

# DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

## ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2024-25



Department of  
**Justice**

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An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Mánnystrie O tha Laa

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# **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2024-25 For the year ended 31 March 2025**

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under section 10(4) of the  
Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001  
by the Department of Finance  
on 4 July 2025



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## **PERFORMANCE REPORT**

### **OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Overview is to provide sufficient information to ensure that the remit and purpose of the Department is understood. The Overview includes:

- a statement from the Permanent Secretary providing his perspective on the performance of the Department over the period;
- a statement of the purpose and activities of the Department;
- the key issues and risks that could affect the Department in delivering its objectives; and
- a performance summary.

### **FOREWORD BY PERMANENT SECRETARY**

I am privileged to introduce the Annual Report and Accounts for 2024-25 for the Department of Justice (DoJ) following appointment as Permanent Secretary and Accounting Officer on 15 April 2024.

Since then I have had the opportunity to meet with a wide range of colleagues across the Department working in many different areas. I have been greatly impressed by the commitment and dedication of colleagues to the delivery of public services. Many of the Department's people work in front-line operational roles to support the administration of justice and helping keep people safe. Some of those roles have been particularly challenging due to the increased demands on the services while at the same time we continue to deal with the consequences of the Covid pandemic.

While seeking to address the additional demand for services, we have been managing budgetary challenges as well as a high number of vacancies. We have worked closely with NICS HR colleagues to address resourcing gaps and, where possible, putting in place arrangements where possible to target resourcing of business critical posts. I am very grateful to the continued commitment of all colleagues working within that challenging context who made such good progress against delivery of actions within the Department's 2024-25 Business Plan.

Publication of the Programme for Government in February 2025 was a significant milestone for the NI Executive and provides an important strategic framework for the work of Departments. It is evident that there are continuing challenges across society and much work to be done. I look forward to continuing to work with justice partners and wider stakeholders to continue to deliver high quality public services.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES**

#### **Statutory background**

DoJ has a range of devolved policing and justice functions as set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010, including the functions transferred from the Northern Ireland Office and the former Northern Ireland Court Service.

In addition to its statutory functions, the Department provides resources and a legislative framework for its Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), which collectively constitute most of the justice system in Northern Ireland.

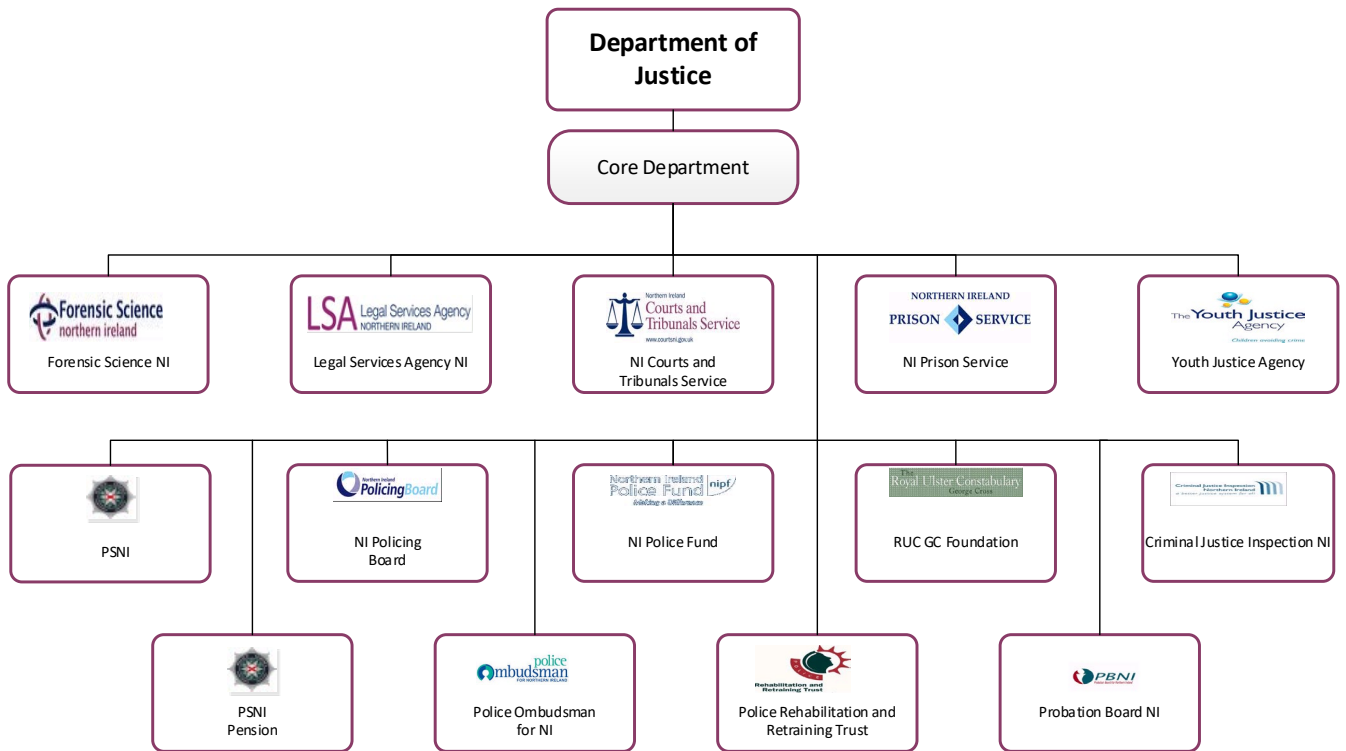
#### **Mission and values**

Our mission is *"to work in partnership to create a fair, just and safe community where we respect the law and each other"*. However, we recognise that we can only deliver effectively by working together with our delivery partners across the wider justice system, with other Government departments, and with the community and voluntary sector. In seeking to deliver our objectives, we sought to uphold the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) values of:

- Integrity, Honesty, Objectivity and Impartiality.

**DEPARTMENTAL BOUNDARY**

The overall structure of the Department for accounting purposes is outlined below:



The Accounts of the Department comprise a consolidation of the income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of the entities within the Departmental resource accounting boundary as follows (see Note 23 to the Accounts for full details):

**Core Department** - consisting of four Directorates: Access to Justice, Justice Delivery, Reducing Offending and Safer Communities.

**Executive Agencies**

- Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI);
- Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI);
- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS);
- Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS); and
- Youth Justice Agency (YJA).

**NDPBs and Pension Schemes**

- Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI);
- Northern Ireland Police Fund (NIPF);
- Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB);
- Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI);
- Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT);
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and PSNI Police Pensions;
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI); and
- RUC George Cross Foundation.

These organisations prepare separate annual reports and accounts that are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General, and links to their websites are contained in Annex 2.

The Northern Ireland Law Commission is also a NDPB of the Department of Justice but has been non-operational since April 2015 due to budgetary pressures.

## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The 2024-25 DoJ Business Plan translated the Minister's priorities into actions and assigned responsibility and timescales for delivery. The key focus of the Department for the financial year was to continue to deliver the mission of **“Working in partnership to create a fair, just and safe community where we respect the law and each other”** through four strategic themes:

- Support safe and resilient communities;
- Address harm and vulnerability;
- Challenge offending behaviours and support rehabilitation; and
- Deliver an effective justice system.

Under these four strategic themes, 18 actions and 42 deliverable outcomes were developed and assigned across the Department's organisational business areas. A summary of progress under each strategic theme is set out below.

### *Support safe and resilient communities*

Good progress has been made on disrupting criminality and ensuring safer communities in Northern Ireland. Two new organised crime offences were agreed and there was significant engagement with the UK Government in relation to two separate Bills which require legislative consent. New Codes of Practice (Northern Ireland Provisions of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023) were introduced and published in July 2024 and funding allocations under a new three-year Assets Recovery Community Scheme to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime were approved by the Minister on 17 April 2024. Progress on proposals for a new strategic approach for organised crime was subsumed into a wider project with the Strategic Investment Board appointed to assist with the development of options for a new strategic approach to safer communities.

Actions included in both the Child Criminal Exploitation Action Plan and under the three-year Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking (MSHT) Strategy 2024-2027 (published July 2024) address the development of a system wide response to tackling child exploitation. The Department is seeking to increase awareness and use of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in relation to child exploitation and is working with partners, including the PSNI, to consider how the NRM can be used across the UK. Changes have also been implemented to strengthen and better co-ordinate the multi-agency response to all forms of child criminal exploitation (CCE). The Department, alongside the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre (MSPEC) has commissioned research to investigate barriers to the identification of modern slavery and human trafficking among children in NI. Work was progressed with operational partners and Office of Legislative Counsel to finalise new serious organised crime provisions in legislation and with Home Office colleagues on the potential extension of a proposed new CCE offence and civil preventative orders to NI.

The Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) allocated £16m in 2024-25 to projects to tackle paramilitarism and arrangements are in place to ensure collaboration across projects and that they are working towards shared outcomes. On 5 September 2024, the Executive agreed to a two-year extension of EPPOC with a focus on embedding and mainstreaming projects. An expert Working Group established to consider possible changes to Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO) legislation and liaison with criminal justice partners continues. Draft instructions for a first tranche of new hate crime provisions were prepared for inclusion in a proposed Sentencing Bill.

The Department's commitment to developing a new Community Safety Strategy continues and work on a new strategic approach to Safer Communities, based on Trauma Informed and Public Health approaches, will continue into 2025-26. In line with the Department's commitment to the reduction and removal of interface structures through the Interfaces Programme, three interface security structures were removed during the year following community and statutory partner consultation.

### *Addressing harm and vulnerability*

The Department published a seven year Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (aimed at working in partnership to tackle domestic and sexual abuse by addressing the root causes, providing victims with protection and access to support, and holding individuals who are abusive to account) and associated three-year Action Plan which was published in September 2024.

## Departmental Business Plan (continued)

### *Addressing harm and vulnerability (continued)*

The Strategic Framework for Ending Violence Against Women And Girls was also published in September and there has been continuing collaboration with The Executive Office on implementation and to ensure consistent messaging and approach in relation to shared outcomes.

A Call for Views to help inform the Department on development of a new victim and witness strategy (to improve the experiences of victims and witnesses within the Criminal Justice System) was launched. Responses have been analysed and a draft paper for full consultation is in development. A one-year addendum Action Plan to the Victims and Witness strategy has been published. Work on the development of policy and legislative proposals is well advanced, with a view to launching a public consultation. Proposals for inclusion in a potential Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill are also in development.

Work continues within the Department to improve the law and procedures in serious sexual offences. Work to implement the Gillen Review continues in line with the Gillen Programme Delivery Plan was agreed with 78% of recommendations fully or partly completed (68% fully completed & 10% partially completed). A PSNI-led Power to Change (Active Bystander campaign) was launched in January 2025 and research on attrition in serious sexual offence cases is well advanced with a draft report currently being quality assured prior to issue.

The External Review of Supporting People at Risk Evolution (SPAR Evo) was published in May 2024. The report recognised the significant improvement in the support available to people living in prison who may be at risk of suicide and self-harm, as well as the joint working between NIPS and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSC). Along with the increasing prison population, which continues to increase, there has been a rise in people with mental health issues from 38% in April 2024 to 51% in March 2025. Recorded conditions among the population include behavioural problems, psychological conditions, ADHD, Dyslexia, learning disability, Autism, speech impairment, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), communication difficulty, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia and Tourette's Syndrome. Despite the growing complexity of the prison community, the number of individuals who self-harmed in prison reduced from 317 in 2023 to 280 in 2024. Effective joint working and the expansion of the Healthcare in Prison team to include Speech and Language Therapists at Maghaberry and Magilligan and Learning Disability nurses across all establishments is having a positive effect.

### *Challenge offending behaviours and support rehabilitation*

In line with Programme for Government commitments the Department continues to meet with senior officials across key Departments to explore methodology and content for an agreed approach to reducing offending and reoffending, contributing to delivering improved outcomes for those who engage with the justice system. Meetings have been held with Communities, Education, Health and Economy Departments. Discussions have been held on the use of an Innovation Lab (including Departmental roundtable discussions) as well as research on drivers to offending to inform the development of a new Strategy.

The Department is committed to the continued implementation of the Adult Restorative Justice Strategy and a Community Resolution Notice pilot launched on 8 April as the first step of an intended suite of restorative disposals for adults and a pilot restorative diversionary disposal planned as an alternative to court. An annual progress report under the Adult Restorative Justice Strategy was published in September and practice Standards and Accreditation Framework developed in consultation with key stakeholders and approved for formal launch in 2025. Draft legislation was prepared to transfer restorative justice functions to the Department of Justice.

The Department awarded a new Electronic Monitoring Contract in March 2025 following completion of a procurement exercise. Secondary legislation has progressed to reflect the new provider and transition to the new provider will commence on 1 September 2025. The Department was pleased to appoint Darrin Jones as the new Prisoner Ombudsman on 1 November 2024, a critical role in ensuring effective independent monitoring and complaints system for prisons that provides assurance that the prison environment and treatment of prisoners is appropriate. The Department has continued to support the Ombudsman's Office and, whilst some posts remain to be filled, and backlogs have been substantially reduced, they do remain above appropriate levels.

## Departmental Business Plan (continued)

### *Challenge offending behaviours and support rehabilitation (continued)*

Much work has been done by the Department, Agencies and partners to put in place arrangements for the care of children in a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment supported by a youth justice policy and legislative framework with a coherent approach to early intervention. As part of this work the criteria for Community Resolution Notices was extended by the PSNI in October 2024 and the YJA continues to engage with the PSNI to monitor trends. Significant work was undertaken by YJA and partners prior to commencement of a Children's Early Diversion Scheme Pilot in Armagh/ Banbridge/ Craigavon in January 2025. YJA continues to work with the Safeguarding Board NI (SBNI) and HSC Trusts through its representation on the SBNI Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) Committee to develop and share TIP. The Agency has also developed a TIP Implementation Plan to take forward findings from a recent self-assessment process, which was supported by Trauma Informed Oregon at Portland State University, to inform all aspects of YJA work and improve outcomes. Work on the TIP Implementation plan 2024-2027 is ongoing.

A joint funding model was established between the YJA and the Department of Health to support the delivery of a shared mental health and therapeutic care service across the Lakewood and Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) sites. A co-located YJA Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service pilot has now been established across all 5 area teams. YJA, together with partners, are beginning preparations for an evaluation of this service during the next business year. There is still no sustainable funding stream in place to fund this service in the medium-term, and it is hoped that this evaluation will support efforts to secure this.

Work has continued on implementation of the Strategic Framework for Youth Justice. A draft consultation document for a new single community order has been developed. The 2024-25 Workplan for a child-friendly youth court has been delivered with two key resources for children and families developed – 3D online youth court 'tours' and a video explaining what to expect when attending court. Final provisions in relation to children's bail, remand and custody were agreed by the Executive and the Justice Bill was introduced to the Assembly on 24 September. The Bill is now progressing through the Committee Stage, which is expected to last until early 2026.

### *Deliver an effective justice system*

A mixed-content Justice Bill (formerly referred to as Modernisation of Justice Bill) was introduced in the Assembly and the Executive approved the policy content of a draft Sentencing Bill. Progress has also been made on updates to the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 and subordinate legislation and Codes of Practice. Work to inform preparation and development of subordinate legislation is on track. A consultation on draft PACE Codes closed in October 2024 and an analysis of the responses has been completed. Revised draft Codes have been prepared. The management of the NI Appropriate Adult Scheme (NIAAS) continues, with a new contract in place from December 2024.

Progress continues to be made across all Speeding Up Justice workstreams to support the continued modernisation and transformation of the Civil, Family and Criminal Justice Systems to maximise benefits for citizens. A draft staged implementation plan has been agreed by the Criminal Justice Board and will be further developed as the pace of delivery is accelerated, supported by a governance reset. Finalisation of an implementation plan will commence the prohibition of cross examination provisions in the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act and scoping phase to develop proposals to enable greater transparency in family courts.

Significant progress has been made in relation to improved access to justice. Following assessment of the wide-ranging responses to a call for evidence, development of an Access to Justice Strategy has been incorporated into the Enabling Access to Justice (EAJ) Reform Programme launched in December 2024. Significant progress has also been made against actions to ensure that legal aid frameworks are fit for purpose and comply with the relevant statutory criteria to support citizen's access to justice. This includes: Public consultation of proposed fee changes to civil, family and criminal legal aid frameworks launched in January 2025; Proposals for High Court bail fees to issue to stakeholders April 2025, with detailed delivery plan to roll out further transfer of taxation reform over next two years included in the EAJ Reform Programme; and Analysis of responses to a call for evidence which informed development of the EAJ Reform Programme launched by the Minister in December 2024.

## Departmental Business Plan (continued)

### *Deliver an effective justice system (continued)*

A Delivery Partner to support implement of the Themis Project to transform the NICTS was appointed in August 2024 and implementation continues. The Department commenced the development of a Strategic Asset Management Plan aligned to the NICTS Estate Strategy and work has commenced as planned, with additional data captured throughout the year and a first analysis of estate assets undertaken.

CJINI published their report on YJA's community interventions in September 2024. An Action Plan has been developed to address the report's five strategic and five operational recommendations and work has commenced on implementation. Two of the strategic recommendations have been completed and actions to implement the remaining report recommendations has been ongoing.

The NIPS made substantial progress in delivering the third and final year of its Prisons 25 by 25 continuous improvement programme. This was an ambitious three-year programme, focusing on the delivery of rehabilitation through: Our People, Our Services, Our Infrastructure, Our Partnerships and Our Contribution. It is commendable that the organisation achieved 74% of the 237 milestones in year, not least given the highly challenging operating context within which it works with many more prisoners than in recent years, many of whom have unmet health needs such as poor mental health and addictions. Key achievements during the last year include the approval secured to increase prison officer numbers by 75; launch of a new recruitment campaign and selection/training programme; and completion of the first bespoke NIPS staff survey, analysis of the results and development of an Action Plan in conjunction with staff and recognised trade unions. One of the many highlights of last year include two exceptionally positive reports by CJINI on Hydebank Wood Secure College and Women's Prison. Both facilities for young male offenders and the women's prison received top marks – a first for a prison in Northern Ireland. This achievement was the culmination of many years of hard work by the Prison Service and its partner agencies, acknowledging that just over ten years ago, it was described by inspectors as a failing prison – but today, is a model of excellence and good practice.

The Department continues to raise awareness of sustainability through promoting the benefits of good housekeeping and of reducing single use plastic, through staff and end-user engagement and education programmes. The staff awareness programme continues with a calendar of articles and events in place. The Estates and Sustainability hub on the Department's Intranet remains the central source of information and is prominently displayed on the Home Page.

In line with Ministerial targets, the Department committed to achieving an efficient and effective system for the issue of Access NI disclosure certificates. This has been achieved with the average turnaround of 3 days for Enhanced checks and all Ministerial targets being met.

The Department, through FSNI, continues to maximise opportunities for collaboration and partnership working in Forensic Science Collaboration continued with partners in England, Scotland and Ireland with joint training events, peer review support, method sharing and where required, operational support. Partnership with local universities extended through delivering lectures and engaging with research projects which focus on innovation as well as assessing "value".

The Department achieved its commitment to maximise efficiency and utilise resources for maximum effectiveness and reduce the risk of overspend. This was achieved through a combination of additional funding received in Monitoring Rounds and strong financial management across Department's business areas, ensuring that the Department reported a non-ringfenced underspend of £2.9m (0.22%) in 2024-25. In particular, close scrutiny of the budget was maintained throughout the year in order to redirect any easements to priority areas. This ensured that the Department maximised the available budget in 2024-25 and helped to manage pressures going into 2025-26.

The Department's People Plan reflects and complements NICS-wide initiatives setting priorities for supporting our people. A number of initiatives were delivered to support our people including Mentoring Circles for Executive Officer grade staff which was well received, and a programme of development sessions for Staff Officers with positive feedback to date.

## Departmental Business Plan (continued)

### Forward look

Publication of the Programme for Government in February 2025 sets out the Executive's priorities for the remainder of this Assembly mandate. While the DoJ will contribute to a number of priorities the main focus of the Department will be the Safer Communities priority.

Implementation of the legislation programme approved by the Minister will remain a key priority for the remainder for this current mandate. It is still the Minister's intention, subject to Executive approval, to introduce a Sentencing Reform Bill and a Hate Crime (and Victims) Bill.

The Department was pleased to secure funding for two areas of transformation within the Department – Speeding up Justice and Electronic Monitoring – and while these are two areas for reform, there will be a focus across the Department on transforming the delivery of services.

Speeding Up Justice to tackle avoidable delays in the justice system will be a particular priority as well as reforming legal aid. The Minister has also indicated her commitment to begin recovery of sufficient number of police officers in line with an approved PSNI business case, as well as a continued focus on tackling domestic and sexual abuse, ensuring support for victims of crime and continuing work to develop a strategy on reducing offending, and seeking to address the increasing prison population which also creates challenges for delivery of probation services.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

**Performance against Business Plan for 2024-25**

<b>Strategic Theme 1: Support Safe and Resilient Communities</b>			
<p>We will work with our partners to help build safe and resilient communities and reduce the vulnerability of individuals to becoming a potential victim and/or offender. We will empower communities, businesses and individuals to protect themselves from becoming a victim of crime and will work within a multi-agency partnership model to support responses to cross-cutting community safety issues and will address criminality and coercive control within our communities through proactive collaboration and local problem solving.</p>			
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>What we will deliver during 2024-25</b>	<b>Position at 31 March 2025</b>
1.1	Engage with our partners to reduce the vulnerability of businesses and individuals from the harm caused by crime	<p>Develop new organised crime offences and other enhanced measures aimed at disrupting criminality.</p> <p>Introduce relevant Northern Ireland provisions of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023, and associated Codes of Practice.</p> <p>Make allocations under a new three-year Assets Recovery Community Scheme to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime.</p> <p>Develop an Addendum Workplan to the existing Organised Crime Strategy for 2024/25 and consider and agree with stakeholders the strategic approach to organised crime for its next iteration.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
		<p>Support the co-ordination of the multi-agency implementation of a series of recommendations from the Child Criminal Exploitation Task and Finish Group including delivery of two specific recommendations for DoJ.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
		<p>Continue to work with partners to deliver the Executive’s Programme to create safer communities, resilient to paramilitarism, criminality and coercive control.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
1.2	To engage with our partners to help build safe and resilient communities, improve community relations and tackle paramilitary activity.	<p>Complete and publish analysis of ASB legislation consultation responses.</p> <p>Development of foundational hate crime provisions for inclusion in appropriate legislation.</p> <p>Complete desk-based research component to inform new Community Safety Strategy</p> <p>Commission Community Safety Network inputs to new Community Safety Strategy and convene structured workshop discussion.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
		<p>Continue to progress the reduction and removal of interface security structures.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>

<b>Strategic Theme 1: Support Safe and Resilient Communities</b>			
<p>We will work with our partners to help build safe and resilient communities and reduce the vulnerability of individuals to becoming a potential victim and/or offender. We will empower communities, businesses and individuals to protect themselves from becoming a victim of crime and will work within a multi-agency partnership model to support responses to cross-cutting community safety issues and will address criminality and coercive control within our communities through proactive collaboration and local problem solving.</p>			
Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
1.3	To carry out a review of the legislative framework for the control of firearms	<p>Build on engagement with PSNI and NIO to finalise a pre-consultation paper to support wider stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Engage with key stakeholders to inform a consultation on proposed changes to the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004.</p>	<p><b>Not Achieved</b></p> <p>A review, as originally envisaged, was not achieved in the proposed timeframe due to staffing constraints. It is proposed that a more practical approach is developed in the short-medium term.</p>

<b>Strategic Theme 2: Address Harm and Vulnerability</b>			
<p>We will work partners to provide early stage diversionary approaches to address issues that contribute to offending behaviours. We will provide practical support to victims and develop policies and legislation to protect those most vulnerable in our society.</p>			
Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
2.1	To work in partnership to tackle domestic and sexual abuse by addressing the root causes, providing victims with protection and access to support; and holding individuals who are abusive to account.	Publish a new cross-Executive Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (which includes a Partnership and a Support pillar) and associated Multi-Year Action Plan.	<b>Achieved</b>
		Support the development and implementation of the Executive Office led strategy on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.	<b>Achieved</b>
2.2	To work in partnership to improve the experiences of victims and witnesses within the criminal justice system.	<p>Publish a 1-year addendum to the Victim and Witness Strategy 2021-2024</p> <p>Commence development of a new Victim and Witness Strategy 2025-2030</p> <p>Develop draft strategy for consultation</p>	<b>Achieved</b>

<b>Strategic Theme 2: Address Harm and Vulnerability</b> We will work partners to provide early stage diversionary approaches to address issues that contribute to offending behaviours. We will provide practical support to victims and develop policies and legislation to protect those most vulnerable in our society.			
Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
		Develop and consult on proposals for a statutory Commissioner for Victims of Crime;  Develop and consult on proposals to enhance the protection of victim data within disclosure procedures;  Develop and consult on proposals to provide clarity on pre-trial third-party representation for victims.  Commence development of final legislative proposals for consideration by the Minister, Justice Committee and Executive.	<b>Achieved</b>
2.2	To work in partnership to improve the experiences of victims and witnesses within the criminal justice system.	Develop and publish a Delivery Plan setting out an agreed vision, objectives and milestones for delivery for agreed Gillen Review recommendations.  Continued implementation of prioritised recommendations under the Gillen Review - including:  Work in partnership with PSNI and The Executive Office to deliver strategic communications aimed at reducing unacceptable behaviour, sexual offending and gender-based violence (Bystander campaign).  Deliver an interim report on the extent and causes of attrition in serious sexual offences.	<b>Achieved</b>
2.3	To work with partners to support improved health (including mental health) within the justice system to maintain the safety and wellbeing of people in our care.	Subject to the availability of funding, engagement with partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors to develop and implement actions aimed at improving health outcomes for those in contact with the criminal justice system including the development of a refreshed 2-year action plan to implement the strategic vision as set out in the Improving Health within Criminal Justice Strategy.	<b>Not Achieved</b>  It was not possible to progress development of a refreshed action plan due to lack of resources in the Department of Health.  A report detailing progress made in the area of health in justice as a result of the three year Improving Health within Criminal Justice Action Plan was well advanced by end March 2025.

**Strategic Theme 3: Challenge Offending Behaviours and Support Rehabilitation**

We will work with people who offend to challenge their behaviours and support them to become active and responsible citizens. Working with our partners we will promote rehabilitation; and when a custodial sentence is imposed out focus will be on resettlement leading to integration back into society.

Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
3.1	To improve the outcomes for those in contact with the justice system by enhancing opportunities to address the needs of individuals, helping them address the root cause of their offending behaviour and reduce the rate of offending.	Advice to Minister and, as appropriate: draft an Executive Paper and establish a Cross Governmental Strategy Development Group	<b>Achieved</b>
		Delivery of medium-term (years 2-3) actions in Adult Strategy Action Plan, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of a restorative Community Resolution Notice pilot;</li> <li>• Publication of an Annual Progress Report;</li> <li>• Development of Training Standards Framework;</li> <li>• Development of an agreed accreditation process; and</li> <li>• Development of updated provisions to transfer RJ legislative functions from SoS to DoJ, for inclusion in the Modernisation of Justice Bill at Consideration Stage.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
		Award new Electronic Monitoring contract and 'go live'.	<b>Achieved</b>
3.2	To provide the mechanisms to support an effective independent monitoring and complaints system for prisons that provides assurance that the prison environment and treatment of prisoners is appropriate.	Appoint a Prisoner Ombudsman  Support the office to ensure recovery of service delivery to appropriate levels.	<b>Achieved</b>

### Strategic Theme 3: Challenge Offending Behaviours and Support Rehabilitation

We will work with people who offend to challenge their behaviours and support them to become active and responsible citizens. Working with our partners we will promote rehabilitation; and when a custodial sentence is imposed our focus will be on resettlement leading to integration back into society.

Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
3.3	To put in place arrangements for the care of children in a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment supported by a youth justice policy and legislative framework with a coherent approach to early intervention.	Deliver with partners alternatives to children entering the formal justice system including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with PSNI to further expand, within available resources, the use of Community Resolution Notices where appropriate; and</li> <li>Working with PSNI and PPS to develop and test a new diversionary disposal that doesn't attract a criminal record.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
		Develop and deliver appropriate social, mental health and therapeutic supports including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with SBNI and HSC Trusts on developing and sharing trauma-informed practice;</li> <li>Embed the joint Acorn mental health and therapeutic service across Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre and Lakewood Regional Secure Care Centre; and</li> <li>Deliver the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) YJA co-located mental health pilot and work with Health &amp; Social Care (HSC) Trusts to seek sustainable funding to roll out the model across all five YJA area teams.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
		Focus on those actions which are to be delivered in the medium-term (i.e. within 2-3 years of publication).  A public consultation on a new single community order for children; and  Implementation of measures aimed at improving the youth court experience for children and parents/carers.	<b>Achieved</b>
		Final draft provisions on children's bail, remand and custody for inclusion in the Modernisation of Justice Bill.	<b>Achieved</b>

<b>Strategic Theme 4: Deliver an Effective Justice System</b> We will lead work to make our justice system faster and more effective and more importantly to serve the needs of those who engage with it. We will ensure appropriate access to justice for our citizens. We will also deliver a system, which support other court users in the early and proportionate resolution of civil and family proceedings. We will support and empower people working within the justice system to deliver effectively.			
Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
4.1	To have a primary legislative programme in place for the new Assembly mandate and support the progression of the legislation in Year 1 of the programme.	Introduction of the (Modernisation of) Justice Bill 2024.  Development of Sentencing Reform Bill 2025.	<b>Achieved</b>
4.2	To support the continued modernisation and transformation of the Civil, Family and Criminal Justice Systems to maximise benefits for citizens by enhancing accessibility and ensure the system is fairer, more proportionate and more responsive.	Through a collaborative approach across Criminal Justice Organisations deliver a work programme to drive changes through committal reform, out of court disposals, early engagement, remit of the Magistrates Court and digital.  During 2024-25, a scoping of individual projects will be completed and a staged implementation plan will be agreed.  Work will progress on agreed projects.	<b>Achieved</b>
		Finalise an implementation plan to commence the prohibition of cross examination provisions in the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act.  Commence scoping phase to develop proposals to enable greater transparency in family courts.	<b>Achieved</b>
		Develop and initiate a consultation on a draft framework for an Access to Justice Strategy.	<b>Achieved</b>
		Develop and publish a next stage Modernisation Delivery Plan.	<b>Partially Achieved</b>  Following an assessment of the responses to the call for evidence, an updated delivery plan is included in the Enabling Access to Justice reform programme launched by the Minister in December 2024. This sets out key deliverables to modernise civil and family justice.

<b>Strategic Theme 4: Deliver an Effective Justice System</b>			
We will lead work to make our justice system faster and more effective and more importantly to serve the needs of those who engage with it. We will ensure appropriate access to justice for our citizens. We will also deliver a system, which support other court users in the early and proportionate resolution of civil and family proceedings. We will support and empower people working within the justice system to deliver effectively.			
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>What we will deliver during 2024-25</b>	<b>Position at 31 March 2025</b>
4.2	To support the continued modernisation and transformation of the Civil, Family and Criminal Justice Systems to maximise benefits for citizens by enhancing accessibility and ensure the system is fairer, more proportionate and more responsive.	<p>Consideration of findings and recommendations arising from independent advisor-led fundamental review of criminal legal aid framework (report received August 2024).</p> <p>Commence a consultation on an initial set of proposals relating to High Court bail applications to bring legal aid expenditure, which is currently taxed by the Taxing Master, under the purview of the Departmental Accounting Officer, with the aim of improving accountability and transparency for this expenditure.</p> <p>Issue a call for evidence to inform a Foundational Review of Civil Legal Services.</p> <p>Complete a Foundational Review of Civil Legal Services, producing a report that sets out potential reform options with the potential to enhance access to justice and to improve value for money.</p> <p>Engage with the Office of the Legislative Counsel on primary legislative amendments relating to the statutory charge and to taxation reform.</p> <p>Review LSA findings of fraud and error pilot and consider next steps for a statutory registration scheme.</p> <p>Represent the Department’s interests in legal challenges including judicial reviews and appeals to the Taxing Master.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
4.3	To support the effective operation of devolved tribunals in Northern Ireland for which the Department has responsibility.	<p>Facilitate the McCloud remedy options exercise for members of the devolved judiciary.</p> <p>Address outstanding McCloud litigation relating to injury to feelings caused by the implementation of the 2015 pension scheme reforms.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
		<p>Progress policy in relation to pay, pensions and conditions of appointment of the devolved judiciary.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
4.4	To develop improved court, tribunal and enforcement services that meet the needs of our stakeholders.	<p>Appoint a Delivery Partner to support the Themis Project.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>

<b>Strategic Theme 4: Deliver an Effective Justice System</b> We will lead work to make our justice system faster and more effective and more importantly to serve the needs of those who engage with it. We will ensure appropriate access to justice for our citizens. We will also deliver a system, which support other court users in the early and proportionate resolution of civil and family proceedings. We will support and empower people working within the justice system to deliver effectively.			
Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
4.4	To develop improved court, tribunal and enforcement services that meet the needs of our stakeholders.	Commence the development of a Strategic Asset Management Plan aligned to the NICTS Estate Strategy.	<b>Achieved</b>
4.5	To improve the effectiveness of operational delivery by NIPS/YJA and outcomes it achieves through the ongoing implementation of recommendations made by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland.	Implement agreed recommendations of 2024 Criminal Justice Inspection’s Northern Ireland’s inspection report on Youth Justice Services.	<b>Achieved</b>
4.6	Enhance the delivery of services to support NIPS staff and people in our care and further support operational prison staff to meet the challenges of working in a custodial environment.	Deliver the final year of Prisons 25 by 25.	<b>Partially Achieved</b> Year 3 of Prisons 25 by 25 contained a total of 237 milestones, of which 173 (73%) were complete and 64 (27%) were in progress as at 31 March 2025.
		Develop a strategic NIPS Operational Strategy for 2025-30.	<b>Not Achieved</b> Given current resource pressures and priorities, it has not been possible to develop a strategy for the period 2025-30. A one-year business plan for 2025-26 has been developed.  Development of a new corporate strategy and business plan will commence during the 2025-26 year, informed by the Programme for Government and Department of Justice Corporate Strategy.

<b>Strategic Theme 4: Deliver an Effective Justice System</b>			
We will lead work to make our justice system faster and more effective and more importantly to serve the needs of those who engage with it. We will ensure appropriate access to justice for our citizens. We will also deliver a system, which support other court users in the early and proportionate resolution of civil and family proceedings. We will support and empower people working within the justice system to deliver effectively.			
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>What we will deliver during 2024-25</b>	<b>Position at 31 March 2025</b>
4.6	Enhance the delivery of services to support NIPS staff and people in our care and further support operational prison staff to meet the challenges of working in a custodial environment.	<p>Complete an independent review of the current NIPS Prisoner Development Model.</p> <p>Develop an implementation plan to take forward associated recommendations.</p>	<p><b>Partially Achieved</b></p> <p>The project is behind schedule due to a delay in the 2024-25 budget allocation. Specifications are now being finalised for procurement approval, with the aim of securing providers in October.</p> <p>Revised timescales have been set for the completion of the review, including recommendations for implementation, by March 2026.</p>
4.7	To support the effective delivery of Justice through effective scientific support services, promote sustainability, budget management, staff development, ICT, support services and disclosure certificates.	Continue to raise awareness from a sustainability perspective, of the benefits of good housekeeping and of reducing single use plastic, through staff and end-user engagement and education programmes across the DoJ.	<b>Achieved</b>
		Maximise efficiency and utilise resources for maximum effectiveness and reduce risk of overspend.	<b>Achieved</b>
		<p>A People Plan setting priorities for supporting our people that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establishing mentoring circles for Executive Officer staff; and</li> <li>developing a programme of ‘Connect’ sessions for Staff Officer staff.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
		In line with Ministerial targets to provide an efficient and effective system for the issue of AccessNI disclosure certificates.	<b>Achieved</b>

**Strategic Theme 4: Deliver an Effective Justice System**

We will lead work to make our justice system faster and more effective and more importantly to serve the needs of those who engage with it. We will ensure appropriate access to justice for our citizens. We will also deliver a system, which support other court users in the early and proportionate resolution of civil and family proceedings. We will support and empower people working within the justice system to deliver effectively.

Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
4.7	To support the effective delivery of Justice through effective scientific support services, promote sustainability, budget management, staff development, ICT, support services and disclosure certificates.	<p>Complete service delivery projects and take forward recommendations in Fingerprint Enhancement and Firearms services.</p> <p>Develop a new funding model for FSNI for the 2025-26 financial year.</p>	<p><b>Partially Achieved</b></p> <p>Service Delivery Projects were progressed and reported to the Forensic Services Programme Board. A meeting to discuss and agree on proposals to change the Service Delivery Model for Fingerprint Identification services (currently provided by both FSNI and PSNI) will be held June 2025.</p> <p>A Business case to support a change to the current funding model for FSNI has been developed and discussions were held with Financial Services Division and Director of Safer Communities. A change to the funding model has been proposed to PSNI and will be further progressed early in 2025-26.</p>
		<p>Develop and submit full business case for new laboratory accommodation for Forensic Science NI (Project Atlas).</p> <p>Appoint the Integrated Supply Team (contractor).</p>	<p><b>Partially Achieved</b></p> <p>Due to the complex nature of the project, the issuing of the ITT was delayed until 14 November 2024. Significant level of clarification questions and bidder requests for additional time have pushed closure of ITT back to early April. Work has progressed on the FBC however it cannot be submitted until costs are known and verified. It is anticipated that contract will be awarded June 2025.</p>
		<p>Increase networking and collaborations with forensic service providers in UK &amp; Ireland.</p> <p>Further develop strategic partnerships with local universities.</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p>

<b>Strategic Theme 4: Deliver an Effective Justice System</b> We will lead work to make our justice system faster and more effective and more importantly to serve the needs of those who engage with it. We will ensure appropriate access to justice for our citizens. We will also deliver a system, which support other court users in the early and proportionate resolution of civil and family proceedings. We will support and empower people working within the justice system to deliver effectively.			
Ref	Action	What we will deliver during 2024-25	Position at 31 March 2025
4.8	To continue to enhance measures to identify and reduce error and fraud in the legal aid system.	To further reduce Official Error by 0.5%.  Assist legal aid practitioners in reducing practitioner fraud and error through guidance and training.	<b>Not Achieved</b>  The 2024 Official Error rate was estimated at 6.7%. This compares with the 2023 estimate of 4.0% (the lowest rate since testing began). While this equates to a 2.7 percentage point increase since 2023, it remains significantly below the baseline rate recorded in 2020 (14.9%).  The 2024 Practitioner Fraud and Error rate was estimated at 5.1%, equating to a reduction of 1.4 percentage points from 2023. To support in the reduction of the error rate, the Agency issued a Dashboard to the profession in February 2025 which outlined practitioner fraud and error results at midyear, including analysis of error and recommendations for improvement.
4.9	To progress updates to the Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989 and subordinate legislation and Codes of Practice	Support for OLC to finalise draft amendments to the primary legislation on Live Links and biometrics (including provisions for a Biometrics Commissioner) and for Minister to progress Bill through the Assembly.	<b>Achieved</b>
4.9	To progress updates to the Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989 and subordinate legislation and Codes of Practice.	Support for NIO and Home Office to progress non-devolved aspects of biometrics legislative framework.  Progress drafting of biometrics subordinate legislation and update of PACE Code for consultation.  Consultation on draft updates to PACE Codes A to H and a new Code I before finalising drafts and laying before Assembly.  Reviewing and preparing advice to Minister on proposed updates and changes to PACE.  Continued management of the NI Appropriate Adult Scheme (NIAAS) and completion of tender process for new contract for delivery.	<b>Achieved</b>

## Risk Management

The Department's Management Board considers the Corporate Risk Register on a regular basis and risk management continued to focus on:

- active management of risk within the Department, including taking into account findings from recent audits of existing procedures and to ensure that risk management procedures reflect best practice guidelines;
- ensuring that risk management is understood and embedded as a management tool across the Department; and
- ensuring that risk management processes are sufficiently joined-up, both internally and externally with partners, and are being appropriately applied in Agencies and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs).

In November 2024 a risk management workshop was held comprising of representation from across the Department and Agencies. As a result the Risk Management Framework was updated and a new risk template proposed. These changes were accepted by the DoJ Departmental Board in December 2024.

The key risks identified and included in the Corporate Risk Register at year end included:

- **Budget** - Insufficient financial resources to effectively balance existing pressures with Departmental priorities, Statutory responsibilities and operational services;
- **Staff Capacity - level of staff resources within the Department** - Inability to attract, recruit and retain staff across all grades and specialisms exacerbated by an insufficient supply of staff to deliver business priorities;
- **Staff Capability – staff with necessary skills and competencies within the Department** - Inability to fully develop staff skills and inability to replace core knowledge, in a timely manner, to deliver business priorities;
- **Collaboration shared awareness of priorities with ALBs and other partner organisations** -; Stakeholders across the Justice System and other partner organisations and Departments are not aware of and therefore committed to Departmental priorities;
- **Business Continuity – ensuring continued operation of the work of the Department** - A threat such as pandemic (or another covid surge), fire, electricity outages, flood, cyber-attack or other causes of operational failure impact on critical infrastructure including buildings or line of business that impacts on ability to deliver services or information systems or records resulting breaches to the availability, accuracy or confidentiality of information, including personal information; and
- **Climate Change – supporting work towards achievement of Net Zero targets** - Inability to meet climate change statutory responsibility and inability to meet the financial costs of climate change/sustainability requirements.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

**Budgeting framework**

The Department of Finance (DoF) is responsible for management of the Northern Ireland Budget process in line with a budgetary framework set by HM Treasury. The total amount a department spends is referred to as the Total Managed Expenditure (TME), which is split into:

- Annually Managed Expenditure (AME); and
- Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL).

Treasury, and in turn DoF, do not set firm AME budgets. They are volatile or demand-led in a way that departments cannot control. The Department monitors AME forecasts closely and this facilitates reporting to DoF, who in turn report to Treasury.

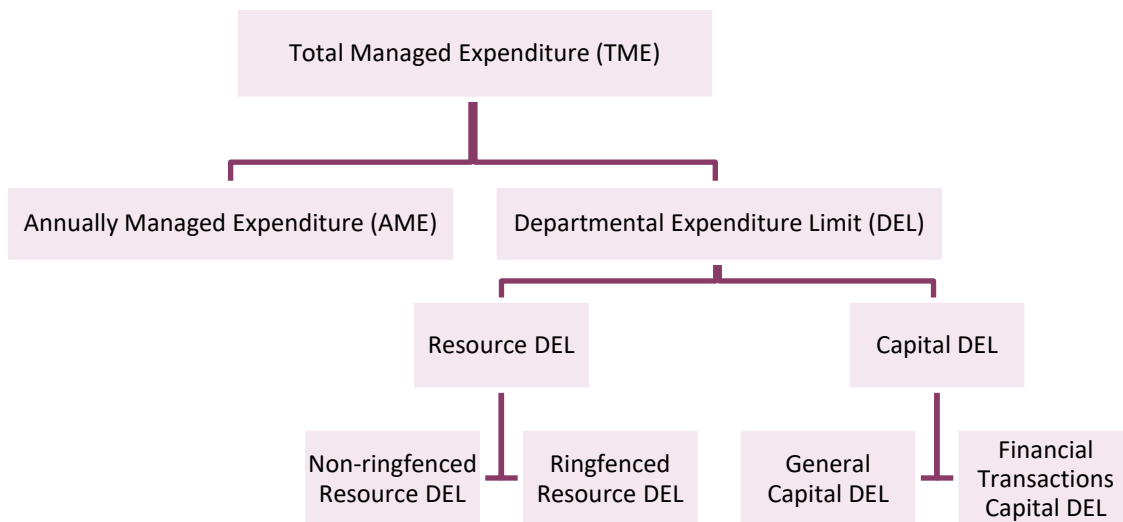
As DEL budgets are controllable, Treasury sets firm limits for DEL budgets for Whitehall departments and Devolved Administrations at each Spending Review. The NI Executive, based on advice from the Finance Minister, will in turn agree a local Budget that will set DEL controls for Executive departments.

DEL budgets are classified into resource and capital:

- Resource budgets are further split into non-ringfenced resource that pays for programme delivery and departmental running costs, and separately ringfenced resource that covers non-cash charges for depreciation and impairment of assets, and student loan impairment; and
- Capital DEL is split into ‘Financial Transactions Capital (FTC)’ which can only be used for loans or equity investments in private sector organisations; and ‘general’ Capital for spending on the purchase and/or acquisition of assets.

Further detail on the Budgeting Framework can be found in the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance published by Treasury: [Consolidated budgeting guidance 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118222/Consolidated_Budgeting_Guidance_2024_to_2025_-_GOV.UK.pdf).

**Budget structure**



**FINANCIAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)****Budgetary performance**

A summary of the Department's performance against Budgetary Control totals is set out in the table below along with the main reasons for the variances. Full details and analysis is contained in the section for Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply within the Accountability Report.

	2024-25		
	Outturn	Final Plan	Underspend/ (Overspend)
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Resource DEL</b>			
<i>Non-ringfenced (cash)</i>	1,334,143	1,337,078	2,935
<i>Ringfenced (non-cash)</i>	100,552	99,108	(1,444)
	<b>1,434,695</b>	<b>1,436,186</b>	<b>1,491</b>
<b>Capital DEL</b>			
<i>General Capital</i>	85,611	88,413	2,802
<b>Total DEL</b>	<b>1,520,306</b>	<b>1,524,599</b>	<b>4,293</b>
Resource AME	255,431	702,020	446,589
Capital AME	197	200	3
<b>Total AME</b>	<b>255,628</b>	<b>702,220</b>	<b>446,592</b>
<b>Total Managed Expenditure</b>	<b>1,775,934</b>	<b>2,226,819</b>	<b>450,885</b>

**Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (Resource DEL)***Non-ringfenced Resource DEL (cash)*

The non-ringfenced resource DEL underspend of £2.9m (0.22% of total budget) was mainly due to:

- Core Department - mainly due to staff vacancies across all Directorates, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking demand-led costs; delays in the project and set up costs for electronic monitoring, slippage in the Causeway project and lower than expected costs across a number of expenditure lines;
- PSNI - mainly due to higher receipts than anticipated from policing activities and an underspend on cash payment of provisions;
- Legal Services Agency NI - a managed overspend in relation to legal aid payments which offsets the above underspends; and
- Compensation Services - a managed overspend in relation to cash payment of provisions for high value cases settled which offsets the above underspends.

*Ringfenced Resource DEL (non-cash)*

This is a technical budget that can only be used for costs such as depreciation. The total Departmental overspend of £1.4m (1.46% of total budget) was mainly due to an overspend in PSNI due to impairment charges significantly higher than forecast; partly offset by lower depreciation than anticipated.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)****Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (Capital DEL)***General Capital DEL*

The Capital underspend of £2.8m (3.17% of total budget) was mainly due to:

- Core Department - underspends in relation to delays in Causeway data sharing systems procurement and the Castle Buildings accommodation project;
- FSNI - underspends mainly due to delays in procurement and the Project Atlas accommodation project; and
- PSNI - underspends mainly due to slippage in new estates projects; partly offset by lower receipts from sale of assets than expected.

**Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)**

The AME underspend of £446.6m (63.6% of total budget) comprises the following main components:

- PSNI £197.3m - underspend mainly due to changes in assumptions from Government Actuary's Department for PSNI pensions including interest on pension schemes and current service costs;
- Core Department £196.5m - underspend mainly in relation to Compensation Services due to the movement in the Statutory Discount Rate (which resulted in a reduction in the provision calculations since 2023-24) and an underspend in McCloud provisions not required in year; and
- NI Prison Service £41.5m - underspend relates mainly to potential legal cases which have not materialised.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)****Summary of expenditure 2020-21 to 2024-25**

The table below provides details of outturn for resource and capital expenditure in each DoJ organisation during the five most recent financial years.

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn (Restated*)	Outturn (Restated*)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Non-ringfenced Resource DEL</b>					
Core Department	64,016	62,526	47,575	53,351	44,724
Forensic Science NI	14,136	12,921	12,607	12,880	12,267
NI Courts and Tribunals Service	62,214	58,689	56,087	54,931	52,765
Legal Services Agency NI	127,148	119,731	109,536	103,858	81,759
NI Prison Service	136,707	126,584	121,928	107,713	111,968
Youth Justice Agency	14,543	14,386	14,218	14,593	14,607
Agencies total	354,748	332,311	314,376	293,975	273,366
PSNI (Main and Pensions)	870,119	819,775	771,333	788,782	765,873
NI Policing Board	5,687	6,052	6,004	6,151	5,464
Police Ombudsman	9,888	10,872	10,301	10,049	9,471
NI Police Fund	1,450	1,504	1,195	1,363	1,371
RUC George Cross Foundation	164	136	166	183	129
Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust	1,761	1,561	1,770	1,671	1,733
Probation Board NI	24,916	23,517	24,461	23,370	23,320
Criminal Justice Inspection NI	1,394	1,208	1,059	1,125	1,127
Executive NDPBs total	915,379	864,625	816,289	832,694	808,488
<b>Total Non-ringfenced Resource DEL</b>	<b>1,334,143</b>	<b>1,259,462</b>	<b>1,178,240</b>	<b>1,180,020</b>	<b>1,126,578</b>
<b>Total Ringfenced Resource DEL</b>	<b>100,552</b>	<b>99,115</b>	<b>85,995</b>	<b>80,321</b>	<b>77,675</b>
<b>Total Resource DEL</b>	<b>1,434,695</b>	<b>1,358,577</b>	<b>1,264,235</b>	<b>1,260,341</b>	<b>1,204,253</b>
<b>Capital DEL</b>					
PSNI	55,434	63,884	47,352	56,097	52,471
NI Prison Service	14,036	15,819	15,635	9,248	11,151
Other	16,141	8,452	13,236	7,109	8,048
<b>Total Capital DEL</b>	<b>85,611</b>	<b>88,155</b>	<b>76,223</b>	<b>72,454</b>	<b>71,670</b>
<b>Total Resource AME</b>	<b>255,431</b>	<b>486,375</b>	<b>300,464</b>	<b>305,542</b>	<b>336,239</b>
<b>Total Capital AME</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Resource and Capital - DEL and AME</b>	<b>1,775,934</b>	<b>1,933,284</b>	<b>1,641,608</b>	<b>1,638,337</b>	<b>1,612,162</b>

\* Long term expenditure information has been restated for 2021-22 and 2020-21 to show the position had Review of Financial Process, which was introduced in 2022-23, been in place at that time by eliminating intra-Departmental income and expenditure transactions in excess of £1 million.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)****Estimates framework**

The Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply (SOAS) is a key accountability statement that shows, in detail, how an entity has spent against their Supply Estimate. Supply is the monetary provision for resource and cash (drawn primarily from the Consolidated Fund), that the Assembly gives statutory authority for entities to utilise. The Estimate details Supply and is voted on by the Assembly at the start of the financial year and is then normally revised by a Supplementary Estimate at the end of the financial year. The final Estimate, normally the Spring Supplementary Estimate, forms the basis of the SOAS.

**Estimates performance**

The Estimates for the year to 31 March 2025 are contained in the Northern Ireland Budget (No.2) Act 2024 and Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2025. The related Acts, Bills and DoF publications containing detailed supporting information are available from The Stationery Office Limited - [www.tso.co.uk](http://www.tso.co.uk). The Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025 report against the Spring Supplementary Estimates and will be laid in the Assembly.

The table below summarises the Outturn and Estimate position:

Category of expenditure	2024-25		
	Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate saving/ (excess)
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Resource</b>			
Voted DEL	1,424,709	1,428,111	3,402
Non-Voted DEL	9,986	8,075	(1,911)
<b>Resource DEL</b>	<b>1,434,695</b>	<b>1,436,186</b>	<b>1,491</b>
Voted AME	255,804	702,235	446,431
Non-Voted AME	(373)	(215)	158
<b>Resource AME</b>	<b>255,431</b>	<b>702,020</b>	<b>446,589</b>
<b>Total Resource</b>	<b>1,690,126</b>	<b>2,138,206</b>	<b>448,080</b>
<b>Capital</b>			
Voted DEL	85,611	88,413	2,802
Voted AME	197	200	3
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>85,808</b>	<b>88,613</b>	<b>2,805</b>
<b>Total Budget and Non-Budget</b>	<b>1,775,934</b>	<b>2,226,819</b>	<b>450,885</b>

The main reasons for the variances were:

**Resource - Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)** - savings relate mainly to staff costs, non-staff costs, increased income; partly offset by additional spend in Legal Aid and Compensation payments in Resource DEL, and delays in procurement and capital accommodation projects.

**Resource - Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)** - the most significant savings relate to: £197.3m in PSNI mainly due to changes in assumptions from Government Actuary's Department for PSNI pensions including interest on pension schemes and current service costs; the Core Department with a £196.5m saving mainly in relation to an underspend in Compensation Services due to the movement in the Statutory Discount Rate (which resulted in a reduction in the provision calculations since 2023-24) and McCloud provisions not required in year; and NI Prison Service with a £41.5m saving mainly due to potential legal cases which have not materialised.

In addition, reasons for the variances are also outlined above in the Budgetary Performance section.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)****Accounts framework**

The Annual Report and Accounts ('the Accounts') provides a comprehensive view of the Department's financial position and performance. The requirement for all NICS departments to produce Accounts is set out in legislation (Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001), and every year departments must prepare a set of Accounts, have them audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office and lay them in the Assembly. The Accounts are prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) and in line with International Financial Reporting Standards.

**Accounts performance**

The Department's Net Expenditure for the three most recent financial years is outlined below:

Departmental Group	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
	£000	(Restated*) £000	(Restated**) £000
<b>Total operating income</b>	<b>(131,023)</b>	<b>(116,235)</b>	<b>(121,038)</b>
Staff costs	839,920	842,621	962,454
Purchase of goods and services	314,106	304,033	286,364
Depreciation and impairment charges	100,385	99,005	85,234
Provision expense	165,514	362,453	138,047
Grants	14,045	14,401	13,259
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>	<b>1,433,970</b>	<b>1,622,513</b>	<b>1,485,358</b>
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>	<b>1,302,947</b>	<b>1,506,278</b>	<b>1,364,320</b>
Finance income	(16)	(21)	(17)
Finance expense	388,843	341,033	201,806
<b>Net expenditure before taxation and notionals</b>	<b>1,691,774</b>	<b>1,847,290</b>	<b>1,566,109</b>
Corporation tax	53	40	16
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>1,691,827</b>	<b>1,847,330</b>	<b>1,566,125</b>
Audit notional costs	447	421	418
Other notional costs	8,536	7,745	8,213
<b>Total notional costs</b>	<b>8,983</b>	<b>8,166</b>	<b>8,631</b>
<b>Net expenditure including notionals</b>	<b>1,700,810</b>	<b>1,855,496</b>	<b>1,574,756</b>

\*2023-24 has been restated to include the elimination of a previously omitted intra-departmental transaction between PSNI Main and PSNI Pension Accounts.

\*\*2022-23 has been restated to reflect the merger of the Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme (NIJPS) into the main DoJ Accounts with effect from 1 April 2023

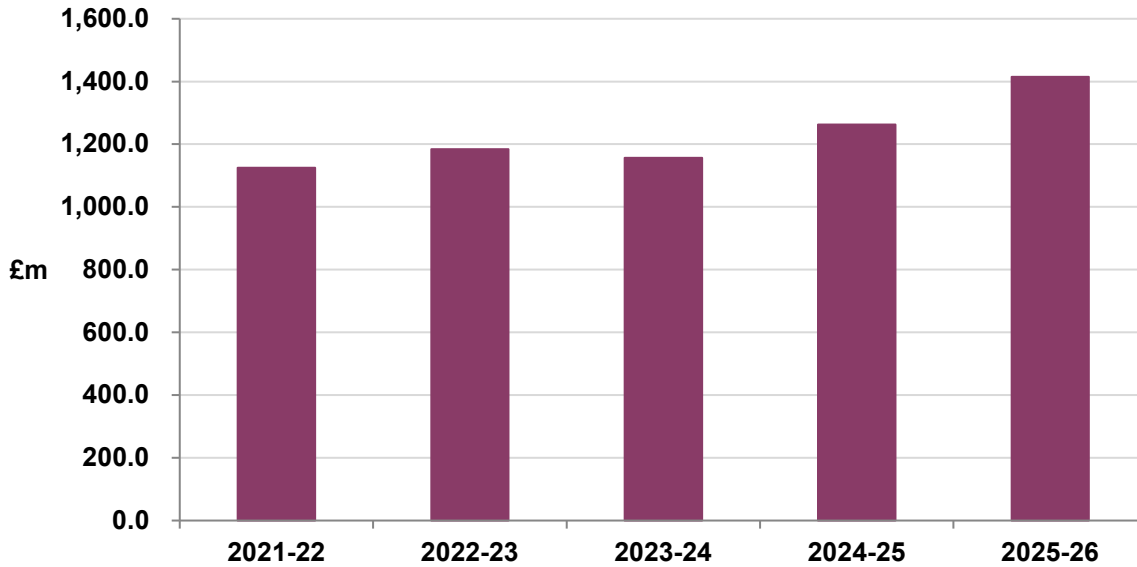
Further details of Income and Expenditure are contained in Notes 4, 5 and 6 to the Accounts.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)**

**Long term expenditure trends**

The chart below shows the movement in the Department of Justice opening baseline for non-ringfenced Resource DEL over the period 2021-22 to 2025-26.

**Chart 1: DoJ Non-Ringfenced Resource DEL opening baselines**



**2024-25 financial year**

On 25 April 2024, in a Written Ministerial Statement, the Finance Minister set out the 2024-25 budgets for Northern Ireland departments which were agreed by the Executive. The Written Ministerial Statement provided a non-ringfenced Resource DEL budget for the Department of £1,262.5m\*.

