveys is informing major decisions that affect people's lives and livelihoods. Its importance in this respect is not expected to diminish over the next few years as NI endeavours to manage the major shocks that the pandemic has had on local businesses and both the NI economy and labour market more generally.

Oversight and accountability for the work carried out by NISRA staff rests with the Chief Executive who is directly responsible to the DoF Minister, through the Department, for the management of the Agency's performance and operations. The relationships between the Agency, the Department and the Minister, as well as internal NISRA governance arrangements, are set out in the NISRA Framework Document which underwent a 5 yearly review at the start of this accounting period. This was followed later in the year by a review of our Concordat arrangements covering the supply of specialist analytical staff to other departments and host organisations for the purposes of delivering our research and analytical services.

The undoubted highlight of this year however has been the way in which NISRA staff have lived by the values that we set out in the Corporate Plan. They have been innovative in the face of crisis, have worked collaboratively to help each other achieve objectives and have gone above and beyond in finding solutions when presented with difficulties. In summary, they have made me proud every single day.

General Register Office (GRO) Operations

Between April 2021 and March 2022, the GRO processed 101,015 certificates, with 99.98% of priority certificate applications and 99.96% of standard certificate applications, fulfilled within target timescales (one and five working days respectively).

Additionally, GRO processed 3,446 Casework Cases including re-registrations, adoptions, name changes, corrections, approval of religious and belief officiants. All were completed within the target timescale of 15 working days.

The GRO public counter remained closed from April 2021 due to the COVID-19 restrictions and re-opened in March 2022. The public search room was closed April – May 2021 (with short intermittent closures throughout the year based on the changing restrictions). The numbers of visitors were limited and a specific COVID-19 protocol was put in place for the safety of the public and staff. The Coronavirus Act and NI Executive restrictions remained in place. This reduced the service that the local Council Registrars could provide and the numbers below reflect that.

Between April 2021 and March 2022, Registrars carried out 2,793 civil marriages. There were also 4,813 religious marriages and 663 belief marriages carried out in the same period. Registrars carried out 40 civil partnership registrations 10 same sex and 30 opposite sex couples and there were 137 conversions of Civil Partnerships to Marriage.

Due to the restrictions the GRO public search room remained closed throughout some of the reporting period however, 593 members of the public did visit Colby House when restrictions allowed, with 20,181 recorded searches conducted from the GRO terminals. In addition to this, in the period between April 2021 and March 2022, there were 10,995 searches of GRO records from the PRONI terminals.

GRO registered 33,448 new accounts on the Family History website. There were 1,033,564 searches carried out, the most popular being the free index search which accounted for 893,193 searches.

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Audit and Risk Committee

Non-Executive Directors' Report 2021-22

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

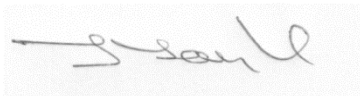
During the fiscal year we met on four occasions on the 26 May, 23 June, 27 October, and 2 February with forward planned Agendas, to ensure we reviewed all relevant issues which included:

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

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

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

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



Tom Taylor

NISRA Chair Audit and Risk Committee

10 May 2022

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Targets

A Balanced Scorecard set out our objectives for 2021/22 and the initiatives and measures that we took towards achieving these.

Performance against Targets

The Agency had three key departmental targets for the year 2021/22, which were achieved. The results have been confirmed as accurate by DoF Internal Audit and are summarised in the section below.

Performance against the NISRA Balanced Scorecard Initiatives and Measures is summarised in the NISRA Balanced Scorecard Section at pages 12 to 28.

NISRA DoF Targets

PRIORITY 10 – Deliver key statistical and registration services:				
	Target	Comment	Rating	Owner
33	Publish a detailed timeline for the publication of 2021 Census results by January 2022	Completed: Census office published an outputs prospectus/outline timetable on 31 January 2022. This details the expected timing and content of each release of results from the 2021 Census up until Summer 2023.	Green	David Marshall
34	Run and report the key findings of the 2021 Civil Service People Survey by January 2022	Completed. NICS People Survey 2021 fieldwork completed successfully on schedule (Monday 18th October to Wednesday 17th November 2021). Headline figures successfully delivered on schedule (mid-January 2022). All other reports successfully delivered on schedule (at end February 2022).	Green	Brian Green
35	Introduce civil registration certificates with English/Irish headings, by March 2022	Completed: Introduction of civil registration certificates with English / Irish headings, was passed by the finance committee on the 17th November 2021 and on the 23rd February 2022. The Regulations were debated at the NI Assembly on the 15th March and were passed. The Regulations commenced on the 11th March 2022 introducing civil registration certificates with headings in English or Irish or bi-lingual English/Irish.	Green	Kathie Walker

NISRA's Balanced Scorecard 2021/22

Quadrant	Objectives	Initiatives	Measure	PfG Contribution
Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Agency will remain within allocated budget. 2. The Agency will optimise its efficiency through revised working practices to meet customer demand. 3. The Agency will deliver outputs and provide services that support customer business needs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review organisational/ operational models. 2. Increase Data Protection / GDPR awareness. 3. FOI Compliance. 4. DEA (Digital Economy Act) Compliance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Underspend to be as close to budget as possible, at least 2% within budget. 2. Meetings schedule set for the year for Agency Board meetings. 3. % customers indicating they have used NISRA statistics in the policy/ decision making process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – % customers, using NISRA information for Educational Purposes – Academic Research – Personnel research – Business decision making – Other 4. % customers reporting satisfaction with NISRA outputs; and % reporting improved satisfaction. 5. % general public that state they trust statistics produced by NISRA. 6. Confirmed number of Breaches of DPA / GDPR. 7. Subject Access Requests (SAR) processed on time (number / %). 8. FOI requests processed on time (number / %). 9. Confirmed number of Breaches of DEA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy. • We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential • We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.

Performance against the Business Quadrant is shown on [page 13](#).

Initiatives

1	<p>The Business Services Organisation (BSO) Honest Broker Service continues to be able to provide researchers with secure remote access to anonymised health service research datasets providing a much more efficient and wide-reaching service. This, coupled with in-person office access where required, means researchers can choose the means of access which suits them best.</p> <p>Central Survey Unit (CSU) introduced Knock to Nudge (K2N) fieldwork on the social surveys from July 2021 in the absence of face-to-face interviewing. This improved fieldwork performance greatly, resulting in better fieldwork outcomes with surveys achieving 92%-100% of their pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>Department for Communities (DfC) Professional Services Unit, as part of a review, have implemented a fully integrated service and operating model that supports the development and delivery of evidence based policy. Economists and statisticians are jointly delivering the DfC economic and social research programme and internal administrative and governance processes have been integrated, as appropriate.</p> <p>Department of Health (DoH) Community Information Branch (CIB) have revised the Children's Social Care outputs in line with customer demand and data suppliers' capacity.</p> <p>Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) new online Redundancy Notification Data Collection system developed by ELMS and CSU Blaise 5 Team following stakeholder engagement with Department for Education (DfE), DfC and Labour Relations Agency.</p> <p>General Register Office (GRO) processed 101,015 certificates, with 99.98% of priority certificate applications and 99.96% of standard certificate applications, fulfilled within target timescales (one and five working days respectively) between April 2021 and March 2022. Additionally, GRO processed 3,446 Casework Cases including re-registrations, adoptions, name changes, corrections, approval of religious and belief officiants. All were completed within the target timescale of 15 working days. Between April 2021 and March 2022, Registrars carried out 2,793 civil marriages 4,813 religious marriages and 663 belief marriages. Registrars carried out 40 civil partnership registrations - 10 same sex and 30 opposite sex couples in the same period. Introduction of civil registration certificates with English / Irish headings, was passed and commenced on the 11th March 2022 introducing civil registration certificates with headings in English or Irish or bi-lingual English/Irish.</p>	Green
2	<p>Guidance has been issued on Data Protection and GDPR awareness. NISRA Business Area Information Manager (BAIM) issued 3 Aide-memoirs to DoF NISRA staff regarding, 'Handling Personal Data', 'Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs)' and 'Handling SAR's'. Monthly articles are posted on the DoF Intranet site. NISRA Branches report all mandatory training in this area is completed.</p> <p>All NISRA staff are made aware of the requirement to handle personal data appropriately, particularly to ensure personal information relating to individuals cannot be derived from any released output. Explicit quoting of the relevant data protection legislation including the UK GDPR are considered for inclusion in all Data Access and Data Sharing Agreements.</p>	Green

3	NISRA Branches report they are fully compliant with aspects of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. Guidance has been issued on FOI and seminars were run by DoF during the summer. An Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) FOI session took place on the 13th October with over 400 attendees	Green
4	NISRA Branches report they are fully compliant with the DEA.	Green

Measure

1	For 2021/22 NISRA had an underspend of £675k which was not within 4% of the allocated budget. This was mainly due to higher than anticipated income from GRO and lower Census costs than expected.	Red
2	There were 12 Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings during the financial year. As an efficiency saving Agency Board (AB) meetings were reduced to every other month, 5 of which were held during 2021/22.	Green
3	In the 2022 Customer Survey, of the NICS staff who had used NISRA statistics, 41% of customers indicated they had used NISRA statistics in the 'policy / decision making' process (36% 2021).	Amber
4	For 2022, the NISRA Customer Survey indicated customers were using NISRA information for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational Purposes 8% (8% 2021) - Academic Research 5% (5% 2021) - Personnel research 10% (12% 2021) - Business decision making 27% (28% 2021) - Other 9% (11% 2021) 	Amber
5	In the 2022 Customer Survey 94% customers reported satisfaction with NISRA outputs, 23% reported improved satisfaction. Note question not asked in 2021.	Green
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisional figures from the Public Awareness of and Trust in Official Statistics 2021 survey (September to November 2021) suggest that 86% of respondents trusted NISRA statistics a great deal or tended to trust them. This is lower than in 2020 (90%) but higher than in 2019 (84%). • Trust levels were higher among those respondents who had heard of NISRA: 94% trusted NISRA statistics a great deal or tended to trust them in 2021. • Finalised figures will be published as official statistics in Autumn 2022 at: https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/public-awareness-and-confidence-trust-official-statistics-pcos. 	Green
7	No breaches of DPA / GDPR reported to the ICO for DoF NISRA.	Green
8	NISRA DoF reported 4 SAR requests were received and processed on time. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) reported 7 SAR requests and all were processed on time.	Green
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA DoF branches reported 109 FOI requests and all were processed on time (100%). • BSO reported 19 of which 18 were processed on time (95%). • Department of Education (DE) reported 20, all processed on time (100%). • DfE reported 100% processed on time. 	Amber

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoH Project Support Analysis Branch (PSAB) reported 2, both were processed on time (100%). • DoH Public Health Information and Research Branch (PHIRB) reported 2, both were processed on time (100%). • DoH Hospital Information Branch (HIB) reported 31 of which 29 were processed on time (94%). • Department of Justice (DoJ) reported 38, all were processed on time (100%). • Legal Services Agency (LSA) reported 4, all were processed on time (100%). • Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland (PPSNI) provided input to all FOI requests that require statistical input (around 25 per year) within agreed timescales (100%). • PSNI reported 365, all were processed on time (100%). 	
10	None reported.	Green