The Department of Justice’s non-ringfenced Resource DEL Budget was as follows:

- an opening baseline budget of £1,123.4m;
- an additional allocation of £95m;
- additional security funding for the PSNI of £31.2m; and
- funding for the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) of £12.8m (this is funding to be distributed across various departments and is not solely for the use of DoJ).

\*Totals may not add due to roundings

**FINANCIAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)****Long term expenditure trends (continued)****2025-26 financial year**

On 3 April 2025, in a Written Ministerial Statement, the Finance Minister set out the 2025-26 budgets for Northern Ireland departments which have been agreed by the Executive. The Written Ministerial Statement provided a non-ringfenced Resource DEL budget for the Department of £1,415.3m\*.

The Department of Justice's non-ringfenced Resource DEL Budget was as follows:

- an opening baseline budget of £1,218.4m;
- an additional allocation of £137.7m, including £1.9m for NI Consolidated Fund judicial salaries;
- transformation funding of £5.4m;
- additional security funding for the PSNI of £37.8m; and
- funding for the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) of £16m (this is funding to be distributed across various departments and is not solely for the use of DoJ).

\*Totals may not add due to roundings

**Capital investment priorities**

On 3 April 2025, in a Written Ministerial Statement, the Finance Minister set out a Capital DEL budget of £100m for the Department in 2025-26. This will allow the Department to fund statutory, inescapable and some high priority capital projects.

**Looking ahead - budgets beyond 2025-26**

Preparatory work for 2026-27 and beyond will be taken forward over the coming months and further strategic decisions will need to be made with the aim of having a budget in place as far in advance of the new financial year as possible.

**Payment of suppliers**

The Department's policy is to pay bills from all suppliers within 10 working days following receipt of a properly rendered invoice or in accordance with contractual conditions, whichever is the earlier. Details of the Department's compliance with Prompt Payment can be found at [NICS Prompt Payment 2024-25](#).

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
Total number of invoices paid	37,785	89,680	36,890	88,149
% of invoices paid within 10 workings days	95.0%	96.4%	92.7%	95.3%
% of invoices paid within 30 calendar days	98.2%	99.1%	97.6%	98.8%
Statutory penalties paid for late payments (£k)	-	-	-	-

**FINANCIAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)****Departmental auditor**

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. The C&AG is head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and reports her findings to the Assembly. The C&AG and her staff are wholly independent of the Department.

The total audit fee for the work performed by the staff of the C&AG during the reporting period was £749,442 (2023-24: £684,500) as detailed in the table below.

Departmental Group	Note	2024-25	2023-24
		£	£
<b>Statutory audits:</b>			
Core Department and Departmental Group		120,000	110,000
Agencies		326,800	310,400
Core Department and Agencies (notional charge)		446,800	420,400
NDPBs (hard charge)	5	294,350	264,100
<b>Total fee for statutory audits</b>		<b>741,150</b>	<b>684,500</b>
National Fraud Initiative audit (hard charge)	5	8,292	-
<b>Total audit fee</b>		<b>749,442</b>	<b>684,500</b>

Notional costs are charged for the statutory audit of the Core Department and its Agencies. NDPBs are hard charged for their statutory audit costs. Audit work related to the National Fraud Initiative is hard charged. Further details of the audit fees for agencies and NDPBs can be found in their individual accounts.

The C&AG may also undertake other statutory activities that are not related to the audit of the body's financial statements, such as Value for Money (VFM) reports. On 5 July 2024 the C&AG issued a VFM report on 'Continuous improvement arrangements in policing (2024)' and on 8 April 2025 a VFM report on 'PSNI Fleet Management'. The relevant bodies across the Department will take forward the necessary work in relation to the recommendations made.

**PERFORMANCE REPORT**


**Hugh Widdis**  
Accounting Officer

**1 July 2025**

## **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

The Accountability section of the Annual Report outlines how the Department meets its key accountability requirements to the Assembly and ensures best practice with corporate governance norms and codes. The three sub-sections within the Accountability Report are outlined below.

### **i Corporate Governance Report**

The purpose of this section is to explain the composition and organisation of the Department's governance structures and how they support the achievement of its objectives.

The Corporate Governance Report includes:

- Directors' Report;
- Non-Executive Board Members' Report;
- Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities; and
- Governance Statement.

### **ii Remuneration and Staff Report**

This section sets out the Department's remuneration policy for directors, reports on how that policy has been implemented and sets out the amounts awarded to directors as salary and pension entitlements.

In addition the report provides information relating to remuneration and staff that the Assembly and other users see as key to accountability.

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

This section brings together the key Assembly accountability documents within the Annual Report and Accounts. It comprises:

- Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply and supporting notes;
- Other Assembly accountability disclosures; and
- Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT**

### **DIRECTORS' REPORT**

#### **The Minister**

The Minister of Justice has overall political responsibility and accountability for all the Department's activities. Naomi Long MLA was appointed as Minister of Justice on 3 February 2024, as part of the return of the Northern Ireland Executive.

#### **The Permanent Secretary**

Hugh Widdis is the Permanent Secretary of the DoJ. He is the most senior civil servant in the Department and the Departmental Accounting Officer. The Permanent Secretary is also responsible for reviewing performance of the Non-Executive Board Members of the Departmental Board.

#### **Departmental Board**

The Board is chaired by the Permanent Secretary and exists to assist in the development of the Department's strategic plans and to assist the Permanent Secretary to meet his responsibilities. The Board is an important element of the Department's corporate governance arrangements, ensuring appropriate scrutiny and oversight mechanisms and through engagement with Non-Executive Board Members, independent perspectives are in place for all of the governance strands and for the Department's delivery of policies and plans. The Board meets approximately five times a year to consider progress on strategic and management issues. It also monitors performance against the draft Business Plan on a quarterly basis. The Board is supported by the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee.

Membership of the Board at 31 March 2025 was as shown below:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Member</b>
Permanent Secretary	Hugh Widdis - Chair
Director, Access to Justice	Sean Holland CBE
Director, Justice Delivery	Deborah Brown
Director, Reducing Offending	Beverley Wall
Director, Safer Communities	Mark Goodfellow
Director, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service	Glyn Capper
Non-Executive Board Member	Colm McKenna
Non-Executive Board Member	Catherine Dolliver

In their role as Board Members, Directors are responsible for the development of strategy and for supporting the delivery of that strategy. They are also the lead Information Asset Owners (IAOs) for all business areas falling within their area of responsibility including effectively managing the relationship with sponsored bodies under their Directorate.

#### **Business appointment rules**

The NICS Standards of Conduct Policy, (Section 8 and Annexes 4) sets out the rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments, employment or self-employment for staff after they leave the NI Civil Service, including procedures to make staff aware of these rules and provides that the Permanent Secretary of the Department is responsible for the effective operation of the Business Appointment Rules within their Department. Further detail is available in the [NICS Standards of Conduct Policy](#).

## Business appointment rules (continued)

In compliance with Business Appointment Rules (BAR), the Department is transparent in the advice given to individual applications for senior staff, including special advisers.

During 2024-25 there were 188 staff exits from the Civil Service within the Department of Justice, with no BAR applications from Senior Civil Servants.

## Register of interests

Declaring conflicts of interest is a standing agenda item at all meetings of the Departmental Board and the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee; no interests declared were deemed to conflict with Departmental business. In addition, an annual exercise is commissioned from all senior management, including Non-Executive Board Members, reminding them of their responsibilities in regard to declaring interests and requesting them to update their declaration of interests. A register of interests for Departmental Board members is available on the Department's website at [DoJ Board Register of Interests](#). No significant interests are currently held by Board members that may conflict with their management responsibilities.

## Complaints

The Department is committed to providing a high-quality service across all business areas. Key to demonstrating this commitment is a robust and effective complaints procedure which addresses any customer dissatisfaction fairly, comprehensively, and with a view to early resolution. The complaints procedure allows customers to report when they are unhappy with the quality of service provided, and receive redress where appropriate. The policy is available on the Department's website at [DoJ Complaints](#) and a policy procedure document to assist staff is in place. Complaints are dealt with by the relevant business area and are subject to investigation and response as appropriate within a specified timescale.

The Department's Complaints Officer monitors the progress of all complaints to ensure compliance with procedures, including adherence to the timescales contained within the policy, and to ensure the Department operates a transparent and consistent complaints system with all complaints being treated fairly. The Complaints Officer requests that the relevant business area dealing with a complaint documents any lessons learned, which will be collated and listed in bi-annual updates to the Departmental Management Board to note, and to take action where necessary. Any recommendations made by the Board based on the lessons learned are passed to the Complaints Officer to amend the Department's complaints procedure and communicated to staff. There were 131 (2023-24:119) complaints recorded for the Core Department (including Agencies) during 2024-25, 51 of which were fully upheld, with another 31 being partially upheld. In instances where issues have been noted and lessons learned, these are taken forward by the relevant business area with a view to improving service delivery and maximising quality.

Complaints are handled by the Department's Complaints Officer and can be made:

- in writing to: Department of Justice  
Complaints Officer - Governance Unit  
Corporate Engagement and Communications Division  
Room B5.16, 5th Floor  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast BT4 3SG;
- by telephone: 028 9052 3731; or
- by e-mail: [Governance.Unit@justice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Governance.Unit@justice-ni.gov.uk).

## Raising a Concern

The Department is committed to openness, probity and accountability and there are procedures in place to ensure that concerns about serious wrongdoing can be raised. The purpose of the Department's Raising a Concern Policy is to reassure staff that they can raise genuine concerns about potential wrongdoing or malpractice, in confidence, through a clear internal reporting process, without putting their position at risk. The policy also provides arrangements for anyone who is not a member of staff to raise concerns about the proper conduct of public business by the Department or any of its Agencies. The policy is available on the Department's website at [Raising a Concern](#).

A Register of Concerns is maintained at departmental level to ensure that individual cases are escalated as appropriate and to monitor the progression of enquiries. Summary details of any concerns raised under the Raising a Concern policy are reported to the Departmental Management Board and the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee. There were eight (2023-24: five) concerns raised and investigated by the Department and its Agencies during 2024-25.

## Fraud, anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The Department is committed to the values of probity and accountability that foster a positive organisational culture. It is also committed to the elimination of any fraud within the Department, to the rigorous investigation of any prima facie case, and, where fraud or other criminal acts are proven, to ensure that wrongdoers are dealt with appropriately. The Department will take proportionate steps to recover any assets lost as a result of fraud, corruption or theft. The Department has a zero-tolerance approach towards acts of bribery and corruption by staff, associated persons and organisations. In November 2024, the Department published news articles on the Departmental Intranet to promote International Fraud Awareness Week reminding staff that everyone has a crucial role to play in safeguarding public resources.

Managing the risk of fraud and bribery is seen by the Department in the context of managing a wider range of risks. The Department promotes an anti-fraud and anti-bribery culture by encouraging management to create conditions in which staff members have neither the motivation nor the opportunity to commit fraud or either offer or accept bribes. Professional staff are the first line of defence against these issues, supported by the establishment and maintenance of carefully designed and consistently operated procedures. Managers have prime responsibility for establishing internal control arrangements to minimise the risk of fraud, corruption and other irregularities within their business areas. Other than as outlined below for the Legal Services Agency, there were eight instances of actual, attempted or suspected fraud reported within the Department during 2024-25 (2023-24: two).

### *Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI)*

The Agency continues to seek opportunities to enhance its procedures in the area of prevention, detection and response to fraud with an emphasis upon procedures, controls and accountability from all staff in LSANI.

During the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, LSANI received 264 referrals (2023-24: 240) which were the subject of an initial fraud investigation.

All 264 cases were subject to a full fraud investigation (2023-24: 240) with 178 of these cases closed due to insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal investigation via the Police or the subject of the referral not being in receipt of Legal Aid at the time of investigation. The investigation into the remaining 86 cases is currently ongoing. 7 cases received prior to this reporting year remain under investigation which gives a current caseload of 93.

The categories under each heading in the tables below relate to the failure to fully declare the appropriate information or misrepresentation and relate to either the applicant or practitioner. The total referrals were as follows:

**Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI) (continued)**

<b>Number of cases received</b>	<b>Earnings</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Co-habiting</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>False Statement</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>264</b>
2023-24	91	46	19	1	7	56	20	<b>240</b>
2022-23	114	55	35	4	10	28	15	<b>261</b>
2021-22	175	53	28	12	18	33	19	<b>338</b>

Of the 93 cases outstanding at 31 March 2025, these are being investigated for evidence of criminality and are categorised as:

<b>Number of cases outstanding</b>	<b>Earnings</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Co-habiting</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>False Statement</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>93</b>
At 31 March 2024	31	10	3	-	4	20	4	<b>72</b>
At 31 March 2023	12	7	5	1	3	9	-	<b>37</b>
At 31 March 2022	28	10	1	1	5	11	9	<b>65</b>

**Corporate social responsibility**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an important aspect of the Department's business. The Department continues to build on our approach by:

- promoting and supporting the wellbeing of our staff;
- supporting and promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace;
- seeking to make a positive impact on the wider community through promoting volunteering activities; and
- promoting sustainability and environmental issues.

The Department has continued to promote staff wellbeing, diversity and inclusion by signposting staff to a bank of online resources. There is also a vast amount of information, links and resources available on several information hubs on the Department's Intranet site homepage, covering a variety of topics including mental and physical health and advice for line managers. The Department also publishes regularly a range of articles on the DoJ Intranet focussed on specific wellbeing topics including Menopause, Staff Welfare, Parenting and Fitness.

There has also been physical fundraising and in December 2024, for example, the Department arranged an appeal for Northern Ireland Hospice, to which staff responded positively. Staff were also encouraged to hold fundraising charity coffee mornings and events including quizzes and a "Santa Fun Run". Consideration of initiatives to promote CSR across the Department is a focus of the Department's Engagement and Communication Forum which is made up of representatives of each business area from across the Department. The Forum meets on a regular basis.

**Statutory equality and rural needs assessment obligations**

The Department is committed to complying with its statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Rural Needs (NI) Act 2016 in all that we do. The Department continues to implement its Equality Scheme to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. Details of any Rural Needs Impact Assessments are reported to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for publication in a Rural Needs Annual Monitoring report. Monitoring reports are available on the DAERA website - [Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Reports | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#).

## Sustainability reporting

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 sets a clear statutory target of net zero emissions by 2050 and places a number of duties on each NI Department, with DAERA identified as the lead Department in the Act. DAERA's Sustainability Reporting Guidance 2024-25 provides a suggested list of actions for government bodies until specific targets are developed for reporting purposes.

Within the DoJ, an Outline Sustainability Strategy and associated Action Plan was launched in Summer 2023. This sets out our commitment to sustainable practices and supports us in meeting our obligations under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 and in contributing to the first NI Climate Action Plan 2023-2027.

During 2024-25, a number of sustainability initiatives were progressed, which included:

The creation of a Climate Change Strategic Oversight Board which is chaired by the Director General of the NIPS who is also the Departmental Sustainability Champion. The Board comprises the Director of Justice Delivery, Director of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, with the PSNI represented by the Assistant Chief Officer for Strategic Planning and Transformation. The Board acts as a strategic oversight group for the Department's delivery of its obligations under the Climate Change (NI) Act 2022 and its contribution to the NI Climate Action Plan and the carbon budgets that sit under it. The Board also provides direction and support to the Core Department and its Agencies as their respective sustainability agendas are progressed through the delivery of the strategies of the Core Department, NICTS, NIPS and PSNI.

The Department's Asset Management Board continued to retain sustainability as a standing agenda item at its meeting; the Sustainability Working Group (a sub-group of the Asset Management Board) continued to meet throughout the year to progress the supporting Action Plan to the Department's outline Sustainability Strategy 2023. Work was also well advanced to develop an Asset Management Plan 2024-2029 which outlines actions for modernising the DoJ estate in keeping with the NICS Estates Strategy. The Asset Management Plan also outlines planned activities to make the estates more sustainable under the work streams of public buildings, energy and transport. It is also the intention to seek to progress initiatives that support the nature focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2023, a new Estates and Sustainability Hub was launched on the Department's Intranet containing 5 different sections: Outline Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action; Single Use Plastic; Estates; Recycling / Behavioural Change and a "What Can I Do To Help?" section. The hub was maintained during 2024-25 with key sustainability events promoted to staff. It is planned to refresh the hub during 2025-26 which will be informed by a Staff Survey.

Throughout the year the NIPS and the PSNI participated in a Department of Finance (DoF)-led Pilot of Hydrogen Fuel; the impact of the pilot exercise is being analysed and will inform further decisions regarding fleet replacement by both organisations.

The DoJ continues to be represented on and participate in the DAERA-led fora to progress the Climate Change (NI) Act 2022; and other NICS-wide fora on sustainability initiatives such as the NICS Fleet Working Group.

### ***Reducing Offending Directorate (ROD) - NI Prison Service (NIPS) and Youth Justice Agency (YJA)***

NIPS has continued to advance a broad range of initiatives to support their environmental and climate change commitments across its operations and supply chains. The organisation's long established focus on energy efficiency and reducing Green House Emissions (GHG) means they have already surpassed the 48% reduction target in net GHG emissions (1990 baseline) set within the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 by 2030.

The progression of Environmental and Climate change initiatives is co-ordinated by a small in-house estates team within NIPS and monitored through a Sustainability Steering Group. This early focus on sustainability has allowed NIPS to be seen as one of the leading lights within NI central government on reducing their carbon emissions and managing their broader response to sustainability.

Mechanisms are in place to monitor and manage a range of sustainability targets including carbon emissions, energy performance and waste reduction/recycling initiatives.

## Sustainability reporting (continued)

During 2024-25 further work was progressed to strengthen the resilience and improve energy performance through a number of plantroom / boiler houses and LED lighting upgrades across a number of sites. Building Energy Management systems (BEMS) are installed at all the sites to monitor and control room temperatures across the prison estate. A recent upgrade programme has seen BEMS refreshed in 3 of the 4 prison sites in recent years. A scheme to design and install a new BEMS across the largest site at Maghaberry is currently being progressed.

A solar farm was installed at Hydebank Secure College during 2024 and plans are being developed to introduce a Solar Farm at Maghaberry in the coming years. The schemes are designed to reduce the reliance on electricity from the power grid and support the ongoing reduction in GHG emissions.

Recycling activities occur across each of the NIPS sites, creating inmate activity and helping reduce levels of general waste. All Prisons have compactors, balers and other recycling equipment (recycling paper, plastics, cardboard, metal and wood). 30 prisoners are involved in the recycling activities at our largest prison. Recycled materials are segregated and collected separately helping reduce levels of general waste. Food Waste is segregated within Prisons and collected separately and put through an anaerobic digester whose gases are used to provide heat/electricity. General Waste is sent to a MRF and any remaining recyclables removed. These measures help to achieve recycling rates above 43%.

NIPS operates a range of Electric Vehicles (EVs) within its fleet. As part of Northern Ireland's continuing Climate Change journey, NIPS has also been exploring options to reduce the carbon emissions of their commercial vehicles. After consulting DfI and industry experts to examine the options that exist, the direction of travel for Electric Vehicles (EV), the new technologies under development and new sources of eco fuels entering the market, a trial of Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) has been successfully conducted. HVO offers a 90% reduction in vehicle CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. Following the successful completion of the trial a decision has been taken to continue to operate a number of prison escort vehicles using this eco fuel (with a commitment to transition the whole PECCS fleet if resources allow).

Biodiversity Action Plans have been produced for each prison site. NIPS continues to work with the NI Environment Agency, RSPB, Woodland Trust and conservation specialists to protect flora and fauna across the prison estate.

At Magilligan, a tree nursery project run by prisoners has created a native tree nursery which nurtures 40,000 native tree saplings (like Scots Pine, Oak, Chestnut and Birch) which are in short supply. The 'Justice for Woodlands' project is a joint venture between Magilligan Prison, the local Bineavenagh Landscape Partnership, the Woodland Trust and Causeway Coast and Glens Trust. Last year 7,000 of these trees were transferred from the Prison and planted in the local area, which included a scheme to prevent erosion on the banks of a local river. The Magilligan project is the first large scale tree nursery of its kind in Northern Ireland and one of only two in Ireland which does not rely on imported stock, reducing the likelihood of disease. As Northern Ireland is one of the least wooded countries in Europe, having a native tree nursery, produced from local seeds for local projects is an important step forward.

### ***Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS)***

As a large operational agency delivering front line and in person public services, the challenge for NICTS is to continue to deliver those services in a more sustainable way, across an ageing and eclectic estate. While working within budgetary constraints, it is recognised that continued investment in sustainability and energy efficiency measures should also allow NICTS to achieve significant utility cost savings.

Published in 2023, the NICTS Estate Strategy 'Making the Place for Justice' 2023, sets out the framework for evidence-based investment over the next decade and beyond; improving sustainability is one of the strategy's improvement aims. It is intended to publish a Sustainability Delivery Plan in early 2025-26 which will detail the specific actions being taken across the NICTS estate up to 2027 (i.e. to align with the life cycle of the current NI Carbon Budget).

## Sustainability reporting (continued)

### *Climate Change Mitigation*

NICTS aims to accelerate the transition to an energy efficient estate, and increase our sustainability interventions, in line with its 'Be Mean, Be Lean, Be Green' hierarchy. This approach is based on:

- reduce energy waste and aligning demand with operations;
- installing energy efficient and smart technology; and
- deploying renewable energy sources.

During 2024-25 the NICTS continued to implement automatic meter reading (AMR) technology and have installed smart meters on power and lighting circuits in each building to help identify areas of excessive or out of hours consumption. Work continues to progress the conversion of the NICTS estate to LED lighting, and design projects have been developed this year for both Newry and Dungannon courthouses.

### *Renewable Energy*

The solar photovoltaic (PV) installation at Laganside Courts continues to perform well, and in 2024-25, produced approximately 81,000 units of electricity, displacing approximately 18 tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

### *Climate Change Adaptation*

To strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change, the NICTS has significantly increased maintenance activity on roofs and rainwater goods, ensuring these are functioning correctly, and can be accessed quickly to undertake future repairs. At Ballymena Courthouse, the administration office had an enhanced comfort cooling systems installed to mitigate the impacts of high summer temperatures and improve internal conditions for staff.

### *Heritage and Environment*

NICTS operates an ageing property portfolio, with 10 of its properties being granted listed status. NICTS has completed Conservation Management Plans on three of its listed properties and aims to complete a further two plans during the 2025-26 period.

### *Water Consumption*

NICTS is progressing schemes that will reduce or eliminate the storage of cold water within our buildings; through conversion to By mains fed systems the NICTS will improve water quality and reduce unnecessary expenditure. During 2025-26, the newly installed automatic meter reading system will be used to target excessive, out of hours consumption and leaks.

### *Travel*

NICTS has worked with colleagues from Ordnance Survey (OSNI) to develop a mapping interface of the NICTS estate. This interface allows analyses of the travel distances and times from every postcode centroid in Northern Ireland to its associated court and tribunal venue. The Spatial NI map also illustrates the locations of other justice agencies, and in time this tool could be used to assess the carbon impact of travel associated with the despatch of court and tribunal business.

## **Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)**

Sustainability is one of the 10 key focus areas for the PSNI enshrined in its Horizon 2025 Strategy and the PSNI recognises that the Climate Change Act 2022 places new obligations on all public sector organisations. The PSNI is working with partners across the public sector to identify best practice and ensure that it plays its part in meeting Northern Ireland's carbon reduction targets. The PSNI is one of 40 public bodies in Northern Ireland which will report under the new Public Body Reporting Regulations, with the first report due in October 2025.

There are, undoubtedly challenges for the PSNI in delivering its frontline service alongside very significant improvements in carbon reduction and environmental performance within an estate with over 900 buildings, containing substantial variations in age, construction type and efficiency. Transport and geographical coverage are also an essential component of frontline service and fleet decarbonisation is an ongoing priority.

## Sustainability reporting (continued)

The PSNI's need to continue to develop its climate adaptation strategies was demonstrated this year as the impact of flooding and extreme weather events highlighted the need to plan for these events and adapt the PSNI's estate and approach to investment, improve its resilience while supporting the increased demands from the public at such times. During 2024-25, despite the financially challenging constraints, the PSNI:

- secured £1.97m for specified carbon reduction projects across the estate following a successful bid to the Department of the Economy 'Invest to Save' scheme;
- achieved a silver award in the Business in the Community Annual Sustainability Benchmarking Survey;
- increased solar PV electricity generation by 81.5%;
- installed 390 new Solar Photo Voltaic panels installed at Musgrave Street PSNI Station, Belfast, adding to existing PV at Lisburn, Woodburn and Lisnasharragh;
- reduced energy consumption by 1.7% across estate;
- reduced estate related carbon emissions by 134 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (0.8%);
- overall waste reduced by 2% and recycling increased by 9%;
- an unexpected, 18.6% increase in water use within the period runs counter to our annual reduction trend over the past decade, and is due to three significant and complex water leaks, the increase would have been 1.91% above previous baseline without the leaks;
- continued with the Building Energy Management System (BEMS) Upgrade Project to improve management and monitoring of energy use across the estate, replacing all unsupported Schneider BEMS systems with the EcoStruxure platform to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs;
- delivered a project to upgrade internal and external lighting fittings with Low Energy LED's and improved controls to reduce energy consumption and reduce carbon at three sites;
- developed capacity and capability within the Sustainability and Energy team to address new Public Body Reporting Regulations NI; and
- engaged across public sector, including training and reporting uplift to meet requirements of the Climate Change Act 2022.

### Governance

The PSNI's has published its Sustainability Strategy which aligns with the other main corporate strategies People, Fleet, Estates ICS. The Sustainability Delivery Group (SDG), chaired by a chief officer, reports annually to the Chief Constable and a report is published within the Chief Constable's Annual Report. The SDG monitors progress in relation to the organisation's Sustainability Strategy; the organisation manages environmental performance through an Environmental Management System (EMS) and estate related emissions reductions towards Net Zero are managed through both the EMS and our Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP). The CRP sets targets to reduce GHG emissions by 5.3% per year and Energy usage by 3.71%. Compliance is monitored and evaluated, via monthly and annual Energy, Waste & Water reports and through EMS meetings and IT systems. As part of the EMS a review of legislation is conducted annually to ensure the EMS is up to date with current regulation. EMS and CRP reports are submitted to the Sustainability Delivery Group.

### Environmental Management System

The Environmental Management System (EMS) proactively monitors and manages the PSNI's environmental impact. An EMS dashboard has been developed to report on the organisation's environmental performance within internal governance systems and to enhance accountability by publishing progress against its targets.

Progress has been made in key focus areas to reduce energy consumption and enhance carbon reduction however at a slower pace than anticipated. Barriers to rapid progress inevitably include some factors beyond PSNI's immediate control e.g. a complex estate and aging infrastructure leading to three major water leaks in one year and a very challenging fiscal context which constrained capital investment.

PSNI is working to minimise its impact on the environment by reducing emissions, reducing water consumption, quickly identifying and correcting water leaks, reducing waste and moving waste up the waste hierarchy wherever possible, making smarter procurement choices that consider finite resources and their impact on our natural world. The organisation operates a Carbon Reduction Plan, Water Efficiency Plan and began development of a new Energy Management Strategy in the period.

## Sustainability reporting (continued)

### *Environmental Performance and Emissions Reporting*

The PSNI published baseline environmental performance data in its 2021-22 Annual Report and continues to track annually trends in performance. Details are provided in the Chief Constable's Annual Report.

### *Water Efficiency Plan*

The PSNI Water Efficiency Plan was adopted in the last 12 months and introduced essential steps to reduce water consumption by improve efficiency and remove unnecessary usage. Improving performance in this area will bring significant environmental and financial benefits, achievement of the existing target to reduce overall water consumption to 95,000m<sup>3</sup> per annum would equate to a water saving of almost 24,500m<sup>3</sup> and a cost saving of approximately £86,000 compared to 2022-23 water costs. Although water use has increased over the last year, progress has been made in resolving some significant leaks due to aging infrastructure on the estate and going forward the Water Efficiency Plan will guide efforts to improve water management and leak detection.

### *Circular Economy Plan*

A Circular Economy Plan (CEP) has been drafted which sets out three principles:

1. Eliminate waste and pollution
2. Preserve resource to value by keeping products and materials in use
3. Improve natural systems

Embedding these principles throughout the 4 stages of Asset Management will help to break the link between economic activity and resource consumption by embedding a circular economic approach to managing and improving the PSNI's estate. This will help make a positive impact on the most significant global environmental sustainability challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, waste and pollution. Throughout the organisation there are many initiatives which relate to the reuse of materials, furniture, and technology. Work is underway to better collate this data as part of local sustainability action plans so that it can be measured and reported on in future years.

### *Reporting and Benchmarking*

The PSNI took part in the Business in the Community Benchmarking Survey across public and private sector organisations in Northern Ireland, achieving a silver award. The PSNI contributed to the development of the Public Body Reporting Online Portal through the Co Design process and contributed to numerous consultations in relation to implementation of the Public Body Reporting Regulations and implications of the Climate Change Act 2022.

The PSNI is a member of the Department of Justice Climate Change Strategic Oversight Group and Sustainability Group and works with a range of governmental and non-governmental partners locally and nationally to enhance our sustainability, identify best practice, contribute to new initiatives and improve our own processes.

## Health and safety

The Department has developed an effective management system based on the HSG65 management model issued by the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI). This system ensures that legislative requirements are met and relies on the commitment of management and staff at all levels. The Department also continues to work closely with the HSENI on related matters.

A programme of health and safety inspection audits across the core estate continues on a rolling basis. The aim of these audits is to ensure proactive monitoring of health and safety, and to inform management of legal requirements and best practice. The audits also provide valuable information that contributes to policy development. To complement the inspection programme, the Department continues to monitor performance through the health and safety management checklist that is used at both a local and corporate level to improve the management of health and safety within the Department.

Health and safety for home working stations is governed by the NICS Hybrid Working Policy, which requires employees to ensure that their home insurance policy covers home working arrangements. Work was ongoing within the DoJ during 2024-25 to review the NICS Hybrid Working Policy but that has not concluded. Employees are also required to complete two checklists: Display Screen Equipment and General Risk Assessment.

Basic health and safety training continues to be provided via e-learning including Fire Safety, Office Safety and Display Screen Equipment Awareness. Completion of this suite of courses is mandatory for all staff. Additional training for specialist roles and training needs identified by the risk assessment process will continue to be provided by the Centre for Applied Learning within the NICS. The Department also continues to promote the importance of reporting all accidents no matter how minor and an annual reminder is issued to staff. Accidents are investigated and appropriate control measures introduced to help avoid reoccurrence.

## Records Management

The DoJ continued to respond promptly to requests for information. During the 2024 calendar year in comparison to 2023, the DoJ Core experienced a 72% increase in FOIs received and a 50% increase in 'subject access requests' received under the Data Protection Act. Despite the increases the DoJ, including its five agencies, obtained overall compliance rates of 94% for Freedom of Information requests and 98% for subject access requests.

The DoJ Data Protection Officer (DPO) issued advice and guidance to assist staff with compliance on various aspects of the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). During this period, the DPO resolved twenty complaints (100% increase from last year) from members of the public in relation to how their personal data has been processed by the Department. In addition, the DPO advised on over 30 Data Protection Impact Assessments (a 50% increase with some applying to the Justice Bill and associated regulations which have developed at pace with the NI Assembly sitting).

The increase in legislation by the Department has required a significant increase in consultations with the Information Commissioner's Office. The DPO was also involved in providing advice in relation to 12 Information Sharing Agreements. Four personal data breaches were reported to Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) during this period, all of which were closed by the regulator with no further action against the Department.

DoJ records management continued to provide support to the DoJ Covid Inquiry team during the year, maintaining retention holds on relevant information, assisting with identification of documentation and facilitating responses. A project also commenced in 2005 to upgrade Content Manager in mid-2025 on DoJ and NIPS Fileplans and at this time User Acceptance Testing is well underway.

DoJ records management and information security provided advice and guidance to the Castle Buildings accommodation project, including retention advice to relevant business areas decanting, information security checks in several buildings and security advice.

During the last year, there was a 27% increase in approvals of Disposal Logs across the Department and five Agencies, it reflects a year on year increase from 30% the previous year. This is a result of current staff decants and moves, as well as an increased application of Retention and Disposal scheduling to legacy information on our Content Manager Fileplans.

## Records Management (continued)

The Departmental Information Manager worked extensively with a range of business areas across the Department and five Agencies to develop and streamline Retention and Disposal Schedules in preparation for the return of the NI Assembly. This new version 5 has updated retention decisions in line with DPA 2018 and Privacy Notices and was submitted to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) for agreement in 2024 and laying with the NI Assembly to take legal effect this year. In the meantime, work has commenced on version 6 of our Schedules.

During the year the Departmental Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was updated to reflect the various lessons learned from the Reasonable Worst Case Scenario Business Continuity test exercise - Risk to Gas and Electricity Supply. Details of the Civil Contingencies Group's (CCG) roles and infrastructure for management of a CCG incident were added. The updated BCP was approved by DoJ's Information Risk Owner's Council, circulated to interested parties and uploaded to the Departmental Intranet.

## Asset management

The Department's Asset Management Board has a work programme aimed at improving asset management practice, promoting collaboration and increasing efficiency. A Sustainability sub-group has been established to co-ordinate a joined-up approach within the Department to harness and build on much good work being done in the Agencies and ALBs.

The purpose of the Asset Management Board is to:

- ensure that property assets owned and funded by the Department are organised and configured in a strategic and sustainable fashion to support the Department's vision and Corporate Plan, delivery of Justice services, draft Programme for Government and the strategic objectives of the Executive's Asset Management Strategy;
- monitor lease agreements for rented properties to ensure value for money is achieved and in line with the Executive's Asset Management Strategy;
- on an annual basis, to oversee and support the commissioning and production of a Departmental Asset Management Plan;
- put in place a programme of work that identifies potential actions and projects which can enable the more effective and efficient operation of the property assets owned and/or funded by the Department and its ALBs, managing operational risk and achieving better justice outcomes;
- approve and oversee the delivery of an ongoing programme of cross departmental asset management activity aimed at improving the efficiency and utilisation of the Department's estate as well as embedding asset management best practice across the Department; and
- embed a future-focussed, whole-DoJ approach to asset management within the DoJ family through challenging the current thinking.

## NON-EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS' REPORT

### Departmental Audit and Risk Committee (DARC)

I was pleased to take up my role as Chair of the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee following my appointment as a Non-Executive Board member to the Departmental Management Board in August 2024. I am strongly supported by my Non-Executive colleague Catherine Dolliver as Deputy Chair and also by Brigitte Worth and Andrew Scott, two Independent Committee Members.

The DARC met four times over the course of this financial year. The DARC welcomed the unqualified audit opinion in July 2024 for the Department's Accounts for 2023-24 and continued to be diligent in reviewing the Department's approach to risk management and financial controls. I would like to thank all attendees for their valuable contributions to meetings over the course of the year.

### Risk Management

The Departmental Management Board has continued to follow the principles of the DoJ Risk Management Framework to ensure effective risk management arrangements are in place and enhance risk management across the Department. The Board regularly reviewed individual risks listed on the Corporate Risk Register. As a result of a Risk Management Workshop, the format of the Risk Register was reviewed and updated and a new format was recommended. The workshop also recommended the removal of the Cost of Living Crisis Risk. These were agreed at the December Board meeting. Seven key corporate risks were in place at year end: Budget; Staff Capability; Staff Capacity; Collaboration; Community Expectations; Business Continuity; and Climate Change Actions.

The highest 'red' risks were recorded on the register over the course of the year, namely Budget; Staff Capability; Staff Capacity; and Climate Change Actions.

I am pleased to be able to provide assurance to the Departmental Management Board as a result of my role as Chair of the DARC.

**Colm McKenna**  
**Chair, Departmental Audit and Risk Committee**

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the Government Resources and Accounts (Northern Ireland) Act 2001 (GRANNI), the Department of Finance has directed the Department of Justice to prepare, for each financial year, consolidated resource accounts detailing the resources acquired, held or disposed of, and the use of resources, during the year by the Department (inclusive of its Executive Agencies) and its sponsored Non-Departmental Public Bodies designated by order made under the GRAANI by Statutory Rule 2024 No.114, as amended by Statutory Rule 2024 No.217, (together known as the 'Departmental Group', consisting of the Department and sponsored bodies listed at Note 23 to the Accounts).

The Accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Department and the Departmental Group and of the income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position and cash flows of the Departmental Group for the financial year.

In preparing the Accounts, the Accounting Officer of the Department 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;
- ensure that the Department has in place appropriate and reliable systems and procedures to carry out the consolidation process;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis, including those judgements involved in consolidating the accounting information provided by Non-Departmental Public Bodies;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the Accounts;
- 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 Permanent Head of the Department as Accounting Officer of the Department of Justice.

The Accounting Officer of the Department has also appointed the Chief Executives [or equivalents] of its sponsored Non-Departmental Public Bodies as Accounting Officers of those bodies. The Accounting Officer of the Department is responsible for ensuring that appropriate systems and controls are in place to ensure that any grants that the Department makes to its sponsored bodies are applied for the purposes intended and that such expenditure and the other income and expenditure of the sponsored bodies are properly accounted for, for the purposes of consolidation within the Resource Accounts. Under their terms of appointment, the Accounting Officers of the sponsored bodies are accountable for the use, including the regularity and propriety, of the grants received and the other income and expenditure of the sponsored bodies.

The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the assets of the Department or Non-Departmental Public Body for which the Accounting Officer is responsible, are set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland published by the Department of Finance.

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 the Department'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

### 1. Role and responsibilities of the Department

The mission of the Department is to support the Minister of Justice by working in partnership to create a fair, just and safe community, where we respect the law and each other. Working collaboratively with its Agencies, NDPBs and stakeholders, the Department's aim is to keep communities safe and reduce crime, make the justice system more effective, and reduce reoffending.

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Department's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and Departmental assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

### 2. Purpose of the governance framework

The Corporate Governance Framework is the system that ensures the effectiveness of direction and control of the Department. The framework encompasses the following internal controls:

- **governance** - how the Department plans, sets, communicates and monitors its corporate objectives;
- **risk management** - how the Department identifies, considers and manages the risks to the achievement of corporate objectives; and
- **business controls** - how the Department assures itself and its stakeholders that it is in control of its business and the risks to the achievement of its objectives.

The governance framework is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk. The framework is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Departmental policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

### 3. Governance framework

During 2024-25, the Department operated under its Corporate Governance Framework. A new Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance in Government Departments was published by the DoF on 26 Feb 2025. The Department will be revising its Corporate Governance Framework in line with the updated Code of Good Practice.

The key organisational structures that support the delivery of effective corporate governance in the context of the current Corporate Governance Framework are:

- Departmental Board;
- Departmental Audit and Risk Committee;
- Senior Management Team Meetings;
- Procurement Governance Board;
- Portfolio, Programme and Project Office (P3O);
- Internal Audit; and
- Information Risk Owners Council.

### Departmental Board

The role of the Departmental Management Board is as set out previously in the Directors' Report. Key work of the Departmental Board during the year included:

- monitoring delivery of the Department's key priorities against the Business Plan within the constraints of significant financial pressures;
- monitoring and mitigating against Departmental risks;
- overseeing the management of the Department's resources including staff, information, physical and financial resources;
- programme and project updates;
- a presentation from the Northern Ireland Probation Board and Youth Justice Agency to provide an overview of services and specific challenges; and
- oversight of concerns and complaints raised against the Department.

Attendance by members is shown below for the four meetings of the Board during 2024-25:

Position	Member	Attendance
Permanent Secretary	Hugh Widdis - Chair	4/4
Director, Access to Justice	Sean Holland CBE	3/4
Director, Justice Delivery	Deborah Brown	4/4
Director, Reducing Offending and Director General NI Prison Service	Beverley Wall	3/4
Director, Safer Communities	Mark Goodfellow	2/4
Director, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service	Glyn Capper	4/4
Non-Executive Board Member	Colin Kennedy (until 31 July 2024)	1/4
Non-Executive Board Member	Dr Joanne McDowell (until 31 July 2024)	1/4
Non-Executive Board Member	Colm McKenna (from 1 August 2024)	3/4
Non-Executive Board Member	Catherine Dolliver (from 1 August 2024)	3/4

### Conflicts of Interest

During 2024-25, no declared interests were deemed to conflict with the overall conduct of Departmental business.

### Departmental Audit and Risk Committee

The Departmental Audit and Risk Committee (DARC) is constituted as a sub-committee of the Departmental Management Board and acts in an advisory capacity. It provides advice to the Board and the Accounting Officer on the systems that are in place to monitor risk management, internal controls and governance across the Department. The DARC also oversees the performance and work of Internal Audit in those bodies funded by the Department.

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee are both independent Non-Executive Board Members of the Departmental Management Board and Committee membership is made up of two other members (who are Senior Civil Servants from other Civil Service Departments). Other DARC attendees may include the Department's Directors together with representatives from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), Internal Audit, Financial Services Division and Corporate Engagement and Communications Division.

Key work of the DARC during 2024-25 included consideration of:

- NIAO audit strategy and reports to those charged with governance;
- Internal Audit's Plan including strategy, activity reports and progress updates;
- Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion and report;
- Risk management and corporate governance;
- Financial governance, fraud reporting and accountability grids;
- Draft Departmental Annual Report and Accounts;
- Audit qualification issues and recommendations from the Public Accounts Committee and Value for Money reports;
- Information assurance risk management update; and
- Update on progress against CJINI recommendations.

Attendance by Committee members is shown below for the four meetings of the DARC during 2024-25:

Position	Member	Attendance
Non-Executive Board Member	Colin Kennedy - Chair (until 31 July 2024)	1/4
Non-Executive Board Member	Dr Joanne McDowell - Deputy Chair (until 31 July 2024)	1/4
Non-Executive Board Member	Colm McKenna - Chair (from 1 August 2024)	3/4
Non-Executive Board Member	Catherine Dolliver – Deputy Chair (from 1 August 2024)	3/4
Independent Member	Brigitte Worth - Senior Civil Servant (Department of Health)	4/4
Independent Member	Andrew Scott - Senior Civil Servant (Department of Education )	4/4

### **Senior Management Team Meetings**

The Senior Management Team meetings provide a forum for discussion and decision on strategic issues (and operational issues when necessary) impacting on delivery of the Department's objectives. Meetings occur regularly with membership consisting of the Permanent Secretary and each of the five Departmental Directors. The Deputy Director, Corporate Engagement and Communications Division (CECD) and the Principal Information Officer (PIO) also normally attend meetings. Other officials will attend as required and in line with business being discussed. In particular, the Finance Director will attend for discussions relating to finance.

The main functions include:

- discussing business that directly affects operations of the Department;
- providing a forum for discussion on proposed policies and strategies;
- analysing, discussing and reaching agreement on strategic resourcing issues which face the Department;
- assisting the Accounting Officer in judging strategic resourcing priorities;
- ensuring a consistent approach to financial management across the Department;
- ensuring there is a co-ordinated approach to HR management across the Department;
- providing a forum for senior management to discuss resourcing matters;
- considering and agreeing a strategic approach to learning and development opportunities and external opportunities in particular; and
- monitoring performance against targets at a strategic level.

Any issues that require consideration by the Departmental Management Board will be escalated as necessary.

### **Portfolio, Programme and Project Office (P3O)**

The Portfolio, Programme and Project Office (P3O) monitors the Portfolio of Programmes and Projects across the DoJ to support strategic decision making and risk identification processes. The P3O reports annually to the Accounting Officer and Departmental Board, summarising the delivery confidence ratings and levels of engagement with the Independent Assurance Process NI processes and highlighting any areas of concern across the DoJ portfolio of Programmes and Projects.

The P3O's responsibilities are aligned with DoF's revised policy on project delivery as outlined in Dear Accounting Officer letter DAO (DoF) 05/23.

The primary role of P3O is to:

- ensure visibility of and provide support to Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) in regard to their responsibilities for governance and assurance of Programme and Project Delivery;
- ensure that the Integrated Assurance Process NI is applied and managed throughout the lifecycle of ongoing Programmes and Projects within the Department's Portfolio;
- engage with SROs on a cyclical basis to monitor and report on Programme/Project activity and outcomes to the Departmental Board;
- provide support to the development of Project Delivery Professionals in the Department in line with the strategic direction of NICS Programme and Project delivery, such as through application of the Project Delivery Profession (PDP) and other development activities and events;
- consolidate and communicate best practice in line with NICS policies and standards; and
- provide guidance, direction and support to Programme and Project managers to assist them with delivery activities.

### *Procurement Governance Board*

The Procurement Governance Board provides the governance mechanism for the implementation and delivery of public procurement policy across the Department. The Board meets twice a year and takes its lead on policy based on guidance and advice from the NICS Procurement Board, Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD) within DoF and its Centre of Procurement Excellence.

The Board ensures that the Department has a robust, open and transparent procurement process in compliance with regulations. It has the remit to influence and advise on the activity undertaken by the Department in relation to:

- **procurement policy** - development, adoption and implementation, and the embedding of procurement policies including the approach to Collaborative Opportunities, Social Clauses and Community Benefits;
- **strategic direction** - provision of strategic direction on procurement related activities to the Department through the Procurement Forum including the management of risk;
- **procurement skills** - capacity and capability development through the Procurement Forum, the Intranet and endorsement of training as required; and
- **eProcurement** - through the Department's procurement and contract management database, the CPD run Purchasers Portal, Account NI and Digital Marketplace (G-Cloud).

The Department continues to ensure that best practice is followed across the various business areas with regards the procurement of goods and services, and the management of contracts.

The Department's Procurement Support Team liaises closely with CPD and is the primary point of contact for business areas needing advice and assistance on procurement issues. The Procurement Support Team is also the contact for CPD for the majority of collaborative contracts, ensuring all DoJ business area requirements are covered in the tender documents and that these contracts are managed effectively.

The Procurement Forum meets on a quarterly basis and includes representatives from the various business areas across the Department, and works to promote best practice, address ongoing matters and inform the Procurement Governance Board of significant issues.

### *Internal Audit*

Internal Audit services to the Department are provided by the NICS Internal Audit Service which is a shared service with the Department of Finance (DoF). Internal Audit staff from the Department of Justice Team deliver the Internal Audit service to the Core Department, its Agencies and a number of NDPBs including:

- Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland;
- Northern Ireland Police Fund;
- Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland; and
- RUC George Cross Foundation.

A Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreement covering the Internal Audit arrangements have been agreed between DoF and the Department. Data Sharing Agreements are also in place to ensure compliance with GDPR.

### **Information Risk Owners Council (IROC)**

Membership of the Information Risk Owners Council (IROC) consists of Senior Information Asset Owners (at SCS level) drawn from across the Department, Agencies and NDPBs who are accountable for the management of the information assurance risks in their respective business areas. The Departmental Information Manager (DIM) and the Data Protection Officer (DPO) attend IROC ex officio, as the responsibilities of their posts include Data Protection and relations with the Information Commissioner.

The IROC oversees cyber security on behalf of the DoJ Accounting Officer, in line with the NICS Digital and Data Strategy. The IROC does this by understanding the cyber risk the Department faces, implementing appropriate governance, responsibility and assurance, developing cyber skills and capabilities, and; responding rapidly to cyber incidents.

### **Information assurance**

The DoJ continued to respond promptly to requests for information. During 2024, the DoJ Core experienced a 72% increase in FOI requests and a 50% increase in 'subject access requests' under the Data Protection Act. However, the DoJ, including its five agencies, obtained overall compliance rates of 94% for Freedom of Information requests and 98% for subject access requests.

The DoJ Data Protection Officer (DPO) issued advice and guidance to assist staff with compliance on various aspects of the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). During this period, the DPO resolved twenty complaints (100% increase from last year) from members of the public in relation to how their personal data was processed by the Department. In addition, the DPO advised on over 30 Data Protection Impact Assessments and was involved in providing advice in relation to 12 Information Sharing Agreements. An increase in legislation has also required a significant increase in consultations with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Four personal data breaches were reported to the ICO during this period, all of which have been closed by the regulator with no further action against the department.

The ICO published a Penalty Notice in September 2024, which confirmed a monetary penalty of £0.75m in respect of the PSNI Data Loss on 8 August 2023. The full £0.75m was paid by the PSNI in October 2024.

DoJ records management continued to provide support to the DoJ Covid Inquiry team, maintaining retention holds on relevant information, assisting with identification of documentation and facilitating responses.

During the last year, there was a 27% increase in approvals of Disposal Logs across the Core Department and its five Agencies, as a result of current staff decants and moves, as well as an increased application of Retention and Disposal scheduling to legacy information on the Department's Content Manager Fileplans.

The Departmental Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was also updated to reflect lessons learned from a Reasonable Worst Case Scenario Business Continuity test exercise - Risk to Gas and Electricity Supply. Details of the Civil Contingencies Group's (CCG) roles and infrastructure for management of a CCG incident were added. The updated BCP was approved by DoJ's Information Risk Owner's Council, circulated to interested parties and uploaded to the Departmental intranet.

### **Other assurances**

Additional assurance on various elements of the Department's operations is provided by a range of bodies including Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and Prisoner Ombudsman. These bodies tend to focus on specific areas providing additional scrutiny, reporting and in some cases making recommendations for improvement. Assurance on risk management in the Department's Agencies and NDPBs is provided in the form of bi-annual assurance statements and annual governance statements, which are signed by the designated Accounting Officers.

#### 4. Risk management and internal control

The Department aims to assess and effectively manage risk to the achievement of its business objectives. Its capacity to manage risk derives from the experience and ability of managers to operate the fully documented risk management process. The Department's Risk Management Framework is in line with best practice set out in the Northern Ireland Audit Office report on 'Good Practice in Risk Management'.

The Framework details the Department's approach to risk management including: risk appetite; the hierarchy for managing risks; the risk identification and escalation process; and the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of management. This approach allows risks to be identified and managed at all levels and to be escalated as appropriate.

The Departmental Board provides leadership and direction in managing the risk environment in which the Department operates. Each Director provides leadership to the risk management process in their particular areas of responsibility, as well as corporately through their involvement in the Departmental Board, the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee and local management meetings. Each business area prioritises risk against standardised risk impact/likelihood descriptors to reduce subjectivity in assessing risk. Key risks identified at corporate, group and divisional level were documented in risk registers and reviewed during the year.

During the course of this year the Risk Management Framework was further revised and updated and a Risk Workshop held in October 2024 with representation from across the Department and Agencies, recommended a new format for the Departmental Risk Register. That was approved by the Departmental Board at their meeting in December.

The risks identified and monitored through the Corporate Risk Register at year end were:

- Budget;
- Staff capability (ability/proficiency/competence) – staff skills and experience;
- Staff capacity (volume/size) - staffing levels;
- Collaboration;
- Business Continuity; and
- Climate change Action

The Corporate Risk Register continues to be reviewed regularly by the Departmental Board, with an update also routinely provided at Departmental Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

#### 5. Review of effectiveness of the governance framework

The Accounting Officer has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework including the system of internal control. A revised Governance Framework was approved by the DoJ Board in December 2024. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of Internal Audit, the internal control framework and comments made by external audit in their reports to those charged with governance and other reports. A sound governance framework has been established across the Department (and Agencies) that includes:

- Agency Management boards;
- Audit committees with independent membership;
- Management statement/Financial memoranda/Partnership Agreements with sponsored bodies;
- Sponsor control monitoring;
- Annual governance statements;
- Stewardship statements; and
- Independent reviews by Internal Audit.

Information presented to the Board is fundamental for its assessment and understanding of the performance of the Department. The Board receives a variety of standard information, and other papers, which are quality reviewed by the Board secretariat. The information received is considered to be of a high standard and allows the Board to be kept informed of any issues that it needs to be aware of to support decision making and drive improvement. The Board considers that it is fulfilling its governance requirements. However, a new Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance in Government Departments was published by the DoF on 26 Feb 2025. The Department will be revising its Corporate Governance Framework in line with the updated Code of Good Practice.

## 6. Budget position and authority

The Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2025, which received Royal Assent on 6 March 2025, together with the Northern Ireland Spring Supplementary Estimates 2024-25 which were agreed by the Assembly on 17 February 2025, provide the statutory authority for the Executive's final 2024-25 expenditure plans. The Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2025 also provides a Vote on Account to authorise expenditure by Departments and other bodies into the early months of the 2025-26 financial year.

## 7. Significant internal control issues

The following sections outline the significant internal control issues at a Departmental level together with details of the plans in place to address any weaknesses identified. Further details regarding the issues for individual Agencies and NDPBs are contained in their respective annual reports and accounts.

### 7.1 Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI)

The C&AG qualified the 2024-25 financial statements of LSANI in respect of:

- statistics produced by LSANI estimating that £2.0 million of overpayments and £2.4 million of underpayments of legal aid costs (£4.4 million in total) were made during the year due to official error, along with £2.2 million of overpayments and £1.1 million of underpayments of legal aid costs (£3.3 million in total) were made during the year due to legal practitioner fraud and error; and
- limitations in the scope on the regularity of legal aid payments in the period as a result of the Agency being unable to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy NIAO that material fraud and error by legal aid applicants did not exist within legal aid expenditure.

LSA has continued a significant work programme to address the qualification and has been taking this forward in conjunction with both DoJ and DfC. Details of the work to address the qualification are outlined below.

#### **Regularity of expenditure**

##### **Official error**

A MoU was established, from April 2017, with the SAU within DfC, to measure official error rates. While 2019 represented the first full year of testing under the agreed methodology there have been a number of refinements made to the sample that prevents direct comparison across all years. During 2020 taxed cases (and expenditure) were removed upon receipt of legal advice, meaning 2019 is not comparable with subsequent years and 2020 became the new benchmark for future years. In 2023, following the introduction of practitioner fraud and error under a new common sample with official error, exceptional preparation payments were not included due to logistical reasons, though a workable solution to include this expenditure is being sought. In addition, some practitioner errors that would have previously been attributed to official error are now, rightfully, attributed to the correct source. These developments mean that figures from 2023 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years. The outcomes from 2024 are set out below.

## 7.1 Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI) (continued)

## Official error (continued)

<u>2024</u>	Estimated Monetary Value of Error (MVE)	Lower Confidence Interval (LCI)	Upper Confidence Interval (UCI)
Total error	£4,439,837	£3,022,183	£5,857,492
Overpayments	£2,029,651	£1,080,204	£2,979,099
Underpayments	£2,410,186	£1,323,424	£3,496,948
Total excluding deemed errors	<b>£4,047,568</b>	<b>£2,746,196</b>	<b>£5,348,940</b>

<u>2023</u>	Estimated Monetary Value of Error (MVE)	Lower Confidence Interval (LCI)	Upper Confidence Interval (UCI)
Total error	£2,182,301	£1,385,948	£2,978,654
Overpayments	£647,271	£342,852	£951,689
Underpayments	£1,535,030	£788,216	£2,281,845
Total excluding deemed errors	<b>£2,137,350</b>	<b>£1,341,434</b>	<b>£2,933,267</b>

<u>2022</u>	Estimated Monetary Value of Error (MVE)	Lower Confidence Interval (LCI)	Upper Confidence Interval (UCI)
Total error	£2,516,537	£1,422,348	£3,610,727
Overpayments	£1,297,570	£738,118	£1,857,023
Underpayments	£1,218,967	£252,121	£2,185,813
Total excluding deemed errors	<b>£1,982,650</b>	<b>£964,519</b>	<b>£3,000,782</b>

<u>2021</u>	Estimated Monetary Value of Error (MVE)	Lower Confidence Interval (LCI)	Upper Confidence Interval (UCI)
Total error	£1,924,466	£1,362,282	£2,486,649
Overpayments	£1,009,285	£502,270	£1,516,299
Underpayments	£915,181	£645,234	£1,185,128
Total excluding deemed errors	<b>£1,692,157</b>	<b>£1,144,102</b>	<b>£2,240,212</b>

<u>2020</u>	Estimated Monetary Value of Error (MVE)	Lower Confidence Interval (LCI)	Upper Confidence Interval (UCI)
Total error	£5,573,318	£2,067,580	£9,079,055
Overpayments	£4,356,128	£917,643	£7,794,614
Underpayments	£1,217,189	£459,342	£1,975,037
Total excluding deemed errors	<b>£3,999,730</b>	<b>£2,458,145</b>	<b>£5,541,316</b>

## 7.1 Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI) (continued)

### Official error (continued)

For 2024, a sample of 712 cases (2023: 544; 2022: 756; 2021: 911; 2020: 695) was independently assessed by the SAU and the amount of legal aid estimated to have been paid incorrectly due to official error was projected at £4,439,837 (6.7%) over the review period (2023: £2,182,301 (4.0%); 2022: £2,516,537 (4.8%); 2021: £1,924,466 (4.3%); 2020: £5,573,318 (14.9%)).

Looking at the confidence intervals, the true amount paid incorrectly is likely to lie within the range £3,022,183 to £5,857,492 (4.6% to 8.9%) (2023: £1,385,948 to £2,978,654 (2.6% to 5.5%); 2022: £1,422,348 to £3,610,727 (2.7% to 6.9%) 2021: £1,362,282 to £2,486,649 (3.0% to 5.5%); 2020: £2,067,580 to £9,079,055 (5.5% to 24.3%)).

It should be noted that 2024 estimates of official error (£4,439,837; 6.7%) include a small number of notional under-/over- payments, identified by SAU at the point of testing. However, as these payments were processed in a timeframe in accordance with business arrangements and subsequently paid correctly and entirely before the end of the 2024 timetable, they resulted in no actual error to the legal aid fund. Excluding these notional errors generates a rebased 2024 estimate of £4,114,046 (6.2%) with associated confidence intervals of £2,707,453 to £5,520,639 (4.1% to 8.3%).