Quadrant	Objectives	Initiatives	Measure	PfG Contribution
Customer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business Areas will be proactive in their engagement with customers and stakeholders in order to enhance the insight and understand the value derived from their services and releases. 2. The Agency will maintain or improve overall customer satisfaction with its services. 3. The Agency will seek to improve our level of brand recognition. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish current/ future demand for NISRA products and services. 2. Undertake customer / stakeholder engagement initiatives. 3. Add value to statistical outputs, and ensure that accessibility regulations are considered for all outputs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % customer satisfaction maintained or improved compared to last year. 2. Agree/ disagree ratings (%): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NISRA staff are knowledgeable. – NISRA staff respond to my query promptly. – NISRA staff are helpful. – It is easy to find/ locate NISRA report/ data. – NISRA reports are easy to understand. – NISRA staff are courteous and treat customers with respect. – In my dealings with NISRA I am made to feel valued. – I am satisfied with NISRA's level of user engagement. 3. Likelihood to recommend NISRA products and/ or services to colleagues. 4. % of awareness of NISRA amongst the general public. 5. Awareness of NISRA among customers (%). 6. NISRA staff will be proactive in engaging with their customers and stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of user engagement activities undertaken; and number of user engagement activities which are new/ revamped. – Number of suggestions received from users; and number (i) implemented, (ii) considered for future implementation, and (iii) explanation provided where the suggestion could not be implemented. 7. NISRA releases will aim to enhance insight on Business areas, ensuring that releases comply with the new accessibility regulations / legislation rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential. • We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.

Performance against the Customer Quadrant is shown on [page 17](#).

Initiatives

1	<p>NISRA Branches continue to provide new analyses of interest to customers and stakeholders and is always seeking to improve its service. Business planning exercises are undertaken each year with customers to agree and ensure that branches are sufficiently resourced. Regular consultation and engagement with Departments, Arms Length Body (ALB) customers, policy leads, and working groups is paramount to the work NISRA carries out.</p> <p>Work on the INSIGHT Structure project is ongoing, elements (NISRA Concordat, standard Service Level Agreement, Framework document, Agency Board Terms of Reference) have been completed, other elements are subject to further review.</p>	Amber
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSO held focused interviews with key stakeholders prior to release of annual publications to ensure user needs are being met. As a result, new user engagement plans have been published on their website alongside each topic publication. A user engagement survey was undertaken for users of BSO's publications. A customer satisfaction survey, with a focus across all areas of BSO's work was also undertaken close to the end of the financial year. • Census held a consultation on 2021 Census Outputs in 2021/22 and this informed the 2021 Census Output Prospectus which was published on 31 January 2022. • Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) has sought feedback through user groups. • Dissemination Branch held 2 General Neighbourhood Statistics Northern Ireland (NINIS) Workshops and 2 NINIS presentations to Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) students. • DfC secured approval for a prioritised programme of economic and social research to inform operational delivery and policy working in conjunction with the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC). Delivery of in-house projects is on track and a lessons learned exercise is underway to inform the development and delivery of the next Research Programme. Analytical teams meet with their policy and operational customers at regular intervals to discuss and agree the development and production of outputs. • DfE carried out a readership survey relating to Apprenticeships and Training statistics and published the results on the DfE Website in August 2021. • Department for Infrastructure (DfI) use customer survey to monitor satisfaction with their services. • DoH CIB carried out an annual engagement with main stakeholders in regards to the continued need and relevance of regular outputs, including ad hoc meetings and correspondence with stakeholders to ensure need and relevance of all outputs. CIB have been engaged with 3 major stakeholder initiatives, children's social care, mental health and care homes occupancy. • DoH HIB has met with key customers and stakeholders to develop new information flows and outputs to meet the response to the pandemic, as well as Business As Usual (BAU) outputs. • DoH PHIRB, Health Survey questionnaire user meetings are held annually to ensure the survey meets information needs of policy customers in the Department, including ad-hoc meetings to help policy colleagues to provide required statistical support. • DoH PSAB continues membership of a wide range of strategic and policy working groups. • DoJ secured approval of a research agenda prioritising departmental research to inform operational delivery and policy making that will be delivered by departmental economists and statisticians. A 'quick guide' series of information leaflets for the departmental intranet focussing on Evaluation Process, Outcome Based Accountability (OBA), Pre-release Access, Official Statistics and Management 	Green

	<p>Information were produced. 'Spotlight on the team' article for the DoJ intranet was produced highlighting the work and the services/support DoJ provides to policy colleagues. DoJ commenced a user engagement consultation as part of a review of their quarterly and annual publications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELMS user groups held on economic and labour market statistics. • Human Resource Consultancy Services (HRCS) formed the Paybill User Group (including Trade Union representation) to provide feedback on the annual report. • LSA results of 20/21 Management Information (MI) User Survey found significant increases in levels of user satisfaction. • Statistical Support Branch (SSB), as part of the implementation of the UK User Engagement Strategy for Statistics in NISRA, has provided branches with a number of different resources related to user engagement. This has included an ideas sharing workshop, a spotlight event looking at different types of user engagement, disseminating the findings from a survey on user engagement and providing contacts and information on what types of user engagement are taking place across NISRA, as well as disseminating guidance, top tips and case studies, and signposting to other available resources. <p>SSB engaged with the Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC) in November 2021 regarding the Business, Household & Individual Survey Burden reports. As key users of the Business Survey Burden report with an interest and contacts in the topic area, SSB sought their assistance in raising awareness and identifying and engaging with other users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tech Lab (TL) has issued two calls across the Agency promoting engagement involving TL support, as part of this they have outlined the criticality of collaboration between TL staff and each customer, producing a document detailing what they need from each customer. Customers are invited to their fortnightly sprint planning meetings (as per Agile methodology). They have highlighted the impact of the work through the provision of various demos, INSIGHT presentations, coffee and coding sessions and through Microsoft Teams channels established to allow discussion on technical issues. 	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA Branches include branding in all reporting, during the collection phase of the 2021 Census the NISRA logo was used on all correspondence. Given the high levels of return to the 2021 Census (97%), this has helped to ensure that the public are aware of the Census and the role of NISRA. CSU provided its survey interviewers with NISRA branded Clothing/PPE for the Census Coverage Survey to make them identifiable in the field. This practice has continued with K2N field operations on the social surveys. • NISRA Branches have been working to ensure publications meet accessibility regulations. Dissemination branch continue to provide supporting materials to staff, to ensure NISRA publications are accessible and provide help to branches in relation to specific queries. The RMarkdown exemplar was produced in partnership with the Tech Lab to ensure accessibility for HTMLs and best practice recommendations, this has been rolled out across NISRA. • Several branches have worked with the Tech Lab to develop HTML versions of school enrolment publications (DE), and Dfl to increase accessibility using HTML. • DfC Continuous Household Survey (CHS) report contained clear evidence of a lack of comparability with previous years due to changes in data collection methodology. Estimates based on smaller sample sizes, resulting in wider confidence intervals, were highlighted in the data tables and the methodological changes were explained. The report was shared as an example of best practice within Professional Support Unit? (PSU). All new publications released meet accessibility requirements and are tested both within PSU 	Green

	<p>and by DfC Communications. On the 15th October the Office for Statistics Regulation confirmed National Statistics Designation for the NI Personal Independence Payment Statistics, following successful PSU implementation of assessment requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoH CIB weekly COVID related children's social care output curated in line with customer needs and working with the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to improve Mental Health Statistics outputs. • DoH HIB new commentary and context added to Mental Health and Learning Disability statistical reports. • DoH PHIRB statistical outputs are adapted for inclusion in policy and strategy documents, policy presentations, and consultation documents for policy customers. • The DoJ Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service (NICTS) team commenced a user engagement consultation of their 5 quarterly and 1 annual publication. It is hoped to amalgamate and streamline quarterly publications into a single report with a focus on including frequently requested information. The annual report has been streamlined and amended to include frequently requested information. It is hoped that both publications will go live during 2022. • ELMS Value recognised through ELMS Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics (BESES) National Statistics Accreditation and ELMS Women in NI Compliance Check. 	
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Measure

1	The overall NISRA Customer survey 2021 satisfaction rate was 95% (91% 2021).	Green
2	<p>For 2022, the NISRA Customer survey indicated customers have a very positive view of NISRA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA staff are knowledgeable 94% (91% 2021). • NISRA staff respond to my query promptly 89% (79% 2021). • NISRA staff are helpful 93% (87% 2021). • It is easy to find / locate NISRA report / data 86% (72% 2021). • NISRA reports are easy to understand 91% (86% 2021). • NISRA staff are courteous and treat customers with respect 93% (87% 2021). • In my dealings with NISRA I am made to feel valued 79% (71% 2021). • I am satisfied with NISRA's level of user engagement 80% (68% 2021). 	Green
3	For 2022, customers' likelihood to recommend NISRA products and / or services to colleagues was 92% (90% 2021).	Green
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisional figures from the Public Awareness of and Trust in Official Statistics 2021 survey (September to November 2021) suggest that 55% of respondents had heard of NISRA prior to being contacted about the survey. This is slightly lower than in 2020 (58%) but higher than in 2019 (35%) and previous years. • Finalised figures will be published as official statistics in Autumn 2022: https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/public-awareness-and-confidence-trust-official-statistics-pcos. 	Green
5	The NISRA Customer Survey 2022 showed 99% of Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) staff were aware of NISRA (98% 2021).	Green
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2021/22, most NISRA branches carried out some form of user engagement including formal activities such as consultations, user group meetings and user surveys, and less formal activities such as other meetings and correspondence. Other activities such as 	Green

	<p>media briefings, dissemination and listening events, newsletters or e-zines, statistical press releases and social media posts were also included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the estimated total number of user engagement activities reported by NISRA branches for 2021/22 was 6,711, which will almost certainly be an under-estimate due to the informal, often ad-hoc, nature of certain types of user engagement. 422 of these user engagement activities were new or revamped for 2021/22. • In 2021/22, the most common forms of user engagement were meetings and other correspondence (used by 25 branches); user group meetings (23 branches); social media (22 branches), press releases (21 branches); direct and indirect user surveys (19 branches); and dissemination and listening events (16 branches). • Overall, 99 suggestions were received from users in 2021/22. Of these; 49 were implemented; 31 are being considered for future implementation; and an explanation was provided for 8 which could not be implemented. 	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 2022 Customer Survey 86% of customers indicated NISRA releases enhance insight on their business area (77% 2021). • Dissemination ran three accessibility training sessions. They also ran two DRUPAL training sessions (with another planned in October) to ensure staff are uploading correctly and creating content on the NISRA website that is accessible. The branch runs a quarterly SortSite report which checks for accessibility and feeds back to users to fix any issues. They provide constant support and advice to staff when creating accessible content. They keep the manuals up to date on how to create accessible content and share across NISRA. • All NISRA Branches strive to comply with accessibility requirements for all new publications; including published reports visualisations and data tables. 	Green

Quadrant	Objectives	Initiatives	Measure	PfG Contribution
Processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Agency will seek ways to innovate and improve its service delivery and optimise efficiently. 2. The Agency will be fully compliant with all relevant legislation, NICS and DoF policy and procedure and technical good practice. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop online elements of NISRA recruitment process. 2. To optimise the opportunities for flexible working presented by the current home work arrangements. 3. Increase standardisation of NISRA's products & services. 4. Standardise the statistical toolset. 5. Further develop process and quality assurance documentation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of approved staff vacancies filled within 6 months of activation (including temporary appointments). 2. Number of official statistics publications with corrections (including major corrections and minor errors). 3. Number of official statistics publications. 4. Number of national statistics publications. 5. Number of social science research reports published. 6. % of official statistical outputs with process documentation. 7. % of official statistical outputs with a documented quality assurance process. 8. Number of breaches of the Code of Practice for Statistics (broken down by IT vs non-IT). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential. • We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.

Performance against the Process Quadrant is shown on [page 22](#).

Initiatives

1	The main NISRA recruitment and selection tests for Statistical Concepts and Numeracy testing have been revised and refreshed. The online tests were successfully used in the latest 2022 recruitment process.	Green
2	NISRA has continued to implement the New Ways of Working Policy as it has continued to develop, following DoF Steering Group guidance and toolkit. Workstyle agreements have been developed and agreed by managers. Arrangements are being addressed for staff who either have to, or who prefer, to return to an office based working environment on a more regular basis. The overall approach is one of flexibility.	Green
3 & 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSU developed a standard template for online questionnaires which will be consistent across all commissioned work. • DfC have committed to the development of a Data Automation and Visualisation Strategy to drive the roll out of R / HTML publications, using NISRAs template, in order to replace PDF publications and automate processes. • Dissemination Branch in partnership with the Tech Lab have produced an RMarkdown exemplar to ensure accessibility for HTMLs and best practice recommendations, this has been rolled out across NISRA. • DoH PHIRB follow UK Harmonisation guidance, and sit on a number of UK statistical groups e.g. on life expectancy, alcoholic liver disease etc. PHIRB also work with NISRA CSU to ensure standardised survey questions are included in Health Survey Northern Ireland (HSNI) to improve comparability across the UK. • DoJ has established an R working group to determine what is feasible within the confines of IT Assist Confidential (ITAC) and available resources. • NISRA Software Groups have been set up for R / SQL / Power BI on Microsoft Teams. • The NISRA Tech Lab was established in April 2021; their mission is to “Maximise new and existing technology to support NISRA staff to improve process efficiency, deliver innovative solutions and facilitate learning through collaboration”. <p>In addition the TL has provided input to the NISRA data INSIGHT project outlining the benefits of free open source software and how widely it can be applied.</p>	Amber
5	NISRA Branches have the necessary data quality assurance documentation (Quality assurance of administrative data (QAAD), Background Quality Reports (BQR) etc.), and regularly review where necessary. Three examples are, BSO have implemented Quality Assurance (QA) procedures for all publications and are continuing to develop and update Standard Operating Procedures. CSU developed comprehensive process documentation for CSU assistant statisticians to support all interviewer IT issues in the field. Every solution that the TL has produced is supported by exceptionally detailed handover material including step by step guides which include QA methods etc.	Amber

Measure

1	Vacancies 2021: 21 of 39 (54%) vacancies filled within 6 months (these consisted of 6 new and 33 backfilled posts).	Amber
2	In 2021/22, no publications were revised due to major corrections and 25 were re-issued due to minor errors.	Green
3 & 4	In 2021/22, NISRA published 262 Official Statistics outputs (or repeated outputs), 101 of which were National Statistics.	Green
5	In 2021/22, NISRA published 25 Social Science research reports (some of which were quarterly or weekly).	Green
6	72% of recurring NISRA outputs published in 2021/22 have complete process documentation, with a further 24% having partial process documentation.	Amber
7	97% of recurring NISRA outputs published in 2021/22 had either fully or partially documented quality assurance processes.	Green
8	<p>There were seven reported breaches of the Code of Practice in 2021/22. Of the seven breaches, six could be attributed to human error, while the remaining breach was a result of an IT issue.</p> <p>These included three early access breaches (where figures were uploaded early and removed immediately) – one of these was due to an IT issue; three pre-release access breaches and one 'not published on the pre-announced date' breach.</p>	Amber

Quadrant	Objectives	Initiatives	Measure	PfG Contribution
People	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will strive to improve the level of our wellbeing. 2. All Agency staff will receive relevant, identified training and skills development commensurate with their role and development needs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and increase opportunities for collaboration. 2. Develop our approach to recognising & appreciating our people. 3. Implement findings of cultural survey action plan. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of collaborative¹ projects ongoing in 2021/22. 2. The number of working days lost due to sick absence per staff year. 3. % Overall staff satisfaction. 4. % Employee Engagement. 5. % level of staff wellbeing 6. % of staff receiving the identified approved technical training they need to carry out their jobs. 7. % of all NISRA staff indicating they have deployed training in their day to day work. 8. % staff with PPA / PDP completed on time. 9. Development and delivery of related INSIGHT Project objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity. • We have more people working in better jobs. • We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential.

Performance against the People Quadrant is shown on [page 25](#).

¹ The definition of collaborative is a project involving a project with participants outside the branch / department, this includes inter-departmental collaboration and all policy analytical support.

Initiatives

1

- BSO:
 - Collaborated with Swansea Academy of Inclusivity and Learner Success (SAILS) hosted by Swansea University and Health Data Research UK on use of the Secure electronic Research Platform (SeRP) for data linkage and sharing.
 - Have collaborated with Health Data Research (HDR) UK on a programme of work related to the National Core Studies on the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this the service are for the first time working with research groups from across the UK.
 - Have assisted NISRA colleagues with a pilot project in relation to allowing use of secondary care (E.g. hospital data) in the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS) environment.
 - Have been collaborating with CSU on developing a new BLAISE platform to deliver their Pharmaceutical Margin Survey.
- CSU:
 - CSU have continued to recruit and provide samples to Office for National Statistics (ONS) to deliver the NI fieldwork on the UK COVID Infection Survey. This survey is one of the main surveillance methods to monitor the incidence of COVID-19 in the population. To date, the work has facilitated the collection of 231,051 swab and 63,549 blood tests via 120,416 household visits in NI by delivery partners, providing vital intelligence.
 - Assisted at the enumerator recruitment phase by hosting various training questionnaires online, removing the need to hold physical meetings during the lockdown period.
 - Hosted the Census Communal Establishment Managers form which provided invaluable information about the numbers of residents living in Communal Establishments for the 2021 Census.
 - Carried out the fieldwork and hosted the data collection for the Census Coverage Survey.
 - Worked collaboratively with Census in the planning and conducting the 2021 Census Coverage Survey. The survey, which is critical to the Census coverage assessment and adjustment processes, achieved an unprecedented response rate of 87%.
 - CSU hosted the Covid-19 Opinions survey for ONS on its accredited Blaise 5 data collection system, run on a weekly basis since its inception in the summer of 2020. NISRA securely sends the raw Blaise data to ONS who then do the analysis and publication.
 - Collaborated with TSSSB to host the 2021 People Survey along with all other TSSSB data collections.
 - Collaborated with ELMS and DfE on the development and deployment of the statutory advance notification of redundancy questionnaire.
 - Collaborated with ONS to host the entirety of the UK Opinions survey and UK Labour Market Survey.
 - Collaborated with the Welsh Government to host the National Survey of Wales.
- DE have been collaborating with statisticians in England, Scotland and Wales via weekly meetings about monitoring pupil and staff absence in schools due to COVID.
- DfC Economic and Social Research Programme has led to increased collaboration between economists and statisticians in the department.
- DfC is represented on the Cross-UK Housing Statistics Steering and Working Groups, which encourages collaboration with statistical colleagues across the 4 jurisdictions.

Green

- DfE collaborated with NISRA Research Support Unit (RSU) and DE on development of Education themed dataset as part of process of developing the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset for NI. DfE statisticians are involved in a working group for the project and will be actively involved in stakeholder engagement for the project.
- DfI 1 project completed.
- DoH CIB contributed to Adult Social Care Matrix in combination with the other UK regions to address OSR findings. Eurochild project, liaise with QUB and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to complete a template on children in care that fed into a Europe wide research project. Also contributed to HIB's COVID dashboard maintenance.
- DoH PSAB collaborated with DoF Innovation Lab in training on systems dynamic modelling software and its potential use in workforce planning.
- DoH PHIRB work with ONS/Welsh and Scottish Governments on further developing NI related products from the Coronavirus Infection Survey is continuing. Also working with different teams within ONS on producing products from European Health Interview Survey as well as on UK life expectancy products.
- DoJ collaborative projects currently ongoing between DoJ and Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), and between DoJ, Administrative Data Research (ADR) and GRO.
- One of the NISRA Tech Lab's strategic priorities is to promote collaboration across NISRA. Examples of projects include:
 - A new Baby Names App for Vital Statistics & Administrative Research and Support Branch (VARs);
 - The automation of processes used to produce a range of publications and infographics for DE and DfI (and the migration of the publications from PDF to interactive HTML);
 - Development of a scrolly-telling solution to allow the interactive dissemination of some key Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) statistics for ELMS;
 - The production of a statistical report exemplar that includes all of the required code needed to produce an interactive HTML report that is fully compliant with all essential Accessibility standards; and
 - The automation and streamlined production of the Central Postcode Directory (led by Census but used right across NISRA).
- ELMS:
 - Completion of pilot Earnings and Employee Study, Database for Trade and Economic Research (DTER);
 - Investigations into the development of Environmental Goods and Services Sector accounts for NI initiated between DfE and ELMS;
 - ELMS Economic Accounts team member took the lead in developing training material for the NICS wide economist group in collaboration with colleagues in DOF. They have delivered this training to a number of groups and it will be rolled out wider across the NICS during 2022/23;
 - 3 ELMS and Tech Lab projects. Two on dissemination - scrollytelling and Research and Analysis Project (RAP) project; one on quality assurance - Quarterly Employment Survey Driver of Change analysis;
 - Collaboration between ELMS and CSU to develop Redundancy Notification Data Collection System in Blaise;
 - Fraud and Error programme - ongoing collaboration with DfC;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPS Stats works collaboratively with a number of other organisations where their data can provide additional insight. Core customers include Department for Social Development (DSD), Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and ONS; • Statistical Co-ordination Branch (SCB) have collaborated with The Executive Office (TEO) to produce the first Wellbeing in NI report. The teams are also working in collaboration to develop a set of Indicators for a future Programme for Government (PfG) and to enhance the processes around the PfG; • SSB facilitated a collaborative approach to the implementation of the UK User Engagement Strategy for Statistics in NISRA, with branches sharing expertise and experiences with other branches through workshops, seminars, cases studies, user engagement contact points and the sharing of information on ongoing and previous user engagement across NISRA. SSB and the NISRA User Engagement Champions (which spanned four departments) also collaborated and engaged with the wider Government Statistical Service (GSS) to develop resources and share experiences and expertise across the whole of the UK. This included two presentations by non-Northern Ireland producers at a recent event: and • VARS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have collaborated extensively across a range of departments during 21/22 including DoF, DfE, DE and ONS in the development of a number of de-identified ‘themed, linked datasets’ which will be accessible by accredited researchers via the Trusted Research Environment in Colby House or remotely accessible via the ONS Secure Research Service. To date the Earnings and Employees Study is live for research projects, while the Educational Outcomes linkage is at the data linkage stage; and - Have collaborated with departmental policy colleagues on a number of ADR NI research projects to tailor the research to connect effectively with policy need. Examples include a research report on ‘mental health status of the employed population’ involving collaboration with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as well as the Assembly research unit; and a report on Covid-19 deaths and equality, produced in collaboration with DoH policy officials. 	
2	<p>NISRA branches report that mandatory training is kept up-to-date, and regular discussions take place with staff to ensure their PDP meets their training needs. Staff are encouraged to take part in on-line training, seminars, as well as learning through working together with other colleagues. The majority of branches input to the NISRA review of training needs on an annual basis.</p> <p>During 2021/22 there were regular Wellbeing seminars on a wide range of topics with recognition of specific health issues and engagement with national and regional information programmes. These included cancer awareness, diabetes, mental health, dementia and epilepsy.</p>	Amber
3	<p>MS Teams, as a replacement for NISRAnet, has been rolled out to all NISRA staff and is proving effective as an Agency wide communication tool. Branch and working group/discussion forums on Teams are enabling branch and intra-Agency collaboration and informal discussion channels facilitating information and skills sharing. Through Teams the Training Team and Tech Lab have created discussion forums on a number of the most popular free to air software tools that staff are applying to their work.</p>	Amber