The overall amount estimated to have been paid incorrectly due to official error in 2024 is the combination of the estimated value of overpayments, £2,029,651 (3.1%) (2023: £647,241 (1.2%); 2022: £1,297,570 (2.5%) 2021: £1,009,285 (2.2%); 2020: £4,356,128 (11.7%)) and that of underpayments, £2,410,186 (3.6%) (2023: £1,535,030 (2.8%); 2022: £1,218,967 (2.3%) 2021: £915,181 (2.0%); 2020: £1,217,189 (3.3%)). While the Agency accepts that all error is equally valid these extrapolated figures represent over and underpayments and hence are compensatory. The net underpayment estimated due to official error is therefore £380,535 (2023: £887,759 net overpayment; 2022: £76,603 net overpayment; 2021: £94,104 net overpayment; 2020: £3,138,939 net overpayment).

The results are split into actual and deemed errors. Deemed errors are defined as instances where monitoring officers required further information to complete their review and where that information was not provided by the year end reporting date.

Excluding deemed errors, the amount of legal aid estimated to be paid incorrectly due to official error reduces to £4,047,5681 (£2,746,196 to £5,348,940; 6.1%) over the review period (2023: £2,137,350 (£1,341,434 to £2,933,267: 3.9%); 2022: £1,982,650 (£964,519 to £3,000,782: 3.8%); 2021: £1,692,157 (£1,144,102 to £2,240,212: 3.7%); 2020: £3,999,730 (£2,458,145 to £5,541,316: 10.7%)).

In those cases, in which the categorising officers identified an actual underpayment or overpayment, the Agency has a process to adjust the fees to address the incorrect errors. Underpayments due to the practitioner will be notified and an additional payment may be made under the case. Recoupments from the practitioner are likewise tracked against the case and will be offset within LAMS from future payments due to the same supplier under other cases or a debt raised.

No recoupment is made of deemed errors as the accuracy or otherwise of the payment cannot be proved due to the lack of information. All eligible underpayments and overpayments identified as part of the SAU review process are processed in keeping with the Agency's Fees Adjustment & Recoupment Policy.

LSA has appointed a dedicated team to deal with the work arising from the error work programme. They respond to errors by providing information requested, analysing the source of the errors, identifying underlying issues and recommending remedial action to address. This may take the form of operational change whether through the ongoing revision to desk instructions, clarification of the interpretation of legislation and training.

<sup>1</sup> Excluding both deemed and notional errors, the 2024 official error rate reduces to £3,721,776, or 5.6%.

## 7.1 Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI) (continued)

### ***Applicant fraud and error***

Following an initial delay caused by Covid-19 restrictions, a methodology for addressing applicant fraud and error, commenced for its first full year of testing in January 2021. The major difference to official error testing, is contained within the cases that are eligible for sampling. As applicant testing focuses on the financial eligibility of applicants, the majority of legal aid cases (and expenditure) were ruled out-of-scope.

Primarily, this covered civil cases where a financial eligibility test was not undertaken (including cases where the applicant was a minor or on a passport benefit for the duration of their case) and all criminal cases where LSANI is not responsible for determining the financial eligibility of individuals. This should be considered when interpreting the figures quoted below.

In 2021, a sample of 500 cases was independently assessed by the SAU and the amount of legal aid estimated to have been paid incorrectly due to applicant fraud and error was projected at £1,321,698 (32.1%) over the review period. Looking at the confidence intervals, the true amount paid incorrectly is likely to lie within the range £809,533 to £1,833,863 (19.6% to 44.5%).

Over half of the fraud and error identified was due to non-compliance of applicants who were not compelled to take part in the review by SAU. When non-compliance is excluded, the amount of legal aid estimated to have been paid incorrectly reduces to £569,069 (13.8%) over the review period. Looking at the confidence intervals, the true amount paid incorrectly (excluding non-compliance) is likely to lie within the range £93,400 to £1,044,739 (2.3% to 25.3%).

<b><u>2021</u></b>	<b>Estimated Monetary Value of Error (MVE)</b>	<b>Lower Confidence Interval (LCI)</b>	<b>Upper Confidence Interval (UCI)</b>
<b>Total applicant fraud and error</b>	£1,321,698	£809,533	£1,833,863
<b>Excluding non-compliance</b>	£569,069	£93,400	£1,044,739

While testing for applicant fraud and error once a case is closed mirrors the approach taken in official error testing and provides the best opportunity to get a true picture of continued financial eligibility, it also means the Agency has no power to compel applicant compliance.

In turn, while the methodology applied in 2021 provides an estimate of applicant fraud and error, the Agency is limited in the action it can take to reduce this rate, due to Assisted Persons not having to co-operate or provide information to the Agency once a case has closed.

For this reason, applicant fraud and error testing in this guise was suspended in 2022 and replaced with a review of live cases under the heading of Future Overpayment Prevention (see below). The 2021 figures outlined above, remain the official baseline for applicant fraud and error within legal aid expenditure.

### ***Future Overpayment Prevention***

In May 2022, SAU commenced testing of live cases to review ongoing financial eligibility of individuals who remain in receipt of civil legal aid under the Future Overpayment Prevention (FOP) work-stream, mitigating against the non-compliance issues encountered previously (in formal Applicant Fraud and Error testing), with the potential to revoke certificates and realise future savings. This approach not only allows incidents of fraud and error to be identified and monitored but also allows actions to be put in place to address and reduce future errors.

While it was envisaged that testing would focus solely on future savings, it became apparent that applicant error was being discovered alongside a FOP saving (in the period between when an applicant became no longer eligible for legal aid and cessation of their certificate). As these applicant error estimates are essentially a by-product of FOP sampling, they are not a representative or comprehensive estimate of total applicant error in legal aid expenditure, nor do they replace the applicant fraud and error baseline established in 2021.

## 7.1 Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI) (continued)

### Future Overpayment Prevention (continued)

A total of 291 cases were tested for potential FOP savings in 2024. From the results, it is estimated that £104,899 (2023: £101,477; 2022: £76,577) was saved in future expenditure due to LSA taking action to revoke certificates where the applicant was found to be no longer financially eligible for legal aid or where they failed to comply with testing. In addition, the estimated amount of applicant error found in these cases was £49,945 (2023: £56,215; 2022: £102,893).

### Practitioner fraud and error

In January 2023, the Agency launched formal measurement of Practitioner Error and Fraud under a common sample approach with Official Error testing. Testing is carried out by SAU, reviewing both Agency and Practitioner files on sampled cases.

The 2024 rate of practitioner fraud and error is estimated at 5.1% with associated confidence intervals of 3.6% to 6.5%, reducing to 3.8% (2.9% to 4.7%) when non-compliance errors are excluded. These estimates compare with 2023 baseline rates of 6.5% (4.0% to 8.9%) and 4.9% (2.6% to 7.2%) respectively. The estimated monetary value of errors behind these percentages are set out below.

2024	Estimated Monetary Value of Error (MVE)	Lower Confidence Interval (LCI)	Upper Confidence Interval (UCI)
Total practitioner error	£3,347,519	£2,387,065	£4,307,974
Practitioner overpayments	£2,230,666	£1,318,944	£3,142,388
Practitioner underpayments	£1,116,853	£748,900	£1,484,807
Total excluding non-compliance errors	<b>£2,524,029</b>	<b>£1,910,974</b>	<b>£3,137,084</b>

2023	Estimated Monetary Value of Error (MVE)	Lower Confidence Interval (LCI)	Upper Confidence Interval (UCI)
Total practitioner error	£3,505,869	£2,154,897	£4,856,841
Practitioner overpayments	£2,156,776	£1,334,884	£2,978,667
Practitioner underpayments	£1,349,093	£256,696	£2,441,490
Total excluding non-compliance errors	<b>£2,648,995</b>	<b>£1,401,958</b>	<b>£3,896,032</b>

The estimated amount of Practitioner Error and Fraud in 2024 is the combination of the estimated value of overpayments, £2,230,666 (3.4%) (2023: £2,156,776 (4.0%)) and that of underpayments, £1,116,853 (1.7%) (2023: £1,349,093 (2.5%)). While the Agency accepts that all error and fraud is equally both valid and unacceptable, as these extrapolated figures represent overpayments and underpayments, they are compensatory. The net overpayment estimated due to Practitioner Error and Fraud in 2024 is therefore £1,113,813 (2023: £807,683 net overpayment).

2024 estimates of Practitioner Error and Fraud also include a small number of notional errors, identified by SAU at the point of testing. However, as with Official Error, these payments were processed in accordance with business arrangements and resulted in no actual error to the legal aid fund. Removing these notional errors generates a rebased 2024 baseline of £3,185,212 (4.8%) (2023: £2,707,518 (5.0%)) with associated confidence intervals of £2,233,607 to £4,136,817 (3.4% to 6.3%) (2023: £1,783,412 to £3,631,623 (3.3% to 6.7%)). When both notional and non-compliance errors are excluded, the practitioner rate reduces further to 3.6% (£2,361,722) (2023: 3.4% (£1,850,643)). For any bill submitted from 1 July 2024, where practitioner error is identified it is considered for recoupment under the Agency's revised Fees Adjustment Policy.

## 7.2 Reports by the Northern Ireland Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee

The C&AG undertakes other statutory activities that are not related to the audit of the body's financial statements, such as Value for Money (VFM) reports. These are then normally considered by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) at a public evidence session before a formal report is issued.

The current VFM and PAC Reports that have been issued to DoJ include:

- Continuous Improvement arrangements in policing - July 2024
- Continuous improvement arrangements in policing – May 2025;
- PSNI Fleet Management – April 2025;
- Reducing Adult Reoffending - June 2023;
- Speeding Up Justice: Avoidable Delay in the Criminal Justice System - October 2021;
- Injury on duty schemes for officers in the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Prison Service - March 2020; and
- Managing Legal Aid - January 2017.

The Department continues to ensure that appropriate action is taken to implement the recommendations made and progress is reported to the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee as well as the respective Agency Audit Committees.

A PAC evidence hearing session on Reducing Adult Reoffending took place on 3 April 2025. The PAC report on this hearing will be published in due course. A response will be prepared to any recommendations made by the PAC.

## 7.3 Priority 1 recommendations from Internal Audit

In 2024-25, there were forty-one satisfactory reports issued by Internal Audit across the Core Department and Agencies. The implementation of any Priority 1 recommendations relating to these audits are subject to review by both Internal Audit and the Audit and Risk Committee for the relevant business area. Three limited opinions were issued for audits conducted in 2024-25 and will be followed up in 2025-26. An audit was carried out in relation to NICTS Official Solicitors Office which had remained limited for a number of years pending the implementation of a new case management system. This included a follow up to a previous Priority 1 recommendation which has now been implemented and the assurance has been raised to satisfactory.

## 8. Accounting Officer statement on assurance

The Department has an established and robust assurance framework that includes primary assurance through line management structures on the achievement of objectives. This primary assurance is supplemented by secondary assurances provided through oversight of management activity.

In addition, independent assurance is provided by the Department's Internal Audit service provided by DoF, operating to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Internal Audit delivers an agreed prioritised programme of systems based audits covering all Departmental systems over time. The Head of Internal Audit provides me with an Annual Report and Opinion on the level of assurance that can be provided based on the work done. For the 2024-25 year, an overall satisfactory assurance was provided.

The Department has maintained a framework of control to ensure that there are sufficient control processes in place to provide assurance over financial and operational risks, as well as performing a regular review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. I am therefore satisfied that I have effective governance arrangements and the necessary policies and procedures in place to provide a sound system of internal control to support the Department of Justice in delivering its statutory duties and to meet the aims and objectives set by the Minister, while safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in my letter of delegation and in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

## REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT

### REMUNERATION REPORT

#### Remuneration policy

The pay remit for the Northern Ireland Civil Service, including senior civil servants (SCS), is normally approved by the Minister of Finance. Following approval of the 2024-25 Budget in the Assembly, on 28 May 2024, in which the Finance Minister outlined the overarching approach to public sector pay, the NI public sector pay policy guidance was published on 31 May 2024 in FD (DoF) 07/24.

Annual NICS pay awards are made in the context of the wider public sector pay policy. The pay award effective from 1 August 2024, for NICS non-industrial and industrial staff, including SCS, has been finalised and was paid in May 2025 payroll.

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 and other eligibility criteria.

#### 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 by exception to merit.

Unless otherwise stated, the officials covered by this report hold appointments that are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in consideration of the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme<sup>2</sup>.

Colin Kennedy was appointed as a Non-Executive Member of the Departmental Board on 2 August 2021 for a three-year period. He was also the Chair of the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee (DARC). Dr Joanne McDowell was also appointed as a Non-Executive Member of the Departmental Board on 2 August 2021 for a three-year period. Their tenure ended on 31 July 2024 and Colm Kennedy and Catherine Dolliver were appointed for a three-year period from 1 August 2024. Colm has also been appointed as the Chair of the DARC. Non-Executive Board Members may terminate the appointment by providing one month's notice in writing.

#### Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Minister and most senior management (i.e. Board Members) of the Department.

#### Remuneration and pension entitlements - Minister

*[Audited information]*

##### Single total figure of remuneration

Ministers	2024-25				2023-24			
	Salary	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	*Pension Benefits (to nearest £1,000)	Total (to nearest £1,000)	Salary	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	*Pension Benefits (to nearest £1,000)	Total (to nearest £1,000)
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Naomi Long MLA	38,000	-	12,000	50,000	6,006	-	5,000	11,000

<sup>2</sup> [Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland \(nicscommissioners.org\)](https://www.nicscommissioners.org)

## Remuneration and pension entitlements – Officials

[Audited information]

## Single total figure of remuneration

Officials and Non-Executive Members	2024-25			
	Salary	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	*Pension Benefits (to nearest £1,000)	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Hugh Widdis</b> Permanent Secretary (from 15 April 2024)	145-150 (full year equivalent 150-155)	-	37	180-185
<b>Richard Pengelly CB</b> Permanent Secretary (until 14 April 2024)	5-10 (full year equivalent 140-145)	-	58	60-65
<b>Sean Holland CBE</b> Director, Access to Justice	115-120	-	53	170-175
<b>Deborah Brown</b> Director, Justice Delivery	110-115 (full year equivalent 115-120)	-	75	185-190
<b>Beverley Wall</b> Director, Reducing Offending & Director General NI Prison Service	110-115	-	82	195-200
<b>Mark Goodfellow</b> Director, Safer Communities	105-110	-	94	200-205
<b>Glyn Capper</b> Director, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service	110-115	-	76	185-190
<b>Colin Kennedy</b> Non-Executive Board Member (until 31 July 2024)	0-5	0.1	-	0-5
<b>Dr Joanne McDowell</b> Non-Executive Board Member (until 31 July 2024)	0-5	0.1	-	0-5
<b>Colm McKenna</b> Non-Executive Board Member (from 1 August 2024)	0-5	0.1	-	0-5
<b>Catherine Dolliver</b> Non-Executive Board Member (from 1 August 2024)	0-5	0.1	-	0-5

The salary figures presented in this table are based on actual payments made during the financial year. These figures do not include the 2024-25 pay award, which has been accrued in the financial statements. The value of that award will be included in this table when paid in the 2025-26 financial year.

\* 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.

## Remuneration and pension entitlements - Officials (continued)

[Audited information]

## Single total figure of remuneration

Officials and Non-Executive Members	2023-24			
	Salary	Benefits in kind	*Pension Benefits	Total
	£000	(to nearest £100) £000	(to nearest £1,000) £000	£000
<b>Richard Pengelly CB</b> Permanent Secretary	140-145	-	(32)	110-115
<b>Sean Holland CBE</b> Director, Access to Justice	105-110	-	57	165-170
<b>Deborah Brown</b> Director, Justice Delivery	100-105	-	3	100-105
<b>Beverley Wall</b> Director, Reducing Offending (from 31 July 2023)	65-70 (full year equivalent 100-105)	-	(35)	30-35
<b>Ronnie Armour</b> Director, Reducing Offending (until 30 June 2023)	25-30 (full year equivalent 105-110)	-	25	50-55
<b>Mark Goodfellow</b> Director, Safer Communities	95-100	-	(23)	70-75
<b>Glyn Capper</b> Director, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service	100-105	-	28	130-135
<b>Colin Kennedy</b> Non-Executive Board Member	5-10	0.2	-	5-10
<b>Dr Joanne McDowell</b> Non-Executive Board Member	0-5	0.2	-	0-5

\* 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.

Accrued pension benefits included in this table for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the legacy scheme for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the relevant legacy scheme for the Remedy Period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

**Remuneration and pension entitlements - Officials (continued)*****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 actual payments made by the Department of Justice during the financial year.

The Department of Justice was under the direction and control of Naomi Long MLA during the financial year. Her salary and allowances were paid by the Department and have been included in these accounts. These amounts do not include costs relating to the Minister's role as MLA, 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 (HMRC) as a taxable emolument.

## Fair pay disclosures

### Pay ratios - Core Department and Agencies

*[Audited information]*

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

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in the Department in the financial year 2024-25 was £145,000 to £150,000 (2023-24: £140,000 to £145,000). The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation's workforce is disclosed below.

#### Core Department and Agencies

	2024-25		
	25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	Median	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Total remuneration (£)	29,693	34,524	43,815
Pay ratio	5.0:1	4.3:1	3.4:1

#### Core Department and Agencies

	2023-24		
	25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	Median	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Total remuneration (£)	26,569	29,859	40,247
Pay ratio	5.4:1	4.8:1	3.5:1

For 2023-24 and 2024-25, the 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile remuneration figures are based on annualised salaries for the last month of the financial year, adjusted for any non-consolidated payments made to staff during the 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.

For 2024-25 and 2023-24, the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, median and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile remuneration values consisted solely of salary payments.

In 2024-25, four employees (2023-24: three) received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director.

Remuneration in 2024-25 ranged from £21,000 to £231,000 (2023-24: £21,000 to £208,000).

**Fair pay disclosures (continued)****Percentage Change in Remuneration - Core Department and Agencies***[Audited information]*

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

- salary and allowances; and
- performance pay and bonuses

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

The percentage changes in respect of the Department are shown in the following table.

**Core Department and Agencies**

	<b>2024-25 v 2023-24</b>	<b>2023-24 v 2022-23</b>
	%	%
Percentage change for:		
Average employee salary and allowances	10.6%	3.6%
Highest paid director's salary and allowances*	3.51%	3.6%
Average employee performance pay and bonuses**	n/a	(100%)

\* *The calculation for the highest paid director is based on the mid-point of the band within which their remuneration fell in each year.*

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

## Pension entitlements - Minister

[Audited information]

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/25	Real increase in pension at pension age	CETV* at 31/3/25	CETV at 31/3/24	Real increase in CETV
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Naomi Long MLA	0-5	0-2.5	59	46	7

\* Cash Equivalent Transfer Value

### Ministerial pensions

Pension benefits for Ministers are provided by the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2016 (AMPS). In 2011, the Assembly passed The Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 establishing a panel to make determinations in relation to the salaries, allowances and pensions payable to members of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The tenure of the first Panel ended in July 2016. As a consequence of the Assembly Commission's desire to consider a reform of the Panel and the political situation between March 2017 and January 2020, a new Panel was not appointed. Legislation to reform and rename the Panel, although started, was not completed before the dissolution of the Assembly on 28 March 2022.

Following the election in May 2022, as no Speaker was elected, full Assembly business could not recommence. Therefore progress on the legislation and the appointment of a new Panel was further delayed. The Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill was introduced in the Assembly on 4 February 2025 and is currently being considered at the Committee stage of the legislative process.

In April 2016 the Independent Financial Review Panel (IFRP) issued The Assembly Members (Pensions) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 which introduced a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme for new and existing members. The scheme is named Assembly Members' Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Members of the Legislative Assembly ("MLA" or "Member") aged 55 or over on 1 April 2015 and in continuous service between 1 April 2015 and 6 May 2016 retained their Final Salary pension arrangements under transitional protection until 6 May 2021. The McCloud judgement found that the transitional protection offered to members of the Judiciary and Firefighters Schemes when their schemes were reformed was discriminatory on grounds of age. In light of this decision, the government has agreed to provide remedy to eligible members across the main public sector schemes. This judgement could have an impact on MLAs who missed out on the Transitional Protection policy in the AMPS because of their age. However, the applicability of, and approach to, the McCloud judgement in relation to this scheme is not a matter for the Assembly Commission, instead it is a matter for the new Remuneration Board once it is established.

As Ministers are MLAs, they also accrue an MLA's pension under the AMPS (details of which are not included in this report). Pension benefits for Ministers under transitional protection arrangements are provided on a "contribution factor" basis, taking account of service as a Minister. The contribution factor is the relationship between salary as a Minister and salary as an MLA for each year of service as a Minister. Pension benefits as a Minister are based on the accrual rate (1/50th or 1/40th) multiplied by the cumulative contribution factors and the relevant final salary as an MLA. Pension benefits for all other Ministers are provided on a career average (CARE) basis.

Pension benefits for Ministers are payable at the same time as MLA's pension benefits become payable under the AMPS. Pensions are increased annually in line with changes in the Consumer Prices Index. Up to 6 May 2021 those Ministers under the transitional protection arrangements paid contributions of either 9% or 12.5% of their Ministerial salary, depending on the accrual rate. The contribution paid by Ministers in the CARE Scheme is 9% of the Ministerial salary. There is also an employer contribution paid by the Consolidated Fund out of money appropriated by Act of Assembly for that purpose representing the balance of cost. Following the publication of the 2023 triennial valuation of the AMPS by the Government Actuary's Department, the employer contribution rate remained unchanged and continues to be paid at 17.1%.

***Ministerial pensions (continued)***

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the Minister is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age for their section of the Scheme. Ministers under transitional protection arrangements may retire at age 65. Ministers in the CARE scheme have a pension age aligned to the State Pension Age.

***The cash equivalent transfer value (CETV)***

This 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. It 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 pension benefits they have accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total service, not just their current appointment as a Minister. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

***The real increase in the value of the CETV***

This is the increase in accrued pension due to the Assembly Commission's contributions to the AMPS, and excludes increases due to inflation and contributions paid by the Minister and is calculated using valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

## Pension benefits - Officials

[Audited information]

### Officials

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/25 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/25**	CETV at 31/3/24*	Real increase in CETV	Employer contribution to partnership pension account (Nearest £100)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Hugh Widdis</b> Permanent Secretary (from 15 April 2024)	65-70 plus 10-15 lump sum	0-2.5 plus nil lump sum	1,264	1,194	18	-
<b>Richard Pengelly CB</b> Permanent Secretary (until 14 April 2024)	75-80 plus 200-205 lump sum	2.5-5 plus 5-7.5 lump sum	1,642	1,581	56	-
<b>Sean Holland CBE</b> Director, Access to Justice	35-40 plus nil lump sum	2.5-5 plus nil lump sum	732	683	42	-
<b>Deborah Brown</b> Director, Justice Delivery	35-40 plus 80-85 lump sum	2.5-5 plus 2.5-5 lump sum	753	658	62	-
<b>Beverley Wall</b> Director, Reducing Offending	45-50 plus 120-125 lump sum	2.5-5 plus 5-7.5 lump sum	1,089	973	71	-
<b>Mark Goodfellow</b> Director, Safer Communities	50-55 plus 130-135 lump sum	2.5-5 plus 5-7.5 lump sum	1,168	1,040	82	-
<b>Glyn Capper</b> Director, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service	40-45 plus nil lump sum	2.5-5 plus nil lump sum	759	669	57	-

\* Or date of joining if later.

\*\* Or date of leaving if earlier.

Note: The pension benefits of any members affected by the [Public Service Pensions Remedy](#) which were reported in 2022-23 based on **alpha** membership for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 have been reported since 2023-24 based on PCSPS(NI) membership for the same period.

No pension benefits are provided to the Non-Executive Board Members.

### Compensation for loss of office

There were no compensation benefits paid by the Department to any senior staff members during the financial year (2023-24: £Nil).

### Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes

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

The alpha pension scheme was initially introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of members of the Classic, Premium, Classic Plus and Nuvos pension arrangements (collectively known as the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS(NI)]) also moved to alpha from that date. At that time, members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their

## Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes (continued)

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

### *McCloud Judgement and 2015 Remedy*

In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional protections put in place back in 2015 that allowed older workers to remain in their original scheme, were discriminatory on the basis of age. As a result, steps have been taken by the Department of Finance (DoF) to remedy this discrimination.

DoF has now made regulations which remedy the discrimination by:

- ensuring all active members are treated equally for future service as members of the reformed alpha scheme only from 1 April 2022; and
- providing each eligible member with options to have their pension entitlements for the period when the discrimination existed between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the remedy period) retrospectively calculated under either the current (reformed) scheme rules, or the older (pre-reform) legacy rules which existed before 2015.

This means that all active NICS Pension Scheme members are in the same pension scheme, alpha, from 1 April 2022 onwards, regardless of age. This removes the discrimination going forwards in providing equal pension provision for all scheme members.

DoF is now implementing the second part of the remedy, which addresses the discrimination which was incurred by affected members between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

Eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) will now be entitled to a choice of alternative pension benefits in relation to that period. i.e. calculated under the pre-reformed PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' rules or alternatively calculated under the reformed alpha rules. As part of this 'retrospective' remedy most active members will now receive a choice about their remedy period benefits at the point of retirement. This is known as the Deferred Choice Underpin (DCU). For those members who already have pension benefits in payment in relation to the Remedy Period, they will receive an Immediate Choice.

There are a significant number of Immediate Choice Remediable Service Statement (RSS) packs to issue. This process involves complex calculations to provide members with individually tailored statements. Due to the complexity of the calculations and some prolonged work to finalise policy elements of the remedy, not all Immediate Choice packs will issue by 31 March 2025 as originally planned.

At this stage, allowance has not yet been made within CETVs for this remedy. Further information on the remedy will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which, once published, are available at [DoF Annual Reports and Accounts](#).

As part of the remedy involved rolling back all remediable service into the relevant legacy PCSPS(NI) arrangement for the 7-Year Remedy Period, the value of pension benefits for the 2024-25 pension disclosures for affected members continue to be based on the rolled back position.

### *Alpha*

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

From 1 April 2015, all new entrants joining the NICS can choose between membership of alpha or joining a 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (Partnership Pension Account).

### Information on the PCSPS(NI) - Closed Scheme

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

New entrants who joined on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the legacy PCSPS(NI) Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a Partnership Pension Account. Nuvos was also a CARE arrangement in which members accrued pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate of accrual was 2.3%.

Benefits in Classic accrued 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 accrued at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike Classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic Plus is essentially a variation of Premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per Classic.

### Partnership Pension Account

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

### Annual Benefit Statements

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 age 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 [Civil Service Pensions \(NI\)](#).

### Pension Increases

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 2024 was 1.7% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2025.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the periods covering 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 and 1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025 are as follows<sup>3</sup>:

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands) 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025		Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands) 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025		Contribution rates - All members
From	To	From	To	
£0	£26,302.49	£0	£27,091.99	4.60%
£26,302.50	£59,849.99	£27,092.00	£61,645.99	5.45%
£59,850.00	£160,964.99	£61,646.00	£165,793.99	7.35%
£160,965.00 and above		£165,794.00 and above		8.05%

<sup>3</sup> Rates are expected to change mid-year as a result of the outcome of the [Consultation on Scheme Yield and Member Contributions](#)

## Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes (continued)

### *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) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

HM Treasury provides the assumptions for discount rates for calculating CETVs payable from the public service pension schemes. On 27 April 2023, HM Treasury published guidance on the basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes. In their guidance of 27 April 2023, HM Treasury advised that, with immediate effect, the discount rate adopted for calculating CETVs should be in line with the new SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation, superseding the previous SCAPE discount rate of 2.4% above CPI inflation. All else being the same, a lower SCAPE discount rate leads to higher CETVs. The HM Treasury Guidance of 27 April 2023 can be found at: [Basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes - GOV.UK](#). As at the year-end there have been no further changes to the SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation since the HM Treasury guidance was published.

### *Real increase in CETV*

This reflects the increase in CETV that is 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 (which therefore disregards the effect of any changes in factors).

## STAFF REPORT

## Staff costs

[Audited information]

## Departmental Group

	2024-25				2023-24 (Restated)
	Permanently Employed *Staff	Others	Minister	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Wages and salaries	602,731	13,184	38	615,953	609,695
Social security costs	69,135	18	5	69,158	66,999
Other pension costs	64,440	45	6	64,491	70,719
Pension provision	92,955	-	-	92,955	97,607
<b>Total Gross Costs</b>	<b>829,261</b>	<b>13,247</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>842,557</b>	<b>845,020</b>
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(1,460)	-	-	(1,460)	(792)
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>827,801</b>	<b>13,247</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>841,097</b>	<b>844,228</b>
<b>Of which:</b>					
Core Department and Agencies	189,579	7,581	49	197,209	187,186
NDPBs	639,682	5,666	-	645,348	657,834
<b>Total Gross Costs</b>	<b>829,261</b>	<b>13,247</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>842,557</b>	<b>845,020</b>

\* Permanently employed staff includes the cost of the Department's Special Adviser who was paid in the pay band £65,000-69,999 (2023-24: £65,000-69,999).