Measure

1	Several collaboration projects are reported in the Initiatives section above.	Green
2	<p>Figures for April 2021 to March 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Days lost per staff year equivalent 21/22 7.5 Days lost per staff year equivalent YTD 20/21 4.8 	Red
3	In the NICS People Survey 2021 NISRA responses indicated overall staff satisfaction with life was 68%, 3 percentage points higher compared to the 65% for the NICS.	Green
4	In the NICS People Survey 2021 NISRA responses indicated an Employee Engagement Index of 58%, 1 percentage point higher compared to the NICS average of 57%.	Green
5	In the NICS People Survey 2021 NISRA responses indicated 76% of staff reported thing in their life were 'worthwhile' and 66% reported feeling 'happy'. Both increases in comparison with the NICS (72% and 64% respectively). The overall score for how NISRA staff rate their work is 83%, an increase of 11 percentage points in comparison to the NICS (72%).	Green
6	<p>Four programming courses (R / SQL / Power BI / SPSS) were identified as essential to NISRA - 100% of the staff who requested these courses were contacted and dates for the courses scheduled. For each course organised all NISRA staff were contacted to ensure all courses available had full capacity, with a reserve list for potential drop outs. Other courses organised by the Training Team were SAS and Data Linkage, again 100% of staff who requested these courses were contacted during the year regarding training.</p> <p>An update on the other technical training courses identified as essential to NISRA is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult Conversations – GRO are currently looking at suppliers. Delivery will be expected 2022. Statistical Disclosure Control – queried with GSS Learning, responsibility for delivery of this course has moved to SSB. Statistical Foundation Course – GSS did not deliver during the pandemic. Delivery is now on hold while the course is reviewed. <p>The following courses are organised through SSB who have not had the resource allocated to look after this area, when the resource arrives it will be a priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Practice for Statistics QAAD Quality Assurance Statistical Commentary (writing about statistics) NISRA Statistical Quality Management Communicating Uncertainty and Change Effective Tables and Charts Statistical Disclosure Control User Engagement 	Green
7	In the People Survey 2021, 82% of NISRA staff indicated they have received the training (including in-house and on-the-job training) necessary to deliver their business objectives. While 78% stated they had access to the right learning and development opportunities when needed. Over two thirds (68%) of all NICS stated they have been able to access the right learning and development opportunities when needed.	Green
8	Performance Management PPA / PDP completed on time - 5.5%. Regular reminders are sent to staff regarding this.	Red
9	The current projects and associated objectives were reviewed by SMT and Agency Board. Given the recent changes in SMT these will need to be reviewed again and new project leaders sought for some of the projects.	Amber

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

- NISRA have in place an Information Asset Owner (IAO) / Support Information Manager (SIM) in each branch, with a Business Area Information Manager (BAIM) in post for DoF NISRA;
- NISRA builds accountability and privacy by design into all aspects of the business planning process;
- NISRA communicates and raises awareness of DPA / UK GDPR with all staff through e-mails, aide-memoirs, Data Protection Guidance Notes (DPGN's), Departmental Intranet updates, Departmental / Team briefs etc.;
- IAO's and relevant staff attend DP / UK GDPR Awareness Sessions delivered by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Departmental DPO;
- FOI training for relevant staff has been provided by DoF CAED;
- NISRA has robust policies in place which support UK GDPR in line with Departmental guidance;
- Guidance is issued to all DoF NISRA staff i.e. Data Protection Impact Assessments, Data Breach Management Plan, Data Sharing Agreements, Contracts & Records Management etc.;
- GDPR on-line training is completed by all staff including Agency staff;
- Cyber Security on-line training is completed by all staff including Agency staff;
- CM (formerly TRIM) training is available to all staff who haven't used the system;
- NISRA ensures that all holdings of personal data are compliant with UK GDPR requirements, identifying the lawful basis for processing;
- NISRA branches regularly review the Departmental on-line Information Asset Register, with approval by respective IAO's;
- NISRA branches regularly review their procedures for handling personal information;
- Privacy Notices for NISRA and Civil Registration Services are produced and published on the internet, supported by Privacy Information Statements as required;
- Procedures are in place to detect, report and investigate data breaches;
- NISRA Retention and Disposal Schedule has been reviewed and updated, to ensure NISRA complies with the requirements of the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 and the Disposal of Documents Order (S.R. & O. 1925 No.167);

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

There were no reportable data breaches between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

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

FINANCIAL REVIEW

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

	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
	£000	£000	£000
Revenue from contracts with customers	(19,179)	(17,811)	(18,225)
Total operating income	(19,179)	(17,811)	(18,225)
Staff costs	28,628	26,518	25,010
Purchase of goods and services	3,231	3,378	2,590
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,505	1,565	1,649
Provision expense	(47)	80	–
Other operating expenditure	6,681	9,451	6,785
Total operating expenditure	39,998	40,992	36,034
Net expenditure for the year	20,819	23,181	17,809

The net resource expenditure for the year excluding non-cash expenditure was £16.34m against the closing excluding non-cash budget position of £17.25m. The underspend was due mainly to forecast expenditure not going ahead due to continued COVID-19 restrictions during the year, a decrease in Census 2021 contract costs and increased income generated by the General Register Office (GRO) as District Register Office's (DROs) reopened during 2021-22.

Income generated by the General Register Office (GRO) increased as restricted trading conditions imposed upon DROs due to COVID-19 were removed. Other operating expenditure (excluding non-cash items, see note 3 in the Financial Statement section) has decreased to £3,666k (2020-21: £6,248k) because of reductions associated with the completion and scale-back of operations associated with Census 2021.

The Agency employed an average of 558 staff during the financial year and total staff costs were £28,628k (2020-21: £26,518k). Average staff numbers remained the same across both years 2021-22 and 2020-21 at 558.

The Agency has been allocated an indicative opening budget (excluding non-cash) of £13.01m for 2022-23. The budget has been decreased from 2021-22 as Census 2021 operations are scaled back.

LONG TERM EXPENDITURE TREND

	2021-22 Outturn £000	2020-21 Outturn £000	2019-20 Outturn £000
Total Resource DEL	39,998	40,992	36,034
Of which:			
Staff costs	28,628	26,518	25,010
Purchase of goods and services	3,231	3,378	2,590
Other operating expenditure	6,681	9,451	6,785
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,505	1,565	1,649
Total Resource AME	(47)	80	-
Of which:			
Provision expense	(47)	80	-

In 2021-22 the decrease is mainly due to decreased operating expenditure associated with the completion of Census 2021.

Census 2021 funding has continued in 2021-22 as data is processed and analysed. Census spend will drop substantially for 2022-23 as analysis is completed and staff numbers return to pre-Census levels.

AUDITORS

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

The audit of the financial statements for 2021-22 resulted in a notional audit fee of £17,475 (2020-21: £20,400) and is included in the operating expenditure in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

During 2021-22 the Agency did not purchase any non-audit services from its auditor (2020-21: none).

EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

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

PAYMENT TO SUPPLIERS

The Agency's policy is to pay bills from all suppliers within 10 working days of receipt of the goods or performance of the services following receipt of a properly rendered invoice or in accordance with contractual conditions, whichever is the earlier. During the financial year, the Agency achieved an average of 88% (2020-21: 91%) of invoices paid to suppliers within 10 working days. The Agency achieved an average of 96% (2020-21: 96%) of invoices paid within 30 calendar days.

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

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

NISRA through its occupancy of Colby House, continues to follow Departmental guidance as set out in the Department's Office Estate Energy Efficiency Carbon Reduction Plan 2020-21 / 2022-23 which is aimed at improving energy efficiency across the Northern Ireland Civil Service Estate.

At Colby House NISRA continues to implement a waste management regime which focuses on paper as the dominant waste stream. A number of measures have been implemented including: discouraging routine printing of emails; avoiding the procurement and use of single use plastic items, promoting full usage of the NICS Records Management systems; encouraging double sided and monochrome photocopying / printing in instances where it is necessary to print documents; and using recycled paper. Receptacles have been made available to facilitate recycling of paper, cans, plastics containers, paper towels, envelopes, magazines, and empty printer cartridges. Dry recyclable materials are kept separate from standard domestic waste for collection and recycling by the Department's Waste Recycling service provider. The quantity of office materials collected for recycling in 2021-22 was considerably reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Performance Report is approved and signed



Siobhan Carey
Accounting Officer
22 June 2022

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

OVERVIEW

The Accountability Report comprises the following:

Corporate Governance Report

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

Remuneration and Staff Report

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

Assembly Accountability and Audit Report

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

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Introduction

NISRA presents its Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2022.

Management

Ministerial responsibility for the Agency for the 2021-22 financial year rested with the Department of Finance. During this reporting period the role of Accounting Officer was shared by David Patterson and Siobhan Carey² and they were responsible to the Minister of Finance for the management of the Agency's performance, operations and finances.