## Departmental Group

	2024-25				Total
	Charged to Administra- tion	Charged to Programme	Sub-total Charged to SoCNE	Charged to Capital Projects	
	Note 4 £000	Note 5 £000	£000	£000	
Core Department and Agencies	32,941	161,631	194,572	2,637	197,209
NDPBs	-	645,348	645,348	-	645,348
<b>Total Gross Costs</b>	<b>32,941</b>	<b>806,979</b>	<b>839,920</b>	<b>2,637</b>	<b>842,557</b>

## Departmental Group

	2023-24 (Restated)				Total
	Charged to Administra- tion	Charged to Programme	Sub-total Charged to SoCNE	Charged to Capital Projects	
	Note 4 £000	Note 5 £000	£000	£000	
Core Department and Agencies	31,484	153,304	184,788	2,399	187,187
NDPBs	-	657,883	657,833	-	657,833
<b>Total Gross Costs</b>	<b>31,484</b>	<b>811,137</b>	<b>842,621</b>	<b>2,399</b>	<b>845,020</b>

### Staff costs (continued)

The Northern Ireland Civil Service main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Department 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 2020 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in October 2023. The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027.

The Cost Cap Mechanism (CCM) is a measure of scheme costs and determines whether member costs or scheme benefits require adjustment to maintain costs within a set corridor. Reforms were made to the CCM which was applied to the 2020 scheme valuations and included the introduction of a reformed-scheme-only cost control mechanism which assesses just the costs relating to reformed schemes (alpha for the NICS) and introduced an economic check. Prior to the cost control mechanism reforms, legacy scheme (PCSPS(NI)) costs associated with active members were also captured in the mechanism. The reformed-scheme-only design and the economic check were applied to the 2020 scheme valuations for the devolved public sector pension schemes, including the NICS pension scheme. The 2020 scheme valuation outcome was that the core cost cap cost of the scheme lies within the 3% cost cap corridor. As there is no breach of the cost control mechanism, there is no requirement for the Department of Finance to consult on changes to the scheme. 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>.

For 2024-25, employers' contributions of £69,779,476 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements at a flat rate of 34.25% of pensionable pay, for all salaries (2023-24: £60,739,048 at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2%).

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £206,251 (2023-24: £144,783) 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% (2023-24, 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 £1,771; 0.5% (2023-24: £751; 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.

158 persons (2023-24: 150 persons) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £21,400,259 (2023-24: £7,790,111).

### Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS)

Judicial office holders are covered by the provisions of the Judicial Pension Schemes (JPS) the terms of which were, until the end of 2021-22, set out in (or in some cases are analogous to) the provisions of two Acts of Parliament, (Judicial Pensions Act 1981 and Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993), the Judicial Pensions Regulations 2015 and the Judicial Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. From 2022-23 Judicial office holders are covered by the provisions of the Judicial Pensions Regulations 2022. The JPS are unfunded public service schemes, providing pensions and related benefits for members of the Judiciary in eligible offices.

**Staff costs (continued)**

The JPS 2015 and Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme (NIJPS) 2015, were introduced on 1 April 2015. These mirror each other and, as far as possible, other public service career average pension schemes. From 1 April 2015 NICTS paid contributions in relation to salaried and excepted fee-paid and devolved salaried Judicial Office Holders sponsored by DoJ.

The Fee-Paid Judicial Pension Scheme, established under the Judicial Pensions (Fee-Paid Judges) Regulations 2017, was implemented from 1 April 2017 to deliver the litigation remedy to eligible fee-paid officeholders in the case of O'Brien v Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and related litigation, including in Northern Ireland.

Provision for the excepted fee paid judicial office holders' pension entitlement is recognised in the MoJ JPS Accounts. Accordingly, NICTS accounts for employer contributions payable to the JPS for eligible fee paid judicial office holders as they are incurred.

## Average number of persons employed

The average number of whole-time equivalent persons employed during the year was as follows. These figures include those working in the Core Department as well as its Agencies and other bodies included within the consolidated Departmental resource account (including senior management, ministers, special advisers, staff on secondment or loan into the Department and agency/temporary staff, but excluding staff on secondment to other organisations).

[Audited information]

### Departmental Group

					2024-25	2023-24
	Permanently Employed *Staff	Others	Minister	Special Advisers	Total	Total
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Safer Communities	9,403	100	-	-	9,503	9,917
Access to Justice	738	195	-	-	933	963
Reducing Offending	1,784	15	-	-	1,799	1,759
Justice Delivery	538	50	1	1	590	569
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,463</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12,825</b>	<b>13,208</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
Core Department and Agencies	3,344	269	1	1	3,615	3,576
NDPBs	9,119	91	-	-	9,210	9,632
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,463</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12,825</b>	<b>13,208</b>

\* Of the total, 39 members of staff (2023-24: 40) were engaged on capital projects.

## Staff composition

The number of persons employed at 31 March 2025 by the Core Department and its Agencies was as follows:

### Core Department and Agencies

	2024-25			2023-24		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Departmental Board	3	5	8	3	4	7
Senior Civil Service	15	15	30	11	16	27
Departmental employees	1,843	1,780	3,623	1,829	1,824	3,653

The breakdown of Senior Civil Service staff by pay scale is as follows:

### Core Department and Agencies

Pay Scale	Banding in 2024-25	2024-25	2023-24
		Number	Number
Pay Scale 1	£81,614 to £91,575	23	21
Pay Scale 2	£104,605 to £116,930	6	5
Pay Scale 3	£135,008 to £154,025	1	1
Pay Scale 4	£182,104 to £208,306	-	-

## Managing attendance

The Department had an overall sickness absence rate of 18.7 days lost per employee in 2023-24 (2022-23: 17.9 days). Annual sickness absence figures can be found at [Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2023-24 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#). The 2024-25 sickness absence data is not currently available and will be published later this year.

## Staff policies

### *Employment, training and advancement of disabled persons*

The NICS is a lead partner of Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) and in 2023 was accredited as a [Disability Positive](#) employer.

The NICS delivers an annual programme of communications and training on disability awareness and has policies in place to support inclusive workplaces. A review of the NICS reasonable adjustment process for in-work support, and for its recruitment selection and onboarding processes, progressed in 2024, which will deliver improvements to the process with implementation anticipated in 2025-26, subject to Ministerial approval and Trade Union consultation. Colleagues with lived experience and external independent advocates have been stakeholders in the reasonable adjustment review.

The NICS is committed to the employment of disabled people and offers work experience for disabled people through the [NICS Work Experience Scheme for Disabled People](#) and annual participation in International Job Shadow Day (IJSJ).

To encourage job applications from disabled people, positive action advertising and targeted advertising alongside a programme of outreach are used. The NICS operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) which ensures a guaranteed number of disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview. Further information can be found on the "Information for disabled applicants" section of the [NICS recruit website](#).

All selection panel members complete mandatory recruitment and selection training, and appointments to the NICS are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition, adhering to the [Recruitment Code](#).

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

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

The NICS Diversity Champions Network includes senior colleagues as designated Diversity Champions for each of the nine NICS Departments, as well as four thematic leads for gender, race and ethnicity, disability and LGBTQ+. The network alongside the NICS corporate HR function, People and Organisational Development, developed and delivered a [NICS Diversity Action Plan 2024-25](#), which set out priorities for action by diversity and inclusion theme and cross-cutting priorities.

Equality is a cornerstone consideration in the development and review of all HR policies which determine how staff are recruited and appointed, their terms and conditions, how they are managed and developed, assessed, recognised and rewarded. Further information 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 [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\)'s website](#).

The NICS continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998, which includes submission of an annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return and a tri-annual Article 55 Review to the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI), both of which assess the composition of the NICS workforce and the composition of applicants and appointees. Although not a statutory requirement, the NICS also conducts a similar formal review of the gender profile of its workforce. The findings from both tri-annual reviews are published in the NICS [Workforce Review](#). The next review will be published late 2025.

### Staff policies (continued)

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 on its website [Department of Justice](#).

### Employee Consultation and Trade Union relationships

The Department of Finance is responsible for the NICS Trade Union Arrangements Policy. People & Organisational Development within the DoF consults and/or negotiates with the NICS recognised trade unions on matters such as pay, promotion, and annual leave which are relevant across the NICS. Local issues relevant only to a particular office or area of work is handled by local managers, and branch trade union representatives, through agreed Local Whitley procedures/constitutions. The DoJ has its own Departmental Whitley structure, to consider matters unique to the DoJ and its Agencies across business areas.

### Pay policy

Under the Civil Service (NI) Order 1999, DoF is responsible for the pay arrangements of NICS civil servants (apart from those Agencies, non-ministerial Government Departments and other bodies with an agreed pay delegation). The pay award system aims to:

- be a system which will help to recruit, retain and motivate staff to perform efficiently the duties required of them;
- encourage staff to improve their individual performance by providing a direct and regular link between satisfactory performance and pay;
- ensure equity of treatment in respect of pay in accordance with legal requirements and the equal opportunities policy of the NICS;
- secure the confidence of staff that their pay will be determined fairly;
- secure the confidence of the public and their representatives in the system for determining the pay of the staff; and
- enable the Government to reconcile its responsibilities for the control of public expenditure with its responsibilities as an employer.

### Pensions and early departure costs

Present and past employees of the Department and its Agencies are covered by either the NICS pension arrangements, Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC), Teachers' Superannuation Scheme or Broadly By Analogy (BBA) Pensions. Those entities covered by each scheme meet the costs of pensions provided for the staff they employ by the payment of charges called Accrued Superannuation Liability Charges. This is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure on an accrued basis annually.

The Department is also required to meet the additional cost of benefits beyond the normal benefits in respect of employees who retire early. The Department provides in full for this cost, charged against the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, when an early retirement programme has been announced. In addition to information contained within the Remuneration and Staff Report, Notes 1.18, 1.20 and 16 to the Accounts provide further detail on how the pension liabilities are calculated.

### Learning and development

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

### *Learning and development (continued)*

Development and delivery of generic staff training is centralised in NICSHR<sup>4</sup>. Training is delivered using a variety of learning delivery channels (including classroom delivery, on-line, and virtual classrooms), providing flexible access to learning. Coherent learning pathways are aligned to both corporate need and the NICS Competency Framework.

During 2024-25, the generic Learning and Development portfolio was updated to include new products, including 16 new classroom products, 11 new eLearning products, five new online resources and 24 product reviews.

A new NICSHR L&D Portfolio is now available showing the comprehensive range of learning available, grouped under six core product areas:

- Policy and Government;
- Leadership and Management;
- Collaborative & Collective Working;
- Innovation, Improvement & Transformation;
- Health and Wellbeing; and
- Digital Skills Development.

Leadership development is a key priority within the NICS and NICSHR L&D offers a suite of products aimed at leadership from EO2 to SCS grades. Development of four new leadership products commenced this year, with 2025-26 launch dates. Topics will cover Inclusive Leadership, Entrepreneurial Leadership, Collective and Compassionate Leadership and Digital Leadership. During 2024-25 a Grade 3 Senior Leadership programme was developed and launched in collaboration with University of Ulster, QUB and the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute. NICSHR continues to develop further leadership products, including a Grade 5 Alumni programme, with events and further resources available within the Leadership Toolkit on LInKS.

### *Staff engagement*

Staff engagement within DoJ takes the shape of in-person meetings and activities as well as virtual sessions. An Internal Communications Forum and Staff Engagement Forum meet on a regular basis, both in-person and virtually, involving representatives from all business areas across the Core Department and its Agencies. Members of both fora have helped inform the development and roll out of a range of staff engagement activities including:

- a Mentoring circles pilot for staff at Executive Officer grade;
- 'SO Connect' sessions on a variety of themes, including 'Overview of the NICS', 'Finance', 'Project Management', delivered by DoJ Senior Managers;
- development of a DoJ Calendar with key dates relating to diversity, inclusion and wellbeing information and events;
- training delivered to a group of voluntary Departmental Harassment Contact Officers who are available to provide advice to staff on a confidential basis if a member of staff feels they are experiencing bullying and harassment in the workplace;
- support for a Menopause Support Group;
- circulation of regular health/wellbeing messages to Wellbeing Champions across the Department for dissemination to staff within their respective business areas as well as publication on the Departmental Intranet;
- promotion of a number of webinars on a variety of topics relating to mental and physical health, as well as information on the Charity for Civil Servants;
- development / enhancement of the DoJ 'Induction Hub' which contains useful information relating to NICS and DoJ policies and procedures; and
- a focus on effective internal communication tools including regular staff update emails and a Departmental e-zine.

<sup>4</sup> NICSHR is the NICS' centralised human resources operational delivery function, falling under the responsibility of the Department of Finance.

## Staff policies (continued)

### Staff engagement scores

When launching the 2023 NICS People Survey in April 2023, the Head of the Civil Service issued a message that the frequency of the Survey was changing from yearly to every other year to allow for proper targeting of actions. The 2025 NICS People survey was launched on 29 April 2025 and the results will be available Autumn 2025.

The 2023 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. For DoJ there were 2,157 (2021: 2,092) permanent staff invited to complete the survey, of which 1,030 (2021: 1,075) participated, a response rate of 47% (2021: 51%). 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%. DoJ responses indicated an Employee Engagement Index of 54% (2021: 58%), compared to the NICS average of 54% (2021: 57%). 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%. The 2023 full survey can be accessed at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/nics-people-survey-results>, and the 2025 full survey will be available at this same link when issued in Autumn 2025.

### Staff turnover

The Departmental Turnover percentage (the total number of people that have left the Department including those who have moved within the NICS) for 2024-25 is 7.6%, and the General Turnover percentage (the people who have left the Department and have not gone elsewhere in the NICS) is 5.8%. This has been calculated by NICSHR based on the Cabinet Office Guidance on calculations for Turnover in the Civil Service.

#### Core Department and Agencies

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Departmental Turnover Rate	General Turnover Rate	Departmental Turnover Rate	General Turnover Rate
	%	%	%	%
Forensic Science Northern Ireland	7.2	3.9	8.8	6.4
Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland	8.4	1.5	6.0	0.8
Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service	12.4	4.3	12.9	5.3
Northern Ireland Prison Service	7.4	6.6	7.7	7.0
Youth Justice Agency	8.1	5.1	9.9	7.4
<b>Core Department and Agencies</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>6.2</b>

## Off-payroll payments

[Audited information]

The Department had the following 'off-payroll' engagements during the financial year as per the criteria set by the Department of Finance. None of the Departmental Board Members are paid 'off payroll'.

Temporary off-payroll worker engagements as at 31 March 2025:

	Core Department and Agencies	NDBPs	Departmental Group
	Number	Number	Number
<b>Number of existing engagements</b>	<b>29</b>	-	<b>29</b>
<i>Of which have:</i>			
Existed for less than one year at time of reporting	5	-	<b>5</b>
Existed for between one and two years at time of reporting	2	-	<b>2</b>
Existed for between two and three years at time of reporting	-	-	-
Existed for between three and four years at time of reporting	6	-	<b>6</b>
Existed for four or more years at time of reporting	16	-	<b>16</b>

All temporary off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2025:

	Core Department and Agencies	NDBPs	Departmental Group
	Number	Number	Number
<b>Number of off-payroll workers engaged during the year</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>
<i>Of which:</i>			
Not subject to off-payroll legislation	29	-	<b>29</b>
Number determined as out-of-scope of IR35	-	1	<b>1</b>
Number determined as in-scope of IR35	-	-	-
Number of engagements reassessed for compliance or assurance purposes during the year	-	-	-
<i>Of which: Number of engagements that saw a change to IR35 status following review</i>	-	-	-
Number of engagements where the status was disputed under provisions in the off-payroll legislation	-	-	-
<i>Of which: Number of engagements that saw a change to IR35 status following review</i>	-	-	-

## Expenditure on consultancy

[Audited information]

In 2024-25, the Department paid £583,459 (2023-24: £120,283) to external consultants. These amounts are included in Professional and consultancy costs disclosed within Notes 4 and 5 to the financial statements.

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

[Audited information]

## Departmental Group

	2024-25			2023-24		
	Compulsory redundancies	Other departures	Total exit packages	Compulsory redundancies	Other departures	Total exit packages
<b>Exit package by cost band:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>
Below £10,000	-	5	5	-	1	1
£10,000 - £25,000	-	5	5	-	-	-
£25,001 - £50,000	-	4	4	-	-	-
£50,001 - £100,000	-	6	6	-	4	4
£100,001 - £150,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£150,001 - £200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Over £200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total number of exit packages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
Core Department and Agencies	-	19	19	-	5	5
NDPBs	-	1	1	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Value</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Total resource cost £</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
Core Department and Agencies	-	660	660	-	298	298
NDPBs	-	25	25	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>298</b>

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (Northern Ireland), a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year of departure. Where the Department has agreed early retirements, the additional costs are met by the Department and not by the Civil Service pension scheme. Ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table.

## **ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT**

### **ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply (SOAS)**

In addition to the primary statements prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) requires the Department of Justice to prepare a Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply (SOAS) and supporting notes.

The SOAS and related notes are subject to audit, as detailed in the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The SOAS is a key accountability statement that shows, in detail, how an entity has spent against their Supply Estimate. Supply is the monetary provision (for resource and capital purposes) and cash (drawn primarily from the Consolidated Fund), that the Assembly gives statutory authority for entities to utilise. The Estimate details Supply and is voted on by the Assembly at the start of the financial year and is then normally revised by a Supplementary Estimate at the end of the financial year. It is the final Estimate, normally the Spring Supplementary Estimate, which forms the basis of the SOAS.

Should an entity exceed the limits set by its Supply Estimate, and corresponding Act of the Assembly, called control limits, its accounts will receive a qualified opinion.

The format of the SOAS mirrors the Supply Estimates to enable comparability between what the Assembly approves and the final outturn. The Supply Estimates are voted by the Assembly and published on the DoJ website.

The SOAS contains a summary table, detailing performance against the control limits that the Assembly has voted on, cash spent (budgets are compiled on an accruals basis and so outturn will not exactly reconcile to cash spent) and administration.

The supporting notes detail the following: Outturn detailed by Estimate line, providing a more detailed breakdown (SOAS 1); a reconciliation of Outturn to Net Expenditure in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE), to tie the SOAS to the financial statements (SOAS 2); a reconciliation of Net Resource Outturn to Net Cash Requirement (SOAS 3); and an analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund (SOAS 4).

The SOAS and Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar to, but different to, IFRS. An understanding of the budgeting framework and an explanation of key terms is provided in the Financial Review section of the Performance Report. Further information on the Public Spending Framework and the reasons why budgeting rules are different to IFRS can also be found in Chapter 1 of the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance available on gov.uk.

The SOAS provides a detailed view of financial performance, in a form that is voted on and recognised by the Assembly. The Financial Review, in the Performance Report, provides a summarised discussion of Outturn against Estimate and functions as an introduction to the SOAS disclosures.

*Key to information presented in the Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply:*

<b>Colour</b>	<b>Type of expenditure</b>
	Outturn
	Estimate
	Outturn vs Estimate saving/(excess)

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

Summary of Resource and Capital Outturn 2024-25 - all figures presented in £000

Type of spend	Note	Outturn			Estimate			2024-25 Outturn vs Estimate (including Virements) saving/ (excess)		2023-24
		Voted	Non-Voted	Total	Voted	Non-Voted	Total	Voted	Total	Outturn
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)</b>										
- Resource	SOAS 1.1	1,424,709	9,986	1,434,695	1,428,111	8,075	1,436,186	3,402	1,491	1,358,577
- Capital	SOAS 1.2	85,611	-	85,611	88,413	-	88,413	2,802	2,802	88,155
<b>Total DEL</b>		<b>1,510,320</b>	<b>9,986</b>	<b>1,520,306</b>	<b>1,516,524</b>	<b>8,075</b>	<b>1,524,599</b>	<b>6,204</b>	<b>4,293</b>	<b>1,446,732</b>
<b>Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)</b>										
- Resource	SOAS 1.1	255,804	(373)	255,431	702,235	(215)	702,020	446,431	446,589	486,375
- Capital	SOAS 1.2	197	-	197	200	-	200	3	3	177
<b>Total AME</b>		<b>256,001</b>	<b>(373)</b>	<b>255,628</b>	<b>702,435</b>	<b>(215)</b>	<b>702,220</b>	<b>446,434</b>	<b>446,592</b>	<b>486,552</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>										
- Resource	SOAS 1.1	1,680,513	9,613	1,690,126	2,130,346	7,860	2,138,206	449,833	448,080	1,844,952
- Capital	SOAS 1.2	85,808	-	85,808	88,613	-	88,613	2,805	2,805	88,332
<b>Total Budget Expenditure</b>		<b>1,766,321</b>	<b>9,613</b>	<b>1,775,934</b>	<b>2,218,959</b>	<b>7,860</b>	<b>2,226,819</b>	<b>452,638</b>	<b>450,885</b>	<b>1,933,284</b>
<b>Non-Budget Expenditure</b>		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Budget and Non-Budget</b>		<b>1,766,321</b>	<b>9,613</b>	<b>1,775,934</b>	<b>2,218,959</b>	<b>7,860</b>	<b>2,226,819</b>	<b>452,638</b>	<b>450,885</b>	<b>1,933,284</b>

Figures in the areas outlined in bold are Voted totals subject to Assembly control.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

**Net Cash Requirement 2024-25 - all figures presented in £000**

<u>Type of spend</u>		2024-25		2023-24	
		Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate (including Virements) saving/ (excess)	Outturn
	Note	Total	Total	Total	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Net Cash Requirement</b>	SOAS 3	1,614,891	1,866,852	251,961	1,476,825

Figures in the areas outlined in bold are Voted totals subject to Assembly control.

**Administration Costs 2024-25 - all figures presented in £000**

<u>Type of spend</u>		2024-25		2023-24	
		Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate (including Virements) saving/ (excess)	Outturn
	Note	Total	Total	Total	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Administration costs</b>	SOAS 1.1	42,690	43,964	1,274	41,133

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## Notes to the Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply 2024-25 - all figures presented in £000

## SOAS 1 Outturn detail by Estimate line

## SOAS 1.1 Analysis of Resource Outturn detail by Estimate line

<u>Type of spend</u>	Outturn*						Estimate				2024-25	2023-24
											Outturn vs Estimate (including Virement) saving/ (excess)	Outturn
	Administration			Programme								
	Gross	Income	Net	Gross	Income	Net	Total	Total	Virement	Total including Virement	Total	Total
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b>Spending in Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)</b>												
<b>Voted expenditure</b>												
1. Access to Justice	18,504	(570)	17,934	246,464	(49,264)	197,200	215,134	213,488	1,646	215,134	-	202,286
<i>Of which:</i>												
<i>Access to Justice - Core Department</i>	10,492	(384)	10,108	20,019	(8,306)	11,713	21,821	22,582	(761)	21,821	-	21,033
<i>NI Courts and Tribunals Service</i>	8,012	(186)	7,826	94,783	(39,211)	55,572	63,398	62,756	642	63,398	-	59,011
<i>Legal Services Agency NI</i>	-	-	-	130,265	(1,747)	128,518	128,518	126,785	1,733	128,518	-	121,029
<i>Criminal Justice Inspection NI*</i>	-	-	-	1,397	-	1,397	1,397	1,365	32	1,397	-	1,213
2. Safer Communities	9,960	(418)	9,542	94,826	(8,135)	86,691	96,233	101,607	(1,996)	99,611	3,378	95,715
<i>Of which:</i>												
<i>Safer Communities - Core Department</i>	9,960	(418)	9,542	32,045	(7,813)	24,232	33,774	37,178	(2,219)	34,959	1,185	35,029
<i>Forensic Science NI</i>	-	-	-	16,454	(322)	16,132	16,132	16,407	-	16,407	275	15,061
<i>Probation Board for NI*</i>	-	-	-	26,191	-	26,191	26,191	25,968	223	26,191	-	24,609
<i>Office of the Police Ombudsman for NI*</i>	-	-	-	10,638	-	10,638	10,638	12,131	-	12,131	1,493	11,461
<i>NI Policing Board*</i>	-	-	-	5,903	-	5,903	5,903	6,228	-	6,228	325	6,099
<i>Police Rehabilitation &amp; Retraining Trust*</i>	-	-	-	1,945	-	1,945	1,945	1,954	-	1,954	9	1,786
<i>NI Police Fund*</i>	-	-	-	1,463	-	1,463	1,463	1,514	-	1,514	51	1,511
<i>RUC George Cross Foundation*</i>	-	-	-	187	-	187	187	227	-	227	40	159

\* NDPB outturn is recorded Net.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## SOAS 1.1 Analysis of Resource Outturn detail by Estimate line (continued)

Type of spend	Outturn*						Estimate				2024-25	2023-24
											Outturn vs Estimate (including Virement) saving/ (excess)	Outturn
	Administration			Programme								
	Gross	Income	Net	Gross	Income	Net	Total	Total	Virement	Total including Virement	Total	Total
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b>Spending in Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) (continued)</b>												
3. Reducing Offending	15,598	(384)	15,214	176,980	(12,921)	164,059	179,273	178,923	350	179,273	-	168,593
<i>Of which:</i>												
<i>Reducing Offending – Core Department</i>	4,745	(384)	4,361	14,303	(7,814)	6,489	10,850	10,532	318	10,850	-	-
<i>NI Prison Service</i>	10,853	-	10,853	146,788	(5,104)	141,684	152,537	152,628	(91)	152,537	-	152,720
<i>Youth Justice Agency</i>	-	-	-	15,889	(3)	15,886	15,886	15,763	123	15,886	-	15,873
4. Police Service of NI*	-	-	-	934,069	-	934,069	934,069	934,093	-	934,093	24	882,833
<b>Total Voted DEL</b>	<b>44,062</b>	<b>(1,372)</b>	<b>42,690</b>	<b>1,452,339</b>	<b>(70,320)</b>	<b>1,382,019</b>	<b>1,424,709</b>	<b>1,428,111</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,428,111</b>	<b>3,402</b>	<b>1,349,427</b>
<b>Non-Voted expenditure</b>												
5. NI Courts and Tribunals Service - Consolidated Fund Standing Services	-	-	-	11,035	-	11,035	11,035	11,075	-	11,075	40	10,311
6. Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts	-	-	-	-	(1,049)	(1,049)	(1,049)	(3,000)	-	(3,000)	(1,951)	(1,161)
<b>Total Non-Voted DEL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,035</b>	<b>(1,049)</b>	<b>9,986</b>	<b>9,986</b>	<b>8,075</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,075</b>	<b>(1,911)</b>	<b>9,150</b>
<b>Total Resource spending in DEL</b>	<b>44,062</b>	<b>(1,372)</b>	<b>42,690</b>	<b>1,463,374</b>	<b>(71,369)</b>	<b>1,392,005</b>	<b>1,434,695</b>	<b>1,436,186</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,436,186</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>1,358,577</b>

\* NDPB outturn is recorded Net.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

SOAS 1.1 Analysis of Resource Outturn detail by Estimate line (continued)

<u>Type of spend</u>	Outturn*						Estimate			2024-25	2023-24	
										Outturn vs Estimate (including Virement) saving/ (excess)	Outturn	
	Administration			Programme								
	Gross	Income	Net	Gross	Income	Net	Total	Total	Virement	Total including Virement	Total	Total
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b>Spending in Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)</b>												
<b>Voted expenditure</b>												
<i>Of which:</i>												
7. Core Department	-	-	-	(18,234)	-	(18,234)	(18,234)	178,241	(6)	178,235	196,469	64,672
8. NI Courts and Tribunals Service	-	-	-	116	-	116	116	3,266	-	3,266	3,150	511
9. Legal Services Agency NI	-	-	-	15,566	-	15,566	15,566	21,718	-	21,718	6,152	16,370
10. Forensic Science NI	-	-	-	56	-	56	56	50	6	56	-	(1)
11. NI Prison Service	-	-	-	1,240	-	1,240	1,240	42,732	-	42,732	41,492	2,172
12. Youth Justice Agency	-	-	-	(150)	-	(150)	(150)	(30)	-	(30)	120	132
13. PSNI Pensions*	-	-	-	249,646	-	249,646	249,646	295,531	-	295,531	45,885	272,623
14. Police Service of NI*	-	-	-	6,528	-	6,528	6,528	157,992	-	157,992	151,464	129,990
15. Other NDPBs*	-	-	-	783	-	783	783	2,435	-	2,435	1,652	(173)
16. NI Judicial Pension Scheme	-	-	-	253	-	253	253	300	-	300	47	219
<b>Total Voted AME</b>	-	-	-	<b>255,804</b>	-	<b>255,804</b>	<b>255,804</b>	<b>702,235</b>	-	<b>702,235</b>	<b>446,431</b>	<b>486,515</b>
<b>Non-Voted expenditure</b>												
17. NI Courts and Tribunals Service - Consolidated Fund Standing Services	-	-	-	(373)	-	(373)	(373)	(215)	-	(215)	158	(140)
<b>Total Non-Voted AME</b>	-	-	-	<b>(373)</b>	-	<b>(373)</b>	<b>(373)</b>	<b>(215)</b>	-	<b>(215)</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>(140)</b>
<b>Total Resource spending in AME</b>	-	-	-	<b>255,431</b>	-	<b>255,431</b>	<b>255,431</b>	<b>702,020</b>	-	<b>702,020</b>	<b>446,589</b>	<b>486,375</b>

\* NDPB outturn is recorded Net.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

SOAS 1.1 Analysis of Resource Outturn detail by Estimate line (continued)

<u>Type of spend</u>	Outturn*						Total	Estimate			2024-25	2023-24			
	Administration			Programme				Total	Total	Virement	Total including Virement	Outturn vs Estimate (including Virement) saving/ (excess)	Outturn		
	Gross	Income	Net	Gross	Income	Net						Total	Total	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000						£000	£000	£000	£000
Total Non-Budget	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Total Resource	44,062	(1,372)	42,690	1,718,805	(71,369)	1,647,436	1,690,126	2,138,206	-	2,138,206	448,080	1,844,952			

\* NDPB outturn is recorded Net.