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

Senior Management Team

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

Ms S Carey	Chief Executive and Registrar General
Dr T Power	Director of Analysis
Dr D Marshall	Director of Census and Population Statistics
Mr B Green	Director of Sources
Mr D Patterson (retired on 18/03/22)	Business Development Manager
Mrs K Walker	Deputy Registrar General

The following officers also regularly attend SMT meetings to provide resource management information and advice that will aid routine decision making, though they are not formal members:

- Head of Agency Corporate Services;
- DoF Finance Business Partner;
- NICS HR Business Partner.

² In the absence of Ms Siobhan Carey, Chief Executive and Registrar General, Mr David Patterson was temporarily promoted to Grade 5 and appointed (with effect from 25 June 2021) to the position of Interim Accounting Officer pending Ms Carey's return to office on 1 Nov 2021.

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

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

Agency Board

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

Role

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

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

The Agency Board members during the year were as follows:

Role	Name
Chief Executive and Registrar General	Ms S Carey
Director of Analysis	Dr T Power
Director of Census and Population Statistics	Dr D Marshall
Director of Sources	Mr B Green
Head of Central Survey Unit	Dr K Sweeney (up to 21 October 2021)
Head of EU Exit and Statistics of Trade	Dr J Gillan (up to 03 September 2021)
Head of Information and Analysis Directorate, DoH	Dr E Mooney
Head of NICS HR Analytics and Workforce Planning	Mrs M Crawford
Head of Census Office	Mr A Fitzpatrick
Head of Information and Registration Unit BSO	Mr M Mayock
Head of Analytical Services Unit DfE	Mrs N Fisher
Head of Economic and Labour Market Statistics	Mr G Colgan (up to 01 October 2021)
Head of Economic and Labour Market Statistics	Mrs C Blair (from 01 October 2021)
Head of Demographic Statistics	Ms D Lyness

Head of Analytical Services	Mr P McKillen
Head of Business Development	Mr D Patteron (up to 18 March 2022)
Deputy Registrar General	Mrs K Walker

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

Arrangements for external challenge

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

Register of Interests

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

Pension Liabilities

The treatment of pension costs and liabilities is disclosed in the Remuneration and Staff Report and in the Accounting Policies note in the financial statements (Note1.9).

Personal Data

The Agency remains fully committed to complying with the Data Protection Act 2018 / UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). The Agency acts in accordance with a number of Departmental policies to ensure the safe handling of personal information. All of these policies can be found in the [DoF-data-protection-and-information-management](#) hub.

There were no reportable data breaches between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 within DoF NISRA.

Reporting of Complaints

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

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

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

In 2021-22 NISRA dealt with 22 complaints (2020-21: 12) ranging from vital events registration procedures to selection for participation in surveys.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department of Finance, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the *Government Financial Reporting Manual* have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Department of Finance has appointed the Chief Executive of NISRA as Accounting Officer of the Agency.

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

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

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

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

The Agency governance model contains a number of responsibilities:

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

The Agency Board members are listed in the Directors' Report on page 36-38. The Agency Board met five times during the year and was attended as follows:

	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	Sept 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Mar 2022
Siobhan Carey										
Tracy Power										
David Marshall										
Kevin Sweeney										
Sandy Fitzpatrick										
Brian Green										
Eugene Mooney										
Michelle Crawford										
Gerard Colgan¹										
Cathryn Blair¹										
Kathie Walker										
Martin Mayock										
Nicola Fisher										
Deborah Lyness										

	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	Sept 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Mar 2022
David Patterson										
Paul McKillen										

Green indicates attendance; blue indicates non-attendance; grey indicates no meeting held
 1 Temporary promotion changed from Gerard Colgan to Cathryn Blair on 1 October 2021

The Governance Statement, which has been agreed by the Agency Board, sets out how these responsibilities have been discharged throughout the year to 31 March 2022.

Context

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

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

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

Financial Management

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

Risk and Control Framework

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

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

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

All three of the departmental targets for 2022 have been achieved and have been validated by DoF Internal Audit. The Agency performance against Balanced Scorecard targets is published on pages 12 to 28 of this report.

Agency Performance

The NISRA Business Plan 2021/22 sets out the Agency's objectives for the year against which performance is reported and monitored. Progress against plan is regularly reported to Agency Board providing details of actual results against target (DoF and NISRA Chief Executive) and a narrative on the actions taken to deliver the expected outcomes.

Accounting Officer

The Department has designated the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer (AO) for NISRA. The responsibilities of an AO include, ensuring propriety and regularity of the public finances for which an Accounting Officer is answerable, the keeping of proper records and for safeguarding NISRA assets as set out in the 'Accounting Officer's Memorandum' issued by DoF and published in 'Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland'.

The AO has responsibility for maintaining a system of sound internal control that supports the achievement of Agency policies, aims and objectives set by the Minister of Finance, whilst safeguarding public funds and Agency assets, for which they are responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them by 'Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland' (MPMNI).

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

The AO Chairs the NISRA Agency Board which met on five occasions in 2021-22. The Agency Board operates in compliance with 'Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013' and directs the strategic management of NISRA by reviewing its strategic options and setting its corporate direction. The Agency Board considered the information received to be fit for purpose.

The Agency maintains a Register of Significant Interests held by Board members which may conflict with their management responsibilities. Board members are requested annually to make a declaration and no such interests were declared by members for the Agency Board for the year ended 31 March 2022.

In 2021-22 NISRA also obtained declarations of interest from all other Agency staff. Again no interests have been declared which the Agency consider to represent a potential conflict of interest.

The Agency Board also considered and reviewed NISRA risks as detailed in the NISRA Corporate Risk Register. The Agency ARC, which is chaired by an independent Non-Executive Member of the DoF board, supports the AO and the Agency Board on issues of risk, control and governance. In addition, the ARC provides assurance and advice to the AO on the adequacy of both internal and external audit coverage. The ARC met on 4 occasions in 2021-22, attended by its Non-Executive Members as follows:

	26 May 21	23 June 21	27 Oct 21	2 Feb 22
Tom Taylor				
John Smyth				
Elizabeth Ensor				

 Indicates attendance

Level of Assurance

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

The Department's Internal Audit Team reported on the work of the Agency during 2021-22. These reports provide an objective and widespread assessment of the systems of internal control in operation across the Agency, together with prioritised recommendations to strengthen controls and implement further improvements.

Internal Audit completed a programme of audits during 2021-22 and in his Annual Report the Head of Internal Audit provided NISRA with a satisfactory audit opinion. Further details on the Internal Audit output for the year are included in the section, 'Significant Internal Control Problems'.

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

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

Fraud Prevention and Assurance

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

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

Significant Internal Control Problems

DoF Internal Audit undertook the following audits during 2021-22:

- Tourism

Completed after the year end:

- Validation of the Agency target performance for 2020-21 – performance accurately reported.

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

Review of Effectiveness

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

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

Conclusion

Taking into account all of the arrangements set out in this Governance Statement, NISRA has an effective governance structure in place and has satisfactory systems of internal control which have operated effectively throughout 2021-22.

REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT

Remuneration Policy

The pay remit for the Northern Ireland (NI) public sector, including senior civil servants (SCS) in the NICS, is approved by the Minister of Finance. The Minister set the 2021-22 NI public sector pay policy (March 2021).

Annual NICS pay awards are made in the context of the wider public sector pay policy. The pay awards for NICS staff, including SCS, for 2020-21 were paid in June and July 2021. The pay awards for 2021-22 were paid in September and October 2021.

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

Service Contracts

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

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

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

Remuneration and pension entitlements

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

**Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements
(the following section is subject to audit)**

	2021-22			2020-21		
Officials	Salary £000	Pension Benefits * to nearest £1,000)	Total £000	Salary £000	Pension Benefits* to nearest £1,000)	Total £000
Siobhan Carey	100-105	27	125-130	100-105	52	150-155
Gerard Colgan	30-35 (55-60 FYE)	25	55-60 (80-85 FYE)	60-65	40	100-105
Michelle Crawford	65-70	21	85-90	65-70	31	95-100
Nicola Fisher	65-70	37	105-110	60-65	38	100-105
Alexander Fitzpatrick	70-75	20	90-95	65-70	32	95-100
Brian Green	75-80	43	120-125	70-75	42	110-115
Deborah Lyness	65-70	36	100-105	60-65	38	100-105
David Marshall	80-85	39	120-125	75-80	45	120-125
Martin Mayock	65-70	42	110-115	60-65	45	105-110
Eugene Mooney	120-125	51	175-180	65-70	22	85-90
David Patterson	75-80	144	220-225	70-75	53	125-130
Tracy Power	75-80	40	115-120	75-80	37	110-115
Kevin Sweeney	30-35 (50-55 FYE)	8	35-40 (60-65 FYE)	65-70	14	80-85
Kathie Walker	70-75	44	110-115	55-60	50	105-110
Cathryn Blair	25-30 (55-60 FYE)	13	40-45 (70-75 FYE)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Paul McKillen	60-65	16	75-80	n/a	n/a	n/a

* 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. Pension benefit accrued and Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) will increase from one year to the next by virtue of an extra year's service and any pay rise during the year. Where there is little or no pay rise, the increase in pension due to extra service may not be sufficient to offset the inflation increase. In real terms the pension value can therefore reduce, hence the negative values. **Bonus payments are not applicable to departments but may be applicable to other organisations.

(FYE – Full Year Equivalent)

None of the Agency Board members received any benefits in kind in 2021-22 or 2020-21.

Salary

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

For the 2021-22 financial year, NISRA, as an agency of the Department of Finance (DoF), was under the direction and control of Mr Conor Murphy, MLA. His salary and allowances were paid by DoF and have been included in the DoF accounts. These amounts do not include costs relating to the Minister's role as MLA/MP/MEP which are disclosed in the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Accounts.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument.

Pay Ratios (the following section is subject to audit)

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

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in NISRA in the financial year 2021-22 was £120,000 - £125,000 (2020-21, £100,000 - £105,000). The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation's workforce is disclosed below.

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

2020-21	25th percentile*	Median	75th percentile*
Total remuneration (£)	n/a	32,800	n/a
Pay ratio	n/a	3.1:1	n/a

*25th percentile and 75th percentile not required to be recalculated for prior year.

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

The values for the salary component of remuneration for the 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile were £32,893, £33,459 and £42,639 respectively.

In 2021-22 and 2020-21, no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director.

Remuneration ranged from £19,000 to £125,000 (2020-21, £18,000 to £135,000).