The main reasons for the variances are outlined above in the Budgetary Performance section of the Financial Review.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## SOAS 1.2 Analysis of Capital Outturn detail by Estimate line

Type of spend	Outturn*			Estimate			2024-25	2023-24
							Outturn vs Estimate (including Virement) saving/ (excess)	Outturn
	Gross	Income	Net Total	Total	Virement	Total including virement	Total	Total
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Spending in Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)</b>								
<b>Voted expenditure</b>								
1. Access to Justice	10,703	(2)	10,701	11,653	-	11,653	952	5,359
Of which:								
Access to Justice - Core Department	600	(2)	598	1,294	-	1,294	696	601
NI Courts and Tribunals Service	9,905	-	9,905	10,092	-	10,092	187	4,455
Legal Services Agency NI	188	-	188	265	-	265	77	301
Criminal Justice Inspection NI*	10	-	10	2	-	2	(8)	2
2. Safer Communities	3,153	(5)	3,148	4,351	-	4,351	1,203	2,102
Of which:								
Safer Communities - Core Department	681	(5)	676	982	-	982	306	(54)
Forensic Science NI	1,277	-	1,277	1,890	-	1,890	613	1,589
Probation Board for NI*	980	-	980	1,245	-	1,245	265	461
Office of the Police Ombudsman for NI*	134	-	134	111	-	111	(23)	11
NI Policing Board*	23	-	23	25	-	25	2	5
Police Rehabilitation & Retraining Trust*	51	-	51	52	-	52	1	38
NI Police Fund*	7	-	7	-	-	-	(7)	52
RUC George Cross Foundation*	-	-	-	46	-	46	46	-
3. Reducing Offending	16,330	(2)	16,328	16,468	-	16,468	140	16,810
Of which:								
Reducing Offending – Core Department	519	(1)	518	639	-	639	121	-
NI Prison Service	14,037	(1)	14,036	14,053	-	14,053	17	16,334
Youth Justice Agency	1,774	-	1,774	1,776	-	1,776	2	476
4. Police Service of NI*	55,434	-	55,434	55,941	-	55,941	507	63,884

\* NDPB outturn is recorded Net.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts

## SOAS 1.2 Analysis of Capital Outturn detail by Estimate line (continued)

Type of spend	Outturn*			Estimate			2024-25	2023-24
							Outturn vs Estimate (including Virement) saving/ (excess)	Outturn
	Gross	Income	Net Total	Total	Virement	Total including virement	Total	Total
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Spending in Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) (continued)</b>								
<b>Total Voted DEL</b>	<b>85,620</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>85,611</b>	<b>88,413</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>88,413</b>	<b>2,802</b>	<b>88,155</b>
<b>Non-Voted expenditure</b>								
5. NI Courts and Tribunals Service - Consolidated Fund Standing Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Non-Voted DEL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Capital spending in DEL</b>	<b>85,620</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>85,611</b>	<b>88,413</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>88,413</b>	<b>2,802</b>	<b>88,155</b>
<b>Spending in Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)</b>								
<b>Voted expenditure</b>								
<i>Of which:</i>								
7. Core Department	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. NI Courts and Tribunals Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. Legal Services Agency NI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64
10. Forensic Science NI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11. NI Prison Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. Youth Justice Agency	197	-	197	200	-	200	3	113
13. PSNI Pensions*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. Police Service of NI*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15. Other NDPBs*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16. NI Judicial Pension Scheme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Voted AME</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>177</b>

\* NDPB outturn is recorded Net.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## SOAS 1.2 Analysis of Capital Outturn detail by Estimate line (continued)

<u>Type of spend</u>	Outturn*			Estimate			2024-25	2023-24
							Outturn vs Estimate (including Virement) saving/ (excess)	Outturn
	Gross	Income	Net Total	Total	Virement	Total including virement	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Non-Voted expenditure</b>								
17. NI Courts and Tribunals Service - Consolidated Fund Standing Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Non-Voted AME</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Capital spending in AME</b>	197	-	197	200	-	200	3	177
<b>Total Capital</b>	85,817	(9)	85,808	88,613	-	88,613	2,805	88,332

\* NDPB outturn is recorded Net.

The main reasons for the variances are outlined in the Budgetary and Estimates Performance sections of the Financial Review.

Virements are the reallocation of provision in the Estimates that do not require Assembly authority (because the Assembly does not vote to that level of detail and delegates to DoF). Further information on virements are provided in the Supply Estimates in Northern Ireland Guidance Manual, available on the DoF website.

The Outturn vs Estimate column is based on the total including virements. The Estimate total before virements have been made is included so that users can reconcile this Estimate back to the Estimates approved by the Assembly or Parliament.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

**SOAS 2 Reconciliation of Outturn to Net Expenditure**

		2024-25	2023-24
	Note	Outturn £000	Outturn £000
<b>Total Resource Outturn in Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply</b>			
Total DEL	SOAS 1.1	1,434,695	1,358,577
Total AME	SOAS 1.1	255,431	486,375
Total Non-Budget	SOAS 1.1	-	-
		<b>1,690,126</b>	<b>1,844,952</b>
Add: Capital grants		-	636
Add: Research and Development grants		652	581
Add: Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme	SOAS 3	1,049	1,161
		<b>1,701</b>	<b>2,378</b>
<b>Net Expenditure in Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</b>	SoCNE	<b>1,691,827</b>	<b>1,847,330</b>

As noted in the introduction to the SOAS above, Outturn and Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar to, but different from, IFRS. Therefore, this note reconciles the Resource Outturn to Net Expenditure, linking the SOAS to the financial statements.

Capital grants and Research & Development (R&D) grants are budgeted for as Capital DEL but accounted for as spend on the face of the SoCNE, and therefore function as a reconciling item between Resource and Net Operating Expenditure.

Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) is a type of Consolidated Fund Extra Receipt (CFER), which is not accounted for as income on the face of the SoCNE as it does not relate to the Department's operating activities. The CFER is treated as Resource DEL income for budgeting purposes and therefore functions as a reconciling item between Resource Outturn and Net Operating Expenditure.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

**SOAS 3 Reconciliation of Net Resource Outturn to Net Cash Requirement**

		2024-25		
	Note	Outturn £000	Estimate £000	Outturn vs Estimate saving/ (excess) £000
<b>Resource Outturn</b>	SOAS 1.1	1,690,126	2,138,206	448,080
<b>Capital Outturn</b>	SOAS 1.2	85,808	88,613	2,805
<b>Adjustments for ALBs:</b>				
Remove voted resource and capital		(1,302,608)	(1,496,860)	(194,252)
Add cash grant-in-aid	5	1,175,125	1,275,277	100,152
<b>Adjustments to remove non-cash items:</b>				
Depreciation, impairments and revaluations	7, 8	(33,969)	(35,883)	(1,914)
New provisions and adjustments to previous provisions	15, 16	(141,766)	(386,329)	(244,563)
Other non-cash items	4,5	288	7,224	6,936
<b>Adjustments to reflect movements in working balances:</b>				
(Decrease) in inventories	11	69	-	(69)
Increase in receivables	13	(3,533)	-	3,533
(Increase) in payables	14	12,435	140,998	128,563
(Decrease) in financial assets		(2)	-	2
Use of provisions and pensions liabilities	15, 16	142,531	143,466	935
		<b>(151,430)</b>	<b>(352,107)</b>	<b>(200,677)</b>
<b>Removal of Non-Voted budget items</b>				
Consolidated Fund Standing Services	5	(10,662)	(7,860)	2,802
Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts - ARIS	SOAS 2	1,049	-	(1,049)
		<b>(9,613)</b>	<b>(7,860)</b>	<b>1,753</b>
<b>Net Cash Requirement</b>		<b>1,614,891</b>	<b>1,866,852</b>	<b>251,961</b>

As noted in the introduction to the SOAS above, Outturn and Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, not on a cash basis. This reconciliation bridges the Resource Outturn to the Net Cash Requirement.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

**SOAS 4 Income payable to the Consolidated Fund****SOAS 4.1 Analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund**

In addition to income retained by the Department, the following income is payable to the Consolidated Fund (cash receipts being shown in italics).

The type of income allowed to be retained by the Department is set out in the ambit of the Supply Estimate. Income of a type not included in the Estimate, or in excess of amounts agreed with the Department of Finance, is required to be surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. This includes income relating to fines, confiscation orders, fixed penalties and other monetary penalties. Details of income collected by NICTS will be disclosed in the NICTS Trust Statement which is published separately from these financial statements.

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Accruals	<i>Cash basis</i>	Accruals	<i>Cash basis</i>
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Income outside the ambit of the Estimate (Resource)	4,288	<i>4,288</i>	4,550	<i>4,550</i>
Income outside the ambit of the Estimate (Capital)	-	<i>-</i>	-	<i>-</i>
Excess cash surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund	344	<i>459</i>	460	<i>918</i>
<b>Total Amount Payable to the Consolidated Fund</b>	<b>4,632</b>	<b><i>4,747</i></b>	<b>5,010</b>	<b><i>5,468</i></b>

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY DISCLOSURES

## Losses and Special Payments

*[Audited information]***Losses statement**

Numbers	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	Number	Number	Number	Number
Cash losses	5	7	-	8
Claims abandoned	-	624	-	631
Administrative write-offs	178	180	120	126
Fruitless payments	2	196	-	288
Stores losses	2	578	2	4
<b>Total number of losses</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>1,585</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>1,057</b>

Values	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cash losses	-	5	-	5
Claims abandoned	-	1,223	-	420
Administrative write-offs	431	436	234	238
Fruitless payments	1	777	-	128
Stores losses	1	239	7	90
<b>Total value of losses</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>2,680</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>881</b>

**Special payments**

Numbers	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	Number	Number	Number	Number
Compensation payments	1,180	1,566	1,178	1,524
Ex gratia payments	-	-	-	-
<b>Total number of special payments</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>1,524</b>

Values	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Compensation payments	13,614	20,294	11,894	21,124
Ex gratia payments	-	-	-	-
<b>Total value of special payments</b>	<b>13,614</b>	<b>20,294</b>	<b>11,894</b>	<b>21,124</b>

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY DISCLOSURES (CONTINUED)

### Losses

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) published a Penalty Notice in September 2024 in respect of the PSNI Data Loss on 8 August 2023 which confirmed a monetary penalty of £0.75m. The full £0.75m was paid by the PSNI in October 2024.

### Compensation payments

During 2024-25, final compensation payments were made in 1,093 cases (2023-24: 1,050) by Compensation Services. The total amount of final compensation paid in these cases was £11.575m (2023-24: £10.450m).

Included in the litigation provision in Note 15 are special payments made by the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Amounts utilised during the year included 84 compensation payments (2023-24: 69) totalling £1.93m (2023-24: £1.06m). During the year compensation totalling £0.77m was made in respect of a personal injury claim settled by the Agency (2023-24: Nil).

During 2024-25, total final compensation payments were made in 6 cases (2023-24: 59 cases) by Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service. The total amount of compensation paid in these cases was £0.075m (2023-24: £0.234m). There were no individual payments in excess of £0.3m during 2024-25 (2023-24: Nil).

Compensation payments were made in 2024-25 in 386 cases (2023-24: 346) by the PSNI. The total amount of compensation paid in these cases was £6.680m (2023-24: £9.320m). Payments totalling £1.902m (2023-24: £3.3m) in respect of loss, damage and misfeasance in public office were negotiated and agreed for five individuals (2023-24: three), following a mediation process. Details are provided below.

Case 1	£0.391m
Case 2	£0.466m
Case 3	£0.426m
Case 4	£0.307m
Case 5	£0.312m

### Fraud and error

#### *[Audited information]*

The Agency administers legal aid payments on behalf of DoJ. The complexity of the legislation, the degree of discretion and inherent risks associated with adjudication, assessment and payment of bills can result in inaccurate payments being made in a proportion of cases.

Legal aid expenditure therefore may not be applied for the purposes intended by the Assembly or conform to the authorities which govern them due to:

- Official error - where an error can be attributed to the actions or inactions of the Agency or the wider justice structure;
- Errors made by legal aid applicants and legal practitioners; and
- Fraud.

Overpayments are considered irregular as the expenditure has not been applied in accordance with the purposes intended by the Assembly. Underpayments resulting from official error are also considered to be irregular as the transactions have not been processed in accordance with the applicable legislation.

Estimates of official error within individual sampled legal aid payments have been provided by the SAU, within the DfC, under a Memorandum of Understanding since 2019. The estimated level of overpayments in legal aid expenditure resulting from official error in 2024-25 is £2.0m (2023-24: £0.6m; 2022-23: £1.3m; 2021-22: £1.0m; 2020-21: £4.4m), whilst the estimated level of underpayments is £2.4m (2023-24: £1.5m; 2022-23: £1.2m; 2021-22: £0.9m; 2020-21: £1.2m).

**OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY DISCLOSURES (CONTINUED)****Fraud and error***[Audited information]*

Estimates of applicant fraud and error within individual sampled legal aid payments have been provided by the SAU, within the DfC, under a Memorandum of Understanding since 2021. The amount of legal aid estimated to have been paid incorrectly due to applicant fraud and error in 2021-22 was £1.3m. For the reasons outlined in Section 6 of the Governance Statement, applicant fraud and error testing in its former guise was suspended in 2022 and replaced with a review of live cases under the heading of Future Overpayment Prevention. The 2021-22 figure of £1.3m remains the official baseline for applicant fraud and error within legal aid expenditure.

Estimates of practitioner fraud and error within individual sampled legal aid payments have been provided by the SAU, within the DfC, under a Memorandum of Understanding since 2023. The estimated level of overpayments in legal aid expenditure resulting from practitioner fraud and error in 2024-25 is £2.2m (2023-24: £2.2m), whilst the estimated level of underpayments is £1.1m (2023-24: £1.3m).

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## Fees and charges

[Audited information]

An analysis of income from services provided to external and public sector customers is as follows:

	2024-25			2023-24		
	Income	Full Cost	Surplus/ (deficit)	Income	Full Cost	Surplus/ (deficit)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
AccessNI	3,953	(3,223)	730	4,138	(2,917)	1,221
NI Courts and Tribunals Service	28,295	(34,319)	(6,024)	25,285	(32,539)	(7,254)
Forensic Science NI	11,614	(17,250)	(5,636)	11,333	(16,009)	(4,676)
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,862</b>	<b>(54,792)</b>	<b>(10,930)</b>	<b>40,756</b>	<b>(51,465)</b>	<b>(10,709)</b>

The above information is provided for fees and charges purposes, and not for IFRS 8 Operating Segments purposes.

### AccessNI

AccessNI commenced operations on 1 April 2008, delivering a criminal history disclosure service for Northern Ireland under powers legislated in Part V of the Police Act 1997. The AccessNI Business Model requires the organisation to operate on a Full Cost Recovery Basis in compliance with the requirements set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland. Volunteers are not charged for AccessNI checks.

### Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS)

NICTS is committed to achieving full cost recovery for the services it provides in respect of civil court business. The target of full cost recovery takes account of measures in place to protect access to justice, namely the operation of a court fee exemption and remission policy and also the subsidisation of fees in the family and children's arenas. The income for 2024-25 represents 82% of cost recovery (2023-24: 78%).

### Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI)

Whilst there is a deficit of £5.636m (2023-24: £4.676m) on the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, this is offset by non-cash charges and funding provided by the DoJ.

### Remote contingent liabilities

[Audited information]

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of International Accounting Standard (IAS) 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets, the Department is required to report liabilities for which the likelihood of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of a contingent liability. The Department has no such liabilities. Note 17 provides further details regarding the contingent liabilities that are included within the financial statements.

## ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT



**Hugh Widdis**  
Accounting Officer

**1 July 2025**

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## 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 Department of Justice and of its Departmental Group for the year ended 31 March 2025 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The Department comprises the Core Department and its Agencies. The Departmental Group consists of the Department and the bodies designated for inclusion under the Government Resources and Accounts (Northern Ireland) 2001 (Estimates and Accounts) (Designation of Bodies) Order 2022.

The financial statements comprise: the Department's and the Departmental Group's

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2025;
- Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation of the Departmental Group financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

I have also audited the Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply, and the related notes, and 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 Department and the Departmental Group's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of their 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.

### Emphasis of matter

I draw attention to Notes 15.3 ii and 17iii of the financial statements, which describes the material valuation uncertainty for the Data Loss Compensation Provision within the PSNI. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

### Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects:

- the Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals for the year ended 31 March 2025 and shows that those totals have not been exceeded; and
- 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.

## THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)

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

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

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Department of Justice and its Group'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 Department of Justice and its Group'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 the Department of Justice and its Group is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it is 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 certificate.

### 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.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, 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.

## THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)

### Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Department of Justice and its Group and their 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 subject to audit 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's 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;
- ensuring such internal controls as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- ensuring the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, is prepared in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework; and
- assessing the Department of Justice and its Group'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 Department of Justice and its Group 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.

## THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Department of Justice and its Group through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included governing legislation and any other relevant laws and regulations identified;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on the Department of Justice and its Group'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 the Department of Justice and its Group's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: management override of controls from posting of unusual journals;
- 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;
- communicating with component auditors to request identification of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that could give rise to a material misstatement of the group financial statements;
- 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;
- 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.

**THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)**

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

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals and that those totals have not been exceeded. The voted Assembly control totals are Departmental Expenditure Limits (Resource and Capital), Annually Managed Expenditure (Resource and Capital), Non-Budget and Net Cash Requirement.

I am also 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 Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

**Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



*Dorinnia Carville*  
*Comptroller and Auditor General*  
*Northern Ireland Audit Office*  
*106 University Street*  
*BELFAST*  
*BT7 1EU*

*3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025*

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure****For the year ended 31 March 2025**

This account summarises the expenditure and income generated and consumed on an accruals basis. It also includes other comprehensive income and expenditure, which include changes to the values of non-current assets and other financial instruments that cannot yet be recognised as income or expenditure.

	Note	2024-25		2023-24 (Restated*)	
		Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Revenue from contracts with customers	6	(59,588)	(52,372)	(56,876)	(49,761)
Other operating income	6	(22,590)	(78,651)	(19,800)	(66,474)
<b>Total operating income</b>		<b>(82,178)</b>	<b>(131,023)</b>	<b>(76,676)</b>	<b>(116,235)</b>
Staff costs	4, 5	194,572	839,920	184,788	842,621
Purchase of goods and services	4, 5	147,430	314,106	137,299	304,033
Depreciation and impairment charges	4, 5	33,969	100,385	33,852	99,005
Provisions expense	5	138,099	165,514	214,538	362,453
Grants	5	1,184,964	14,045	1,095,366	14,401
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>		<b>1,699,034</b>	<b>1,433,970</b>	<b>1,665,843</b>	<b>1,622,513</b>
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>		<b>1,616,856</b>	<b>1,302,947</b>	<b>1,589,167</b>	<b>1,506,278</b>
Finance income	6	(8)	(16)	(9)	(21)
Finance expense	4, 5	4,133	388,843	3,648	341,033
<b>Net expenditure for the year before taxation and notionals</b>		<b>1,620,981</b>	<b>1,691,774</b>	<b>1,592,806</b>	<b>1,847,290</b>
Corporation tax		-	53	-	40
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>1,620,981</b>	<b>1,691,827</b>	<b>1,592,806</b>	<b>1,847,330</b>
Audit notional costs		447	447	421	421
Other notional costs		8,536	8,536	7,745	7,745
<b>Total notional costs</b>		<b>8,983</b>	<b>8,983</b>	<b>8,166</b>	<b>8,166</b>
<b>Net expenditure for the year including notionals</b>		<b>1,629,964</b>	<b>1,700,810</b>	<b>1,600,972</b>	<b>1,855,496</b>
<b>Other comprehensive net expenditure</b>					
Items that will not be reclassified to Net operating expenditure:					
Net (gain) on revaluation of:					
- property, plant and equipment	7, 10	(14,204)	(29,925)	(37,565)	(35,663)
- intangible assets	8	(473)	(591)	(757)	(744)
Actuarial loss/(gain) on provisions and pension liabilities	15, 16	3,644	24,465	(4,564)	(638,368)
<b>Comprehensive net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>1,618,931</b>	<b>1,694,759</b>	<b>1,558,086</b>	<b>1,180,721</b>

\*Restated to reflect the elimination of an omitted intra-departmental transaction between PSNI Main and PSNI Pension Accounts. This restatement does not affect the net operating expenditure or overall financial position of the Departmental Group. This is discussed further in Note 2.

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2025

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

	Note	31 March 2025		31 March 2024	
		Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Non-current assets</b>					
Property, plant and equipment	7	643,441	1,428,520	639,012	1,419,657
Intangible assets	8	25,160	34,750	20,365	26,910
Trade and other receivables	13	705	6,750	834	6,774
Financial assets		5	13	7	19
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>669,311</b>	<b>1,470,033</b>	<b>660,218</b>	<b>1,453,360</b>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Assets classified as held for sale	10	60	2,864	60	3,034
Inventories	11	1,255	7,946	1,186	7,959
Trade and other receivables	13	45,532	63,951	50,141	71,359
Financial assets		2	14	2	14
Cash and cash equivalents	12	1,973	4,067	3,297	5,332
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>48,822</b>	<b>78,842</b>	<b>54,686</b>	<b>87,698</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>718,133</b>	<b>1,548,875</b>	<b>714,904</b>	<b>1,541,058</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Trade and other payables	14	(87,943)	(196,640)	(101,421)	(241,793)
Provisions	15	(152,031)	(418,755)	(113,186)	(219,992)
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>(239,974)</b>	<b>(615,395)</b>	<b>(214,607)</b>	<b>(461,785)</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>478,159</b>	<b>933,480</b>	<b>500,297</b>	<b>1,079,273</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>					
Provisions	15	(205,654)	(668,455)	(239,461)	(872,595)
Pension liabilities	16	(3,587)	(7,340,090)	(5,923)	(7,220,403)
Other payables	14	(4,186)	(8,578)	(6,158)	(10,766)
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>(213,427)</b>	<b>(8,017,123)</b>	<b>(251,542)</b>	<b>(8,103,764)</b>
<b>Total assets less total liabilities</b>		<b>264,732</b>	<b>(7,083,643)</b>	<b>248,755</b>	<b>(7,024,491)</b>
<b>Taxpayers' equity and other reserves</b>					
General Fund		(38,138)	(7,747,920)	(52,321)	(7,671,684)
Revaluation Reserve		302,870	664,277	301,076	647,193
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>264,732</b>	<b>(7,083,643)</b>	<b>248,755</b>	<b>(7,024,491)</b>



**Hugh Widdis**  
Accounting Officer

1 July 2025

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

## For the year ended 31 March 2025

The Statement of Cash Flows shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Department during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Department generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of service costs and the extent to which these operations are funded by way of income from the recipients of services provided by the Department. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash inflows and outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Department's future public service delivery.

	Note	2024-25		2023-24	
		Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Net expenditure for the year after taxation		(1,629,964)	(1,700,810)	(1,600,972)	(1,855,496)
Adjustment for non-cash transactions		184,499	755,827	260,470	908,425
(Increase) in trade and other receivables	13	3,534	6,465	(13,906)	(21,345)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	11	(69)	13	43	252
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	14	(12,543)	(41,953)	30,055	70,231
Use of provisions	15, 16	(142,904)	(557,639)	(133,431)	(495,682)
Adjustments to NDPBs opening balances		-	306	-	-
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(1,597,447)</b>	<b>(1,537,791)</b>	<b>(1,457,741)</b>	<b>(1,393,615)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>					
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(18,022)	(76,525)	(21,597)	(85,132)
Purchase of intangible assets		(7,380)	(7,927)	(5,144)	(5,286)
Proceeds of disposal of property, plant and equipment		-	605	479	944
Proceeds of disposal of assets held for sale		-	306	-	-
Loans to other bodies		-	(12)	-	(17)
Repayments from other bodies		2	18	2	13
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>(25,400)</b>	<b>(83,535)</b>	<b>(26,260)</b>	<b>(89,478)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>					
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - current year		1,609,799	1,609,799	1,470,415	1,470,415
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - prior year		6,407	6,407	3,167	3,167
From the Consolidated Fund (non-Supply)		11,035	11,035	10,311	10,311
Capital element of payments in respect of leases and 'on-balance sheet' (SoFP) PPP/PFI contracts		(3,024)	(4,478)	(3,133)	(4,582)
<b>Net cash inflow from financing activities</b>		<b>1,624,217</b>	<b>1,622,763</b>	<b>1,480,760</b>	<b>1,479,311</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period before adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund</b>		<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,437</b>	<b>(3,241)</b>	<b>(3,782)</b>
Receipts due to the Consolidated Fund which are outside the scope of the Department's activities		4,747	4,632	5,468	5,009
Payments of amounts due to the Consolidated Fund		(5,329)	(5,329)	(5,168)	(5,168)
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period after adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund</b>		<b>788</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>(2,941)</b>	<b>(3,941)</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the period</b>	12	<b>(5,503)</b>	<b>(3,542)</b>	<b>(2,562)</b>	<b>399</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	12	<b>(4,715)</b>	<b>(2,802)</b>	<b>(5,503)</b>	<b>(3,542)</b>

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## Consolidated Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity - Core Department and Agencies

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Core Department and Agencies, analysed into 'general fund reserves' (i.e. those reserves that reflect a contribution from the Consolidated Fund). The General Fund represents the total assets less liabilities of the Department, to the extent that the total is not represented by other reserves and financing items. The Revaluation Reserve reflects the change in asset values that have not been recognised as income or expenditure.

	Note	Core Department and Agencies		
		General Fund	Revaluation Reserve	Taxpayers' Equity
		£000	£000	£000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>		<b>35,165</b>	<b>276,315</b>	<b>311,480</b>
Net Assembly Funding - drawn down		1,473,582	-	1,473,582
Net Assembly Funding - deemed		(3,167)	-	(3,167)
Consolidated Fund Standing Services		10,311	-	10,311
Supply receivable adjustment	13	6,469	-	6,469
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(1,596,408)	38,322	(1,558,086)
Auditor's remuneration		421	-	421
Other notionals		7,745	-	7,745
<b>Movement in reserves:</b>				
Transfer between reserves		13,561	(13,561)	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>		<b>(52,321)</b>	<b>301,076</b>	<b>248,755</b>
Net Assembly Funding - drawn down		1,616,206	-	1,616,206
Net Assembly Funding - deemed		(6,407)	-	(6,407)
Consolidated Fund Standing Services		11,035	-	11,035
Supply receivable adjustment	13	5,091	-	5,091
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(1,633,608)	14,677	(1,618,931)
Auditor's remuneration		447	-	447
Other notional costs		8,536	-	8,536
<b>Movement in reserves:</b>				
Transfer between reserves		12,883	(12,883)	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2025</b>		<b>(38,138)</b>	<b>302,870</b>	<b>264,732</b>

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## Consolidated Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity - Departmental Group

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Departmental Group, analysed into 'general fund reserves' (i.e. those reserves that reflect a contribution from the Consolidated Fund). The General Fund represents the total assets less liabilities of the Department, to the extent that the total is not represented by other reserves and financing items. The Revaluation Reserve reflects the change in asset values that have not been recognised as income or expenditure.

	Note	Departmental Group		
		General Fund	Revaluation Reserve	Taxpayers' Equity
		£000	£000	£000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>		<b>(7,963,538)</b>	<b>624,407</b>	<b>(7,339,131)</b>
Net Assembly Funding - drawn down		1,473,582	-	1,473,582
Net Assembly Funding - deemed		(3,167)	-	(3,167)
Consolidated Fund Standing Services		10,311	-	10,311
Supply receivable adjustment	13	6,469	-	6,469
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(1,217,128)	36,407	(1,180,721)
Auditor's remuneration		421	-	421
Other notionals		7,745	-	7,745
<b>Movement in reserves:</b>				
Transfer between reserves		13,621	(13,621)	-
Other		-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>		<b>(7,671,684)</b>	<b>647,193</b>	<b>(7,024,491)</b>
Net Assembly Funding - drawn down		1,616,206	-	1,616,206
Net Assembly Funding - deemed		(6,407)	-	(6,407)
Consolidated Fund Standing Services		11,035	-	11,035
Supply receivable adjustment	13	5,091	-	5,091
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(1,725,275)	30,516	(1,694,759)
Auditor's remuneration		447	-	447
Other notional costs		8,536	-	8,536
<b>Movement in reserves:</b>				
Transfer between reserves		13,526	(13,526)	-
Adjustments to NDPBs opening balances		605	94	699
<b>Balance at 31 March 2025</b>		<b>(7,747,920)</b>	<b>664,277</b>	<b>(7,083,643)</b>

The notes on pages 105 to 169 form part of these Accounts.