Percentage Change in Remuneration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pension Entitlements (the following section is subject to audit)

Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/22 (or date of leaving if earlier) and related lump sum £000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000	CETV at 31/03/22 £000	CETV at 31/03/21 £000	Real increase in CETV £000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account (nearest £100)
Siobhan Carey	40-45 plus a lump sum of 130-135	0 – 2.5 plus a lump sum of 2.5-5	970	931	26	n/a
Gerard Colgan	20-25 plus a lump sum of 35-40	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	339	321	16	n/a
Michelle Crawford	25-30 plus a lump sum of 45-50	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	402	372	9	n/a
Nicola Fisher	20-25 plus a lump sum of 40-45	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	361	321	21	n/a
Alexander Fitzpatrick	30-35 plus a lump sum of 55-60	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	555	515	10	n/a
Brian Green	30-35 plus a lump sum of 85-90	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	743	667	34	n/a
Deborah Lyness	20-25 plus a lump sum of 35-40	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	336	298	20	n/a
David Marshall	30-35 plus a lump sum of 55-60	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	556	502	25	n/a
Martin Mayock	30-35 plus a lump sum of 60-65	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	574	514	30	n/a
Eugene Mooney	25-30 plus a lump sum of 80-85	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 5-7.5	653	592	51	n/a
David Patterson	35-40 plus a lump sum of 110-115	5-7.5 plus a lump sum of 17.5-20	885	694	147	n/a
Tracy Power	30-35 plus a lump sum of 80-85	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	709	641	29	n/a
Kevin Sweeney	5-10 plus a lump sum of 15-20	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0-2.5	114	109	6	n/a

Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/22 (or date of leaving if earlier) and related lump sum £000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000	CETV at 31/03/22 £000	CETV at 31/03/21 £000	Real increase in CETV £000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account (nearest £100)
Kathie Walker	30-35 plus a lump sum of 80-85	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 2.5-5	697	623	35	n/a
Cathryn Blair	10-15	0-2.5	169	160	5	n/a
Paul McKillen	20-25	0-2.5	266	247	4	n/a

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes

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

The alpha pension scheme was introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of existing members of the classic, premium, classic plus and nuvos pension arrangements (collectively known as the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS (NI)]) also moved to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age did 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 (tapered protection).

In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the protections put in place back in 2015 that allowed older workers to remain in their original scheme, were discriminatory on the basis of age. As a result, the discrimination identified by the Courts in the way that the 2015 pension reforms were introduced must be removed by the Department of Finance. It is expected that, in due course, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period. The different pension benefits relate to the alternative schemes e.g. legacy PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' (legacy scheme) or alpha. Scheme regulations made in March 2022, closed the PCSPS(NI) to future accrual from 31 March 2022, and all remaining active PCSPS(NI) members (including partially retired members in active service) moved to 'alpha' from 1 April 2022. This completes Phase One to remedy the discrimination identified by the Courts. Any pension benefits built up in the legacy scheme prior to this date are unaffected and

PSCPS(NI) benefits remain payable in accordance with the relevant scheme rules. Phase Two will see the implementation of the Deferred Choice Underpin. That is, giving eligible members a choice between legacy scheme and alpha scheme benefits for service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. At this stage, allowance has not yet been made within CETVs for this remedy. Further information on the remedy will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which are available at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/dof-resource-accounts>

Alpha is a 'Career Average Revalued Earnings' (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The current accrual rate is 2.32%.

Currently new entrants joining can choose between membership of alpha or joining a '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 legacy PCSPS (NI) Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a Partnership Pension Account. Nuvos was also a CARE arrangement in which members accrued pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate of accrual was 2.3%.

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

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

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

Active members of the pension scheme will receive an Annual Benefit Statement. The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. The normal scheme pension age in Alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before the age of 65. The Scheme Pension age is 60 for any pension accrued in the legacy Classic, Premium and Classic Plus arrangements and 65 for any benefits accrued in Nuvos. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni.

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2021 was 3.1% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2022.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 are as follows:

Scheme Year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands)		Contribution rates – All members
From	To	From 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023
£0.00	£24,499.99	4.60%
£25,000.00	£56,399.99	5.45%
£56,400.00	£153,299.99	7.35%
£153,300.00 and above		8.05%

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional 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 2015 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 (the following section is subject to audit)

The Agency did not make any payments for loss of office during 2021-22.

STAFF REPORT

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

The number of staff serving as senior civil servants (or equivalent) based on a full year equivalent as at 31 March 2022 is as follows:

Pay Band*	2021-22	2020-21
£70,000 - £74,999	-	1
£75,000 - £79,999	2	2
£80,000 - £85,000	1	-
£100,000-£104,999	-	1
£105,000-£109,999	1	-

* Based on full year equivalent.

Staff costs (the following section is subject to audit)

Staff costs comprise:

	2021-22		2020-21	
	Permanently employed staff £000	Others £000	Total £000	Total £000
Wages and salaries	17,026	4,577	21,603	19,699
Social security costs	1,831	5	1,836	1,744
Other pension costs	5,189	-	5,189	5,075
Sub total	24,046	4,582	28,628	26,518
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(11,700)	-	(11,700)	(11,275)
Total net costs	12,346	4,582	16,928	15,243

£358k (2020-21: £738k) of salary costs have been charged to capital.

Pension arrangements

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

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

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

The 2016 Scheme Valuation requires adjustment as a result of the 'McCloud remedy'. The Department of Finance have also commissioned a consultation in relation to the Cost Cap Valuation which will close on 25 June 2021. The Cost Cap mechanism is a measure of scheme costs and determines whether members costs or scheme benefits require adjustment to maintain costs within a set corridor. By taking into account the increased value of public service pensions, as a result of the 'McCloud remedy', scheme cost control valuation outcomes will show greater costs than otherwise would have been expected. Following completion of the consultation process the 2016 Valuation has been completed and the final cost cap determined. Further information can be found on the Department of Finance website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-pension-scheme-valuations>.

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

For 2021-22, employers' contributions of £5,255,193 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2020-21: £5,039,896) at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £15,495 (2020-21: £9,579) were paid to one or more of the panel of two appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2020-21: 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay.

The partnership pension account offers the member the opportunity of having a 'free' pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the member does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match member contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings.

Employer contributions of £527, 0.5% (2020-21: £549, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS Pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £Nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were £Nil (2020-21: £Nil).

Ill-health retirement

There were no ill-health retirement during the year (2020-21: £Nil). The total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £Nil (2020-21: £Nil).

Average number of persons employed (the following is subject to audit)

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

			2021-22	2020-21
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
NISRA Board	16	-	16	18
NISRA Employees	434	-	476	458
Other	-	108	66	82
Staff engaged on capital projects*	-	-	-	-
Total	450	108	558	558

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

Staff composition

The gender analysis of permanent Agency staff as at 31 March 2022 was as follows.

	2021-22			2020-21		
	Female staff	Male Staff	Total Staff	Female staff	Male Staff	Total Staff
Agency Board	5	7	12	6	4	10
Senior Civil Service	2	2	4	2	2	4
Other NISRA Employees	232	204	436	254	226	480
Total	239	213	452	262	232	494

[Figures include NISRA staff outposted to other government departments and seconded to other organisations]

Sickness absence

The Agency had an overall sickness absence rate of 7.5 days lost per employee in 2020-2021. Annual sickness absence figures can be found in the “Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021-22” report at [Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2021/22 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#). Figures for the 2021-22 financial year will be published by the end of June 2022.

Staff Policies

Employment, training and advancement of disabled persons

The NICS is committed to working towards creating a truly inclusive workplace where all colleagues feel valued. The NICS has a wide and active network of Diversity Champions. The NICS Disability Champion is supported by the NICS Disability Working Group, a consultative group that works to promote disability equality and inclusion across the NICS.

The NICS applies the recruitment principles as set out in the Recruitment Code of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland, appointing candidates based on merit through fair and open competition. Mandatory training for recruitment and selection panel members includes raising awareness of unconscious bias. Unconscious bias training is available to all staff.

The NICS undertakes outreach activities to promote career opportunities to the disability sector and offers a Work Experience Scheme for People with Disabilities and participates in the annual International Job Shadow Day. In 2021-22 the NICS offered a number of work experience opportunities under the JobStart Scheme.

In 2021-22, the NICS implemented a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS).

To maintain and promote a diverse and inclusive workforce, the NICS has policies in place to support reasonable adjustments to working practices or the work environment as required by disabled persons.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In the NICS, we are committed to building an inclusive workplace culture where diversity is truly valued at all levels, where you are valued for who you are and where you can bring your true self to work. We want to make use of all the talent that exists across the NICS to ensure we are a well-led, high performing, outcome-focused Service and a Service that is a great place to work.

The [NICS People Strategy](#) includes a range of actions that will help accelerate our ambition of a truly inclusive NICS, which reflects the society we serve.

As a key element of the People Strategy, our ambitious diversity and inclusion programme of work is delivered through the implementation of an annual NICS Diversity Action Plan, and overseen by the leadership of the NICS Board, the NICS Diversity Champions Network, Departmental Diversity Champions and Thematic Diversity Champions, NICS colleague networks and NICS HR, as well as through partnership working with stakeholder organisations.

The NICS Diversity Action Plan sets out our priorities for action by diversity and inclusion theme, cross-cutting priorities, departmental priorities and includes supporting plans on communications and outreach.

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

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

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

The NICS continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998, which includes submission of an annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return and a tri-annual Article 55 Review to the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI), both of which assess the composition of the NICS workforce and the composition of applicants and appointees. In addition, the NICS conducts a similar formal review of the gender profile of its workforce. The findings are published in the NICS [Article 55 and Gender Reviews](#).

The NICS uses the findings of all the equality monitoring and analysis to inform its programme of targeted outreach activity to address any areas of under-representation.

As a public authority, the NICS has due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in carrying out its functions. Further information on the department's equality scheme is available at www.finance-ni.gov.uk.

Other Employee Matters

Health & Safety

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

Employee Consultation and Trade Union Relationships

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

Human Capital Management

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

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

Learning & Development

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

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

Talent management is a key theme of the NICS People Strategy and this year the focus continued on promoting the importance of improving the quality of the development conversation between managers and staff, with additional resources being added to the existing talent management toolkit.

The NICS offers a wide range of career development opportunities through mentoring, secondment and interchange opportunities, elective transfers, temporary promotion, job rotation and job shadowing.

Employee Engagement

During the year, DoF delivered a wide-ranging programme of staff engagement including a series of virtual events for over 4,000 DoF staff led by the Permanent Secretary and members of the senior leadership team. Topics covered include New Ways of Working, Welfare Support Services and the Budget. In addition, the Department delivered over 30 NICS Live Online events, with a strong emphasis on mental and physical health and wellbeing, to more than 11,000 staff across the NICS.

Expenditure on consultancy and temporary staffing

There was £Nil NISRA expenditure on external consultancy in the financial year 2021-22 (2020-21: £Nil).

NISRA spent £4,577k during the year on temporary staffing (2020-21: £3,444k).

Staff Turnover

	Departmental Turnover Rate		General Turnover Rate	
	Turnover Rate	Turnover Percentage	Turnover Rate	Turnover Percentage
NISRA	0.061	6.1%	0.02	2.0%

The NISRA Staff Turnover percentage (the total number of people that have left the Agency including those who have moved within the NICS) for 2021-22 is 7.7% (2020-21, 6.1%) and the general turnover percentage (the people who have left the Agency and have not gone elsewhere in the NICS) is 4.4% (2020-21: 2.0%). This has been calculated by NICS HR based on the Cabinet Office Guidance on calculations for Turnover in the Civil Service.

Staff Engagement

The 2021 NICS People Survey was conducted by NISRA across the nine NICS ministerial Departments as well as the Public Prosecution Service and the Health & Safety Executive for NI. All staff working in these organisations were invited to take part in the survey. As the 2020 survey related primarily to the impact of COVID-19 and did not include engagement themes, the latest year for which direct comparisons can be made is 2019. For NISRA there were 336 (2019: 322) staff invited to complete the survey, of which 226 (2019: 248) participated, a response rate of 67.3% (2019: 77%). The Employee Engagement Index (EEI) is the weighted average of the responses to the five employee engagement questions, and it ranges from 0% to 100%. NISRA responses indicated an Employee Engagement Index of 58% (2019: 53%), compared to the NICS average of 57% (2019: 51%). The full survey can be accessed at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/nics-people-survey-results>.

Staff Redeployment

NISRA had no staff redeployed in relation to COVID-19 or EU Exit in 2021-22.

Off-payroll engagements

The Agency did not have any off-payroll engagements during 2021-22.

Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages (the following section is subject to audit)

There were no early retirements or compulsory redundancies in 2021-22 (2020-21: none).

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

OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT

Other Assembly Accountability Disclosures

Regularity of Expenditure

i. Losses and special payments (the following section is subject to audit)

Losses statement

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

Special payments

The Agency did not make any special payments during the year. (2020-21: £Nil).

ii. Fees and Charges (the following section is subject to audit)

General Register Office

In setting fees, the General Register Office (GRO) aims to recover 100% of costs directly attributable to estimated volumes of certificates produced and marriage and civil partnership notices and ceremonies. GRO is legislatively required to provide a birth, death, marriage and civil partnership registration service and no costs are charged for this service. In 2021-22 GRO estimated that it would recover £2,729k (2020-21: £ 2,449k) from the supply of certificates and services. The actual cost recovery for the year was £3,179k (2020-21: £2,689k).

Central Survey Unit

In 2021-22 the Central Survey Unit (CSU) estimated that it would recover £2,403k (2020-21: £1,887k) from carrying out surveys on behalf of government departments and non-departmental public bodies. The actual cost recovery for the year was £2,036k (2020-21: £1,725k). The information provided in the table below is for fees and charges purposes, not for IFRS 8.

			2021-22	2020-21
	Income	Full cost	Surplus/ (deficit)	Surplus/ (deficit)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Registration Services	3,179	(3,151)	28	57
Statistics and Research work carried out by CSU	2,036	(2,036)	-	(154)
Recovery of staff costs for staff outside DoF	11,700	(11,601)	99	7
Other services	2,264	(1,440)	824	569
Total	19,179	(18,228)	951	479

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

iii. Remote Contingent Liabilities (the following section is subject to audit)

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

This Accountability Report is approved and signed



Siobhan Carey
Accounting Officer
22 June 2022

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

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for the year ended 31 March 2022 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its net operating expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Department of Finance directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

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

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs)(UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate.

My staff and I are independent of Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited and my audit certificate and report. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information included in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

Opinion on other matters

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

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Finance directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001; and

- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

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

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- such internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Health and Safety Legislation, The Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989 and relevant Tax laws (PAYE and NIC);
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals and unreasonable management estimates;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate and inquiries of management and those charged with governance;
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:

- performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
- testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
- assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



KJ Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
1 Bradford Court
Galwally
BELFAST
BT8 6RB

28 June 2022

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Revenue from contracts with customers	4	(19,179)	(17,811)
Total operating income		(19,179)	(17,811)
Staff costs	3	28,628	26,518
Purchase of goods and services	3	3,231	3,378
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	1,505	1,565
Provision expense	3	(47)	80
Other operating expenditure	3	6,681	9,451
Total operating expenditure		39,998	40,992
Net operating expenditure		20,819	23,181
Net expenditure for the year		20,819	23,181
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net loss on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	5	(8)	(17)
Net loss on revaluation of intangible assets	6	(252)	(39)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		20,559	23,125

Notes 1 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £000	2021 £000
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	459	747
Intangible assets	6	3,660	3,527
Total non-current assets		4,119	4,274
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	8	5,006	4,140
Cash and cash equivalents	7	198	214
Total current assets		5,204	4,354
Total assets		9,323	8,628
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	(3,018)	(5,517)
Provisions	10	-	-
Total current liabilities		(3,018)	(5,517)
Total assets less current liabilities		6,305	3,111
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	10	(9)	(125)
Total non-current liabilities		(9)	(125)
Total assets less total liabilities		6,296	2,986
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves			
General fund		5,886	2,732
Revaluation reserve		410	254
Total equity		6,296	2,986

Notes 1 to 17 form part of these financial statements.



Siobhan Carey
Accounting Officer
22 June 2022

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating expenditure	SoCNE	(20,819)	(23,181)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
Notional charges	3	3,015	3,202
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	1,505	1,565
Provision expense	3	(47)	80
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	8	(866)	281
(Decrease)/increase in trade and other payables <i>less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</i>	9	(2,499)	3,269
	9	–	274
Use of Provisions	10	(69)	–
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(19,780)	(14,510)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(85)	(160)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	(1,006)	(1,337)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(1,091)	(1,497)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net Assembly Funding - drawn down		20,855	15,977
Net cash flow from financing activities	SoTE	20,855	15,977
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents in the period		(16)	(30)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	7	214	244
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	7	198	214

Notes 1 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	General Fund	Revaluation Reserve	Taxpayers' Equity
		£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2020		6,599	333	6,932
Net Assembly Funding		15,977	–	15,977
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(23,181)	56	(23,125)
Auditor's remuneration	3	20	–	20
Non-cash notional charges	3	3,182	–	3,182
Transfer between reserves		135	(135)	–
Balance at 31 March 2021		2,732	254	2,986
Net Assembly Funding		20,855	–	20,855
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(20,819)	260	(20,559)
Auditor's remuneration	3	17	–	17
Non-cash notional charges	3	2,997	–	2,997
Transfer between reserves		104	(104)	–
Balance at 31 March 2022		5,886	410	6,296

Notes 1 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2021-22 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance. The accounting policies contained in FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context.

Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy that has been judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Agency for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Agency for 2021-22 are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the Accounts.

1.1 Accounting Convention

The Accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets.

1.2 Property, plant and equipment

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

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

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

1.3 Intangible assets

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

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

1.4 Depreciation and Amortisation

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

- Information technology 3-12 years;
- Telecoms equipment 5-10 years;
- Plant and machinery 3-30 years;
- Furniture and fittings up to 10 years; and
- Intangible assets (IT) 3-12 years.

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

1.5 Operating Income

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

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

In 2018-19 the Agency adopted IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. The Agency has Service Level Agreements with a wide range of public sector organisations. These contracts enable the Agency to impose a charge on the customer and the requirement for the customer undertaking the relevant activities to be liable to pay the charge. The Service Level Agreement provides the enforceability on both parties. The income from these activities is effectively revenue from contracts with

customers for services provided to the NI Departments, Public Bodies and UK Departments and Public Bodies and external customers. Note 4 shows the income by customers for each of the three activities.

The effect of the adoption of IFRS 15 has not required significant changes in the judgement on the recognition and recovery of this revenue, nor has it resulted in any differences between the previous carrying amount and the carrying amount at the beginning of the annual reporting period that includes the date of initial application in the opening general fund within taxpayers' equity.

The timing and amount of the levy due from the customer is set out in the Service Level Agreement. The customer is invoiced and the revenue recognised on completion of the services. It is probable that the Agency will collect the consideration to which it is entitled. Any amounts due at the year-end but not yet invoiced to the customer are included as accrued income in the financial statements.

Services that are statutory in nature and provided to members of the public are usually paid for in advance of the service being provided or when the service is provided.

The income generated in pursuit of these activities or as part of managing the Agency's affairs is Operating Income in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Operating income is stated net of VAT.

1.6 Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is defined as any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.7 Value Added Tax

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

1.8 Programme Expenditure

All of NISRA expenditure is classified as Programme expenditure.

1.9 Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the NICS Pension Schemes. The defined benefit scheme is unfunded and is non-contributory except in respect of dependants' benefits. The Agency recognises the expected cost of these

elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the NICS Pension Schemes of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the NICS Pension Schemes. In respect of the defined contribution scheme, the Agency recognises the contributions payable for the year.

1.10 Contingent Liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities disclosed in accordance with IAS 37, the Agency discloses for Assembly reporting and accountability purposes certain statutory and non-statutory contingent liabilities where the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit is remote, but which have been reported to the Assembly in accordance with the requirements of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

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

1.11 Employee Benefits

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

1.12 Provisions

The Agency provides for legal or constructive obligations, which are of uncertain timing or amount at the reporting date on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation. These relate to the settlement of equal pay claims, other potential legal actions and provision for future liabilities in respect of contracts. Where the effect of the time value of money is significant the estimated risk-adjusted cash flows are discounted using the real rate set by HM Treasury.

1.13 Critical accounting estimates and key judgements

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

account of any changes in the circumstances on which the estimate was based or as a result of new information or more experience.

1.14 Impending application of newly issued accounting standards not yet effective

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

Standard	IFRS 16 <i>Leases</i> IFRS 16 <i>Leases</i> (Replaces IAS 17 <i>Leases</i> and related interpretations)
Effective date	IFRS 16 <i>Leases</i> replaces IAS 17 <i>Leases</i> and is effective with EU adoption from 1 January 2019. In line with the requirements of the FReM, IFRS 16 will be implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector, with effect from 1 April 2022.
Summary	IFRS 16 represents a significant change in lessee accounting by largely removing the distinction between operating and finance leases and introducing a single lessee accounting model. A lessee is required to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying asset is of low value on the Statement of Financial Position. There are corresponding changes to the disclosure requirements to show the effect that leases have on the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the lessee.
Comments	NISRA is preparing for implementation in 2022-23. NISRA will consider the implications on the disclosures to the financial statements of the standards on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What operating leases commitments are currently held by the entity and whether these are material to the financial statements; • The nature of the assets being leased and whether they may be classed as short term or low value leases; and • Whether there are sufficient existing disclosures in the financial statements regarding lease commitments where these are considered material.

Standard	IFRS 10 <i>Consolidated Financial Statements</i> , IFRS 11 <i>Joint Arrangements</i> , IFRS 12 <i>Disclosure of Interests in Other Entities</i>
Effective date	The International Accounting Standard Board (IASB) have issued new and amended standards (IFRS 10, IFRS 11 and IFRS 12) that affect the consolidation and reporting of subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures. These standards are effective with EU adoption from 1 January 2014.
Summary	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 (Review of Financial Process), 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 2022-23, 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 changed as a result of these Standards.

Implementation of Review of Financial Process (RoFP)

The Agency is implementing Review of Financial Process in 2022-23. The aim of RoFP is to align the boundaries of budgets, estimates and accounts as far as is practicable, including consolidation of NDPBs and other central government bodies in estimates and accounts. The bodies to be included within the Agency boundary will be designated each year in an Estimates and Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order for consolidation into the Agency's annual Estimates and Accounts.

1.15 Financial Reporting – Future Developments

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

2. Statement of Operating Costs by Operating Segments

					2021-22
	Note	General Register Office	Central Survey Unit	Other	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross expenditure	3	4,745	4,780	30,473	39,998
Income	4	(3,179)	(2,036)	(13,964)	(19,179)
Net expenditure		1,566	2,744	16,509	20,819
Total assets		1,684	1,885	5,754	9,323
Total liabilities		(685)	(90)	(2,252)	(3,027)
Net assets		999	1,795	3,502	6,296

					2020-21
	Note	General Register Office	Central Survey Unit	Other	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross expenditure	3	5,201	4,502	31,289	40,992
Income	4	(2,689)	(1,725)	(13,397)	(17,811)
Net expenditure		2,512	2,777	17,892	23,181
Total assets		1,637	1,826	5,165	8,628
Total liabilities		(772)	(112)	(4,758)	(5,642)
Net assets		865	1,714	407	2,986

General Register Office (GRO)

Consists of the unit that manages all public births, deaths and marriage records and the District Councils that manage this locally.

Central Survey Unit (CSU)

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

Other

Covers all the other statistical research activities and the outposted and seconded staff.

3. Programme Costs

	2021-22	2020-21
	£000	£000
Staff costs		
Wages and salaries	21,602	19,699
Social security costs	1,837	1,744
Other pension costs	5,189	5,075
Total staff costs	28,628	26,518
Purchase of goods and services		
Registrar charges	2,668	2,701
Survey costs	543	659
Finance costs	17	11
Bad debts written off	1	–
Exchange losses/(gains)	2	7
Total purchase of goods and services	3,231	3,378
Other operating expenditure		
Accounting and information technology	1,136	2,729
Accommodation, maintenance and utilities	1,925	2,238
Personnel and training	96	78
Travel, subsistence and hospitality	168	(5)
Printing, stationery and advertising	335	1,080
Legal costs	–	94
Other costs	6	34
	3,666	6,248
Non-cash items:		
(Profit)/loss on disposal of non-current assets	–	–
Auditors' remuneration and expenses	17	20
Notional charges	–	–
Intra-departmental notional charges		
Accommodation	671	651
IT Assist	813	936
Finance	452	510
HR	792	811
Corporate Services	270	275
	3,015	3,203
Total other operating expenditure	6,681	9,451
Depreciation and impairment charges		
Depreciation	242	109
Amortisation	1,262	1,456
Impairment of non-current assets	1	–
	1,505	1,565
Provision expense		
Amortisation	–	80
Written back in year	(47)	–
	(47)	80
Total	39,998	40,992

4. Income

Revenue from Contracts with Customers

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

				2021-22	2020-21
	Registration Services (GRO) £000	Central Survey Unit (CSU) £000	Statistical Research Activities £000	Total £000	Total £000
Income from NI Departments	86	1,162	12,564	13,812	11,738
Income from other NI Public Bodies	1,191	-	117	1,308	2,631
Income from other UK departments and Public Bodies	79	859	16	954	1,975
Income from external customers	1,823	15	1,267	3,105	1,467
	3,179	2,036	13,964	19,179	17,811

The income is reported based on the operating segments.

5. Property, plant and equipment

					2021-22
	Information technology	Plant and machinery	Furniture and fittings	Payments on account and assets under construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2021	707	29	580	135	1,451
Additions	52	–	–	33	85
Revaluation released to SoCNE	(2)	–	–	–	(2)
Reclassification	–	–	–	(138)	(138)
Indexation	(1)	1	11	–	11
At 31 March 2022	756	30	591	30	1,407
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2021	615	17	72	–	704
Charged in year	62	4	176	–	242
Revaluation released to SoCNE	(1)	–	–	–	(1)
Indexation	(1)	1	3	–	3
At 31 March 2022	675	22	251	–	948
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	81	8	340	30	459
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	92	12	508	135	747
Asset financing:					
Owned	81	8	340	30	459
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	81	8	340	30	459

The Agency does not hold any Land and Buildings. Information Technology and Plant & Machinery were revalued using indices supplied by the Office for National Statistics. Furniture and fittings were not revalued as considered immaterial.

5. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

	2020-21				
	Information Technology	Plant and Machinery	Furniture and Fittings	Assets under Construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2020	703	24	82	464	1,273
Additions	4	5	–	151	160
Reclassification	–	–	480	(480)	–
Indexation	–	–	18	–	18
At 31 March 2021	707	29	580	135	1,451
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2020	537	13	44	–	594
Charged in year	78	4	27	–	109
Indexation	–	–	1	–	1
At 31 March 2021	615	17	72	–	704
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	92	12	508	135	747
Carrying amount at 31 March 2020	166	11	38	464	679
Asset financing:					
Owned	92	12	508	135	747
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	92	12	508	135	747

6. Intangible assets

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

	2021-22			
	Software licences	Internally developed software and website	Externally developed software	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2021	293	6,601	6,208	13,102
Additions	–	495	511	1,006
Reclassification	–	–	138	138
Indexation	8	499	127	634
At 31 March 2022	301	7,595	6,984	14,880
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2021	211	3,897	5,467	9,575
Charged in year	17	941	304	1,262
Indexation	3	335	45	383
At 31 March 2022	231	5,173	5,816	11,220
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	70	2,422	1,168	3,660
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	82	2,704	741	3,527
Asset financing:				
Owned	69	2,423	1,168	3,660
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	69	2,423	1,168	3,660

6. Intangible assets (continued)

	2020-21			
	Licences	Internally Developed Software and Website	Externally Developed Software	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2020	252	5,740	5,960	11,952
Additions	40	789	234	1,063
Disposals	–	–	–	–
Indexation	1	72	14	87
At 31 March 2021	293	6,601	6,208	13,102
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2020	193	3,023	4,855	8,071
Charged in year	18	831	607	1,456
Indexation	–	43	5	48
At 31 March 2021	211	3,897	5,467	9,575
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	82	2,704	741	3,527
Carrying amount at 31 March 2020	59	2,717	1,105	3,881
Asset financing:				
Owned	82	2,704	741	3,527
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	82	2,704	741	3,527

7. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Balance at 1 April	214	244
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(16)	(30)
Balance at 31 March	198	214

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

198	214
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8. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	847	657
Other receivables	7	7
Prepayments and accrued income	4,125	3,414
VAT recoverable	27	62
	5,006	4,140

There are no amounts falling due after more than one year

9. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade payables	148	5
Accruals	2,870	5,512
	<u>3,018</u>	<u>5,517</u>

Accruals above include amounts relating to purchase of property, plant and equipment of £8,219 (2020-21: £Nil) and intangible assets of £5,886 (2020-21: £Nil).

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

10. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2021-22		2020-21
	Other £000	Total £000	Total £000
Balance at 1 April	125	125	45
Provided in year	–	–	80
Provisions written back	(47)	(47)	–
Provided utilised in year	(69)	(69)	–
Balance at 31 March	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>125</u>
	2021-22		2020-21
	Other £000	Total £000	Total £000
Not later than one year	–	–	80
Later than one year and not later than five years	9	9	45
Balance at 31 March	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>125</u>

Provisions closing balance at 2021-22 relates to potential legal costs relating to judicial reviews within General Register Office completed during 2021-22.

11. Capital commitments

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Property, plant and equipment	193	5
Intangible assets	–	966
Total	193	971

12. Commitment under leases

Operating leases

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

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Obligations under operating leases for the following periods comprise:		
Office equipment:		
Not later than one year	2	2
Later than one year and not later than five years	3	4
Later than five years	–	1
Total	5	7

13. Other Financial Commitments

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

	2021-22 £000	2020-21 £000
Not later than one year	3,810	5,420
Later than one year and not later than five years	10,947	10,966
Later than five years	2,520	2,520
Total	17,277	18,906

14. Financial Instruments

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

As a result of the nature of its activities and the way in which NISRA is financed, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non- public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with the Agency's expected purchase and usage requirements and the Agency is therefore exposed too little credit, liquidity or market risk.

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

Categories of financial instruments

The Agency's financial assets are classified as loans and receivables and comprise trade receivables and other current assets (Note 8) and cash and cash equivalents (Note 7). The Agency's financial liabilities comprise trade payables and other current liabilities (Note 9). These financial assets and liabilities are held at cost which approximates to fair value because of their short maturities.

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash and demand deposits with banks. As at 31 March 2022, the carrying value of cash at bank approximates its fair value due to its short term nature.

15. Contingent Liabilities

The Court of Appeal (CoA) judgment from 17 June 2019 (PSNI v Agnew) determined that claims for Holiday Pay shortfall can be taken back to 1998. However, the PSNI has appealed the CoA judgment to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court hearing was scheduled for June 2021 but this has subsequently been adjourned. The 2020-21 Holiday Pay provision has been estimated by NICS HR and covers the period from November 1998 to 31 March 2020. There are still some very significant elements of uncertainty around this estimate for a number of reasons:

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

16. Related party transactions

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

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

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

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

Public Prosecution Service
Queens University Belfast
Special EU Programmes Body
The Executive Office

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

17. Events after the Reporting Date

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

Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised the issue of these financial statements on 22 June 2022.



Siobhán Cunniff

GLOSSARY

Acronym	Details
AME	Annually Managed Expenditure
ARAC	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
BAIM	Business Area Information Manager
BSO	Business Services Organisation
CARE	Career Average Revalued Earnings
CETV	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CSU	Central Survey Unit
DAO	Dear Accounting Officer Letter
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit (in accounts)
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DoF	Department of Finance
DoF NISRA	NISRA branches located within DoF
DoH	Department of Health
EU	European Union
FOI	Freedom of Information
FReM	Financial Reporting Manual
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GRO	General Register Office
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
IA	Information Assurance
IAO	Information Asset Owner
IAS	International Accounting Standard
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
IT	Information Technology
MPMNI	Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NISRA DoF	NISRA branches located within DoF
NISRAnet	NISRA's intranet site
ONS	Office for National Statistics
ODP	Outcome Development Plan
PfG	Programme for Government
PRONI	Public Records of Northern Ireland
RAG	Red Amber Green Status (Risk Management)
SCS	Senior Civil Service

Acronym	Details
SIM	Support Information Manager
SLG	Senior Leadership Group
SRO	Senior Responsible Owner
TAP	Technical Assessment Panel
TEO	The Executive Office
UK	United Kingdom
UKSA	United Kingdom Statistics Authority
VAT	Value Added Tax
VES	Voluntary Exit Scheme