## Notes to the Accounts

### 1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2024-25 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply IFRS as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy that is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Department of Justice for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Department are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the Accounts.

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the FReM also requires the Department to prepare one additional primary statement. The Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply and supporting notes show outturn against Estimate in terms of the net resource requirement and the net cash requirement.

#### 1.1 Accounting convention

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

The Accounts are stated in sterling, which is the Department's functional and presentational currency. Unless otherwise noted, the amounts shown in these financial statements are in thousands of pounds sterling (£000).

#### 1.2 Basis of consolidation

These accounts consolidate the Core Department, Executive Agencies and NDPBs which fall within the Departmental boundary as defined in the FReM and make up the Departmental Group. A list of entities included within the Departmental boundary is given in Note 23.

Where two columns are included, the first contains amounts for the Core Department and Agencies and the second contains amounts for the Departmental Group as a whole. Accounting policies are harmonised across the Group and all significant intra-departmental balances and transactions between entities within the Departmental boundary are eliminated.

All consolidated entities have accounting reference dates that align with the Core Department.

#### 1.3 Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment comprises land, buildings, vehicles, plant and machinery, information technology and assets under construction.

The Department of Justice occupies a number of properties within the Northern Ireland Executive Estate. These are managed by DoF. DoF recovers the costs of occupancy of such properties on a notional basis from the Department of Justice. Terms of occupancy of these buildings are outlined in an agreement known as the 'Memorandum of Terms of Occupancy'.

#### **Consolidation of asset categories**

The property, plant and equipment note requires the amalgamation of asset categories under the vehicles, plant and machinery heading. The asset categories represented by this heading include:

- plant and machinery
- motor vehicles
- aircraft and helicopters
- furniture and fittings
- office equipment
- security equipment
- antiques

Where relevant the grouping of a range of property, plant and equipment has also been undertaken in respect of some personal computers, printers, office furniture and equipment.

## 1.4 Valuation of property, plant and equipment

Expenditure on property, plant and equipment of over £1,000 is normally capitalised. PSNI expenditure is capitalised on property, plant and equipment that exceeds £5,000 for an individual asset, or £1,000 for an asset forming part of a significant asset group. The majority of firearms are not capitalised as they fall outside these threshold limits.

On initial recognition property, plant and equipment are measured at cost including any expenditure, such as installation, directly attributable to bringing them into working condition. Items classified as 'under construction' are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position to the extent that money has been paid or a liability has been incurred.

In compliance with IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment, subsequent expenditure on an asset which does not meet the criteria of enhancement or improvement is treated as revenue.

All property, plant and equipment are carried at fair value. Professional valuations of land and buildings are carried out independently by Land and Property Services (LPS) within the Department of Finance. Land and buildings are carried at the last professional valuation, in accordance with the Appraisal and Valuation Manual produced jointly by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation and the Incorporated Society of Valuers and Auctioneers. Land and buildings are restated to current value using professional valuations, in accordance with IAS 16, every five years and in the intervening years by the use of indices provided by LPS, specific to the Northern Ireland property sector.

In addition, a number of properties owned by the Department have been valued by LPS for the purposes of these Accounts. Properties regarded as operational are valued on the basis of existing use, unless there is no market for the property or they are deemed to be specialised, in which case they are valued on a depreciated replacement cost basis.

NIPS has considered the impact of analysing property, plant and equipment assets into identifiable components with different useful lives and accounting for them separately. NIPS componentises new buildings and significant enhancements to existing buildings and adds them to the property, plant and equipment register, analysed between building structure, engineering systems, equipment and security installations and external works.

FSNI has depreciated separately identified components of its buildings assets according to the useful life of that component, with individual lives applied to each component.

Antiques held by NICTS are included in the furniture and fittings classification and are professionally valued every five years. The last valuation was carried out at 31 March 2024.

Upward revaluations are credited to the Revaluation Reserve and permanent reductions in the value of property, plant and equipment are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Any subsequent revaluation of assets is credited to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent that it reverses previous revaluation decreases recognised as an expense.

## 1.5 Intangible assets

Expenditure on case management systems including supplier design and implementation costs and internal project team staff salary costs, has been capitalised and classified as an intangible asset. Expenditure on computer software licenses lasting more than one year and costing more than £1,000 is capitalised and classified as intangible assets. Software licences are amortised over the shorter of the term of the licence and the useful economic life.

All intangible assets are carried at fair value. Software licences are revalued annually using appropriate indices provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

## 1.6 Depreciation and amortisation

All property, plant and equipment and intangible assets are depreciated/amortised at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives. Assets in the course of construction are depreciated from the point when the asset is brought into use. Estimated useful lives, which are reviewed regularly, are:

Asset category	Useful Life
Land	No depreciation
Buildings (including temporary buildings)	10 - 80 years
Vehicles, plant and machinery	2 - 40 years
Information technology	1 - 16 years
Assets under construction	No depreciation
Intangible assets (software and licences)	1 - 15 years

## 1.7 Realised element of depreciation from Revaluation Reserve

Depreciation is charged to expenditure on the revalued amount of property, plant and equipment. An element of depreciation therefore arises due to the increase in valuation and is in excess of the depreciation that would be charged on the historical cost of assets. The amount relating to this excess is a realised gain on disposal and is transferred from the Revaluation Reserve to the General Fund.

## 1.8 Assets classified as held for sale

Assets are classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered through sale rather than continuing use. This condition is regarded as met only when the sale is highly probable and the asset is available for immediate sale in its present condition. Management must be committed to the sale and it should be expected to be completed within one year from the date of classification.

Assets classified as held for sale are measured at the lower of carrying amount and fair value less costs to sell. Depreciation is not charged once an asset has been classified as held for sale.

## 1.9 Inventories

Inventories shown on the Statement of Financial Position relate to essential inventories held by the Northern Ireland Prison Service, Forensic Science Northern Ireland and PSNI. These are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value. Provision is made for obsolete, slow moving or defective items where appropriate. Inventories that are deemed consumable are written off in the year of purchase. In addition, Forensic Science Northern Ireland holds exhibits on behalf of a third-party but the exhibits are not included in the financial statements of either the Agency or the Department.

Assets seized by the Enforcement of Judgements Office (within Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service) are not included in inventories on the basis that they are not owned by the Department, but are held for resale in settlement of third-party creditors. Third-party assets held by the Enforcement of Judgements Office at the year end are disclosed in Note 22.

## 1.10 Taxation

### Value Added Tax (VAT)

Where relevant, output VAT is charged or input VAT is recoverable, and the amounts are stated net of VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the relevant expenditure category or included in the capitalised purchase cost of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets. VAT is recoverable on a Departmental basis for the Core Department and Agencies. Where relevant the NDPBs are registered for VAT as individual entities.

### Corporation Tax

As Crown bodies, the Core Department and Agencies are exempt from liability for Corporation Tax. However NDPBs are required to register for Corporation Tax purposes as individual entities and tax is calculated on any profits generated from the sale of assets, or through the use or rental of surplus properties.

## 1.11 Leases

In accordance with IFRS 16, the Department as a lessee is required to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases (apart from the exemptions listed below).

### *Scope and exclusions*

At inception of a contract, the Department assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time. To assess whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, the Department assesses whether:

- the contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- the Department has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefit from the use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- the Department has the right to direct how and for what purpose the asset is used for.

As adapted by the FReM, IFRS 16 has also been applied to leases with nil or nominal consideration, for example peppercorn leases, defined as lease payments significantly below market value. These assets are measured at current value in use or fair value on initial recognition.

When making the above assessments the Department excludes two types of leases:

- low value assets, with an assessment performed on the underlying asset when new (these are determined to be in line with capitalisation thresholds); and
- leases with a lease term of 12 months or less.

### *Departmental Group as a lessee*

#### *Right of use assets*

The Department recognises a right of use asset and lease liability at the commencement date. The right of use asset is initially measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for initial direct costs, prepayments or incentives, and costs related to restoration at the end of a lease. The right of use assets are subsequently measured at either fair value or current value in existing use in line with property, plant and equipment assets. The cost measurement model in IFRS 16 is used as an appropriate proxy for current value in existing use or fair value for the majority of leases (consistent with the principles for subsequent measurement of property, plant and equipment) except for those which meet one of the following:

### 1.11 Leases (continued)

- a longer-term lease that has no provisions to update lease payments for market conditions or if there is a significant period of time between those updates; and;
- the fair value or current value in existing use of the underlying asset is likely to fluctuate significantly due to changes in market prices.

The right of use asset is depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right of use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of the right of use assets are determined on the same basis of those of property, plant and equipment assets.

The Department applies IAS 36 Impairment of Assets to determine whether the right of use asset is impaired and to account for any impairment loss identified.

#### **Lease liabilities**

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, or if that cannot be readily determined, the rate provided by HM Treasury (4.72% for leases recognised in 2024, 4.81% for those in 2025).

The lease payment is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. It is re-measured when there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in the index or rate, if there is a change in the Department's estimates of the amount expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee, or if the Department changes its assessment of whether it will exercise a purchase, extension or termination option.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- fixed payments, including in-substance fixed payments;
- variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index rate as at the commencement date;
- amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee;
- the exercise price under a purchase option that the Department is reasonably certain to exercise; and
- penalties for early termination of a lease unless the Department is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

At the commencement of a lease the Department recognises a right of use asset and a lease liability.

#### **Departmental Group as lessor**

Where the Department acts as a lessor, the arrangement will be assessed to determine whether it constitutes a finance lease, this being where the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an underlying asset are substantially transferred to the lessee. For these leases the asset is derecognised, and a receivable is recognised, with accrued interest being treated as income over its life. All other leases are treated as operating leases and rental income is recognised in the SoCNE on a straight-line basis.

### 1.12 Public Private Partnership (PPP)/Public Finance Initiatives (PFI) transactions

Where the balance of control of the PPP/PFI scheme is borne by the Department, the scheme is recognised as a non-current asset and the liability to pay for it is accounted for as a finance lease, in accordance with IFRIC 12 Service Concession Arrangements. Contract payments are apportioned between an imputed finance lease charge and a service charge. The services received under the contract are recorded as operating expenses. Further details of current ongoing agreements are shown in Note 19 to the Accounts.

### 1.13 Provisions

Provision is made 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. Where the effect of the time value of money is significant, the estimated risk-adjusted cash flows are discounted using the general provision discount rates as set out by Treasury which varies by the term of the liability. Treasury issue nominal rates which do not take account of inflation, unlike real rates. Departments are therefore required to separately inflate their cash flows. The relevant rates as shown in the table below:

	Term	Nominal Rate
Short-term	Up to 5 years	4.03%
Medium-term	5 to 10 years	4.07%
Long-term	10 to 40 years	4.81%

	Term	Inflation Rate
Year 1	Up to 1 year	2.60%
Year 2	Up to 2 years	2.30%
Into perpetuity	Beyond 2 years	2.00%

### 1.14 Contingent liabilities

In accordance with IAS 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets, the Department discloses as contingent liabilities, potential future obligations arising from past obligating events where the existence of such obligations remain uncertain pending the outcome of future events outside the Department's control, unless their likelihood is considered to be remote.

In addition, the Department 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 that 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.

### 1.15 Third-party assets

Third-party assets are assets for which the Department acts as custodian or trustee, but in which neither the Department nor Government more generally has a direct beneficial interest. Third-party assets are not public assets, and hence are not recorded in the primary financial statements. In the interests of general disclosure and transparency, details of the Departments third-party assets are provided in Note 22.

### 1.16 Administration and programme analysis

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure is analysed between administration and programme income and expenditure. The classification of expenditure and income as administration or as programme follows the definition of administration costs under the administrative cost control regime set by the Department of Finance. Broadly, administration expenditure reflects the costs of running the Department while programme costs relate directly to service delivery activities.

For the purposes of these financial statements, income and expenditure relating to Forensic Science Northern Ireland, Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland and Youth Justice Agency is regarded as programme whilst Northern Ireland Prison Service and Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service are regarded as both administrative and programme. Income and expenditure for all NDPBs is regarded as programme.

## 1.17 Income recognition

The Department recognises income as follows:

### Financing

The Department is primarily resourced by funds approved by the Assembly through the annual Supply process. Resources are drawn down each month to meet expenditure requirements and are credited to the General Fund. In addition, the Department is financed by non-supply funding from the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund in respect of the costs relating to Judicial Salaries.

### Revenue from contracts with customers

Revenue is recognised at an amount that reflects the consideration to which the Department is expected to be entitled in exchange for transferring goods or services to a customer. For each contract with a customer, the Department: identifies the contract with a customer; identifies the performance obligations in the contract; determines the transaction price; allocates the transaction price to the separate performance obligations on the basis of the relative stand-alone selling price of each distinct good or service to be delivered; and recognises revenue when or as each performance obligation is satisfied in a manner that depicts the transfer to the customer of the goods or services promised.

### *Fees, levies and charges*

This principally comprises fees and charges for services provided on a full cost basis to external customers as well as public repayment work. Further details are contained in Note 3 Statement of Operating Expenditure by Operating Segment.

Revenue from fees, levies and charges is recognised over time as the services are rendered based on either a fixed price or an agreed rate.

### *Sale of goods and services*

Revenue from the sale of goods and services is recognised either:

- at the point in time when the customer obtains control of the goods, which is generally at the time of delivery; or
- over time as the services are rendered based on either a fixed price or an agreed rate.

### Other operating income

Other operating income is income that relates directly to the operating activities of the Department including:

- Rental income from properties is recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease term; and
- Other income is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

### Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts (CFERs)

CFERs which do not fall to be treated as operating income are payable directly to the Consolidated Fund. These amounts comprise sundry receipts that have not been incorporated into the Estimate due to their irregular nature and/or uncertainty of receipt. All fine income is payable to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund via the Department as consolidated fund extra receipts.

## 1.18 Pension costs

Past and present employees of the Core Department and Agencies are covered by the provisions of the NICS pension arrangements, which are defined benefit schemes. In certain circumstances employees of NDPBs (including PSNI, NI Policing Board and Office of the Police Ombudsman) are also members of the NICS pension arrangements. The defined benefit schemes are unfunded. The Department 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 arrangements of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the NICS pension arrangements. In respect of defined contribution schemes, the Department recognises the contributions payable for the year. Police officers are members of either:

- Closed Scheme - operating under the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Royal Ulster Constabulary Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1988 with subsequent amendments;
- New Scheme - operating under the Police Pensions (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2007 which apply from 6 April 2006. Entry to the New Scheme was closed on the 31 March 2015; or
- CARE Scheme - this is a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Scheme governed by the Police Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. This was the only Scheme open to new entrants during the 2024-25 financial year.

These are unfunded defined benefit plans. PSNI contributes a percentage of pensionable earnings towards its employees' superannuation, at the Accruing Superannuation Liability Charge (ASLC) rates, determined by the Government Actuary's Department and advised by Treasury. A separate account is prepared showing details of the PSNI. It is also consolidated as part of the Departmental Group following implementation of the Review of Financial Process with the PSNI falling within the DoJ Estimate and Budgeting boundary, and for which the Department holds responsibility to report on as part of its Group position.

Probation Board NI employees are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland operated by NILGOSC. This is a funded defined benefit plan.

The Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme is an unfunded, defined benefit pay-as-you-go occupational pension scheme operated by the Department on behalf of members who satisfy the membership criteria. Contributions to the Scheme by employers and members are set at rates determined by the Scheme's Actuary and approved by the Department. The contributions partially fund payments made by the Scheme, the balance of funding being provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly through the annual Supply Estimates process.

The current service cost is the increase in the present value of the Scheme liability arising from members' service in the current period and is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. The cost is based on the assumptions used by the actuary. The past service cost is a change in the Scheme liability resulting from either:

- a Scheme amendment (the introduction or withdrawal of, or changes to, the Scheme); or
- a curtailment (a significant reduction in the number of members covered by the Scheme due to management action).

The Department is also responsible for the Broadly By Analogy (BBA) pension schemes of public appointments within its Departmental boundary and also entities for which it retains lead policy responsibility. A BBA pension arrangement entitles the recipient to benefits similar to the classic schemes in the NICS pension arrangements. The Department and members are obliged to make contributions in line with the NICS pension scheme. Provision has been made for the future cost of benefits under these schemes. Current service costs are the increase in the present value of the scheme liabilities arising from current members' service over the year. They are determined by the individual scheme actuaries and are calculated using the discount rate at the start of the year. Past service costs are changes in the present value of the scheme liabilities related to employee service in prior periods arising in the current period as a result of the introduction, change, or improvement to retirement benefits. These also include any gains or losses in relation to events defined as settlements or curtailments.

### 1.18 Pension costs (continued)

Pension financing costs are the decrease during the period in the present value of the scheme liabilities because the benefits are one period closer to settlement. The financing cost is based on the discount rate (including inflation) at the start of the year and is calculated on the gross liability of unfunded schemes (which is shown gross) and the net liability of funded schemes (i.e. net of assets).

The gains and losses on revaluation reflect three elements:

- the change in the underlying assumptions used by the actuaries to determine the value of scheme liabilities. This includes changes in the assumptions such as financial assumptions, mortality rates and projected salary increases;
- where in-year experience differs from assumptions previously used to determine the liabilities. For example, relating to assumptions about general salary and pension increases; and
- differences between the asset returns experienced in-year and the interest on the assets included in the Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for funded schemes.

The current service costs, any past service costs, including those arising from settlements or curtailments, and pension financing costs are recognised as an increase in the pension liability and are charged to the Statement of Revenue and Expenditure. The gain or loss on revaluation of pension scheme assets and liabilities is recognised in the Statement of Other Comprehensive Income.

Further details regarding the above schemes are contained in the Staff Report and Note 16 to the Accounts.

### 1.19 Staff costs

Under IAS 19 Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the costs of any untaken leave as at the reporting date. The cost of untaken leave has been determined from a sample of staff leave records.

### 1.20 Early departure costs

The Core Department, Agencies and NDPBs are required to meet the additional cost of benefits beyond the normal NICS pension arrangements and NILGOSC benefits in respect of employees who retire early by paying the required amounts annually to the NICS pension arrangements and NILGOSC over the period between early departure and normal retirement age, and in some cases for the lifetime of the retired staff member and his/her spouse. Where relevant the Department provides for this in full when the early retirement programme becomes binding by establishing a provision for the estimated payments.

### 1.21 Grants payable and paid

The Department recognises grants due to its executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies in the period in which they are paid.

The Department also makes a number of grants to a variety of public sector, private sector and voluntary bodies. These grants are recognised at the point in which an authorised request is received from the recipient body, in accordance with the relevant financial memoranda.

### 1.22 Notional charges

Notional charges, in respect of services received from other Government departments and agencies, are included to reflect the full economic cost of services.

Total notional costs for the Department are £8.983m (2023-24: £8.166m), split between Admin - £7.303m (2023-24: £6.498m) and Programme - £1.680m (2023-24: £1.668m). Notional charges do not apply to NDPBs.

### 1.23 Segmental reporting

Under the requirements of IFRS 8 Operating Segments, the Department must disclose information to enable users of the financial statements to evaluate the nature and financial effects of the business in which it engages and the economic environment in which it operates. 'Total Assets' are only required to be disclosed in reporting segments where total assets for segments are regularly reported to the Chief Operating Decision Maker. As total assets for segments are not regularly reported to the Chief Operating Decision Maker the Department has adopted this option. This does not have a material impact on the Department's financial statements. Full details of the reporting segments are contained within Note 3.

### 1.24 Financial instruments

#### **Recognition and de-recognition of financial assets and financial liabilities**

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 the Department becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial assets are derecognised when the Department no longer has rights to cash flows, the risks and rewards of ownership or control of the asset. Financial liabilities are derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires.

#### **Financial assets**

A financial asset is classified in this category if acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the short term (held for trading) or if so designated by management. Financial assets held in this category are initially recognised and subsequently measured at fair value, with changes in value recognised in the income statement in the line that most appropriately reflects the nature of the item or transaction.

#### ***Loans and receivables***

Loans and receivables are non-derivative assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. Loans and receivables are initially recognised at fair value plus transaction costs and subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, with changes in carrying value recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in a manner that most appropriately reflects the nature of the item or transaction.

#### ***Trade and other receivables***

Financial assets within trade and other receivables are initially recognised at fair value, which is usually the original invoiced amount and subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective method less provisions for doubtful receivables. Provisions are made specifically where there is objective evidence of a dispute or inability to pay.

#### ***Cash and cash equivalents***

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash in hand and current balances with banks which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to insignificant risk of changes in value and have an original maturity of three months or less.

For the purposes of the Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows, cash and cash equivalents are as defined above net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

#### ***Impairment of financial assets***

The Department recognises a loss allowance for expected credit losses on trade receivables and contract assets. The amount of expected credit losses is updated at each reporting date to reflect changes in credit risk since initial recognition of the respective financial instrument.

The Department always recognises lifetime expected credit losses for trade receivables and contract assets. The expected credit losses on these financial assets are estimated using historical credit loss experience,

## 1.24 Financial instruments (continued)

adjusted for factors that are specific to the receivables, general economic conditions and an assessment of both the current as well as the forecast direction of conditions at the reporting date, including time value of money where appropriate.

For financial assets, the expected credit loss is estimated as the difference between all contractual cash flows that are due to the company in accordance with the contract and all the cash flows that the company expects to receive, discounted at the original effective interest rate.

### Financial liabilities

#### *Trade and other payables*

Financial liabilities within trade and other payables are initially recognised at fair value, which is usually the original invoiced amount, and subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### *Loans and other borrowings*

Loans and other borrowings are initially recognised at fair value plus directly attributable transactions costs. Where loans and other borrowings contain a separable embedded derivative, the fair value of the embedded derivative is the difference between the fair value of the hybrid instrument and the fair value of the loan or borrowing. The fair value of the embedded derivative and the loan or borrowing is recorded separately on initial recognition.

## 1.25 Critical accounting estimates and key judgements

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRS requires the use of accounting estimates and assumptions. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Department's accounting policies. The Department continually evaluates its estimates, assumptions and judgements based on available information and experience. As the use of estimates is inherent in financial reporting, actual results could differ from these estimates. The estimates and assumptions that have the most significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts are discussed below.

### *(i) - Pensions and Injury on duty awards*

The Department accounts for pension and other post-retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19. In determining the pension cost and the defined benefit obligation of the pension schemes a number of assumptions are used which include the discount rate, salary growth, price inflation, the expected return on the schemes' investments and mortality rates. Injury on duty awards take into account factors including the current number of injury awards and life expectancy. Full details are contained in Notes 15 and 16.

### *(ii) - Provisions for Legal Aid*

The determination of provisions remains a key area where management's judgement is required. There are a number of assumptions applied in the calculation of the legal aid provision and full details are contained in Note 15.2.

### *(iii) - Provisions for compensation payments made by Compensation Services*

The determination of provisions remains a key area where management's judgement is required. There are a number of assumptions applied in the calculation of the compensation payments provision and full details are contained in Note 15.4.

### *(iv) - PSNI Provisions for the Data Loss on 8 August 2023 & Holiday Pay*

The determination of provisions remains a key area where management's judgement is required. An estimate of liability relating to the Data Loss on 8 August 2023 has been provided based on the number of cases received to date, the estimated damages (inclusive of claimants' costs) and the latest legal advice. Provision has also been made by the PSNI for the ongoing holiday pay legal case. Full details of the assumptions applied, and methodology used by the PSNI for both are contained in Note 15.3.

### 1.25 Critical accounting estimates and key judgements (continued)

#### (v) - Depreciation of property, plant and equipment and amortisation of intangible assets

Depreciation and amortisation is provided in the consolidated accounts so as to write-down the respective assets to their residual values over their expected useful lives and as such the selection of the estimated useful lives and the expected residual values of the assets requires the use of estimates and judgements. Details of the estimated useful lives are as shown in Note 1.6.

Other than as noted above, no material accounting estimates or judgements were made by the Department in preparing these accounts.

### 1.26 Accounting standards, amendments, interpretations or other updates that were issued and effective for the 2024-25 financial year

The Department has considered those new Standards, interpretations and amendments to existing Standards which have been published and are mandatory for the Department's accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2024 or later periods, but which the Department has not adopted. The Department considers that these are either not relevant or material to its operations.

### 1.27 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published Standards not yet effective

The Department has considered those new Standards, interpretations and amendments to existing Standards which have been published but are not yet effective, nor adopted early for these Accounts. Other than as outlined below, the Department considers that these are either not relevant or material to its operations.

<b>Standard</b>	IAS 16 Property Plant and Equipment / IAS 38 Intangibles <b>Non-Investment Asset Valuations</b>
<b>Effective date</b>	1 April 2025
<b>FReM application</b>	2025-26
<b>Description of revision</b>	<p>In December 2023 Treasury released an exposure draft on potential changes to make to valuing and accounting for non-investment assets (e.g. PPE, intangible assets). The following changes to the valuation and accounting of non-investment assets is to be included in the 2025-26 FReM for mandatory implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>References to assets being held for their 'service potential' and the terms 'specialised/ non-specialised' assets are being removed from the FReM. Non-investment assets are instead described as assets held for their 'operational capacity'. This change has no impact on the valuation basis of non-investment assets, which remains Existing Use Value (EUV).</li> <li>An adaptation to IAS 16 will be introduced to withdraw the requirement to revalue an asset where its fair value materially differs from its carrying value. Assets are now valued using the one of the following processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A quinquennial revaluation supplemented by annual indexation.</li> <li>A rolling programme of valuations over a 5-year cycle, with annual indexation applied to assets during the 4 intervening years.</li> <li>For non-property assets only, appropriate indices.</li> <li>In rare circumstances where an index is not available, a quinquennial revaluation supplemented by a desktop revaluation in year 3.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The option to measure intangible assets using the revaluation model is withdrawn. The carrying values of intangible assets at 31 March 2025 will be considered the historical cost at 1 April 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>Comments</b>	Changes will be made to the valuation and accounting of non-investment assets in line with requirements of the 2025-26 FReM, with effect 1 April 2025.

### 1.27 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published Standards not yet effective (continued)

Standard	IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements
Effective date	1 January 2027
FReM application	Not before 2027-28
Description of revision	IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements will replace IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements and is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after the 1 January 2027 in the private sector. The Public Sector implementation date is not yet confirmed. The impact of IFRS 18 on the Public Sector is still being assessed.
Comments	IFRS 18 will be adopted upon its effective date and applied in accordance with the interpretations and guidance set out in the FReM.

### 1.28 Financial reporting - future developments

The Department has considered the accounting initiatives identified by Treasury and Department of Finance covering potential changes and projects where standards, amendments or interpretations are in development. The Department considers that these changes are either not relevant or material to its operations.

### 1.29 Adjustments to NDPBs Opening Balances

Adjustments were made to the Department's 2024-25 opening balances and reserves to reflect movements in the accounts of two NDPBs as follows:

- The Office for Police Ombudsman for NI (OPONI) 2023-24 Accounts were finalised after the Departmental Group Accounts were certified and laid; and
- NI Policing Board (NIPB) processed a prior period adjustment for an omission in their 2023-24 Accounts.

These differences are not deemed to be material to the Departmental Group and so prior period adjustments have not been processed. This is in line with IAS 8. They have therefore been treated prospectively in the current year, with associated adjustments being made through opening balances and reserves. Adjustments to opening balances have been made to the Consolidated Statement of Changes in Taxpayer's Equity, Property, Plant and Equipment (Note 7), Intangible Assets (Note 8) and Provisions for liabilities and charges (Note 15).

## 2. Prior period restatements

There was one adjustment required to the prior year 2023-24 Departmental Group figures which related to the elimination of an omitted intra-departmental transaction between PSNI Main and PSNI Pension Accounts. The adjustment only affected items within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and completely netted out within that statement. The changes were:

	As previously stated £000	Adjustment £000	Restated 2023-24 £000
Other operating income (pension scheme contributions)	(74,229)	7,755	(66,474)
Staff costs (other pensions)	850,376	(7,755)	842,621

### 3. Statement of Operating Expenditure by Operating Segment

					2024-25
	Safer Communities Directorate	Access to Justice Directorate	Reducing Offending Directorate	Justice Delivery Directorate	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross expenditure	1,354,868	125,462	177,598	173,921	1,831,849
Income	(59,705)	(39,890)	(5,107)	(26,337)	(131,039)
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>1,295,163</b>	<b>85,572</b>	<b>172,491</b>	<b>147,584</b>	<b>1,700,810</b>

					2023-24 (Restated*)
	Safer Communities Directorate	Access to Justice Directorate	Reducing Offending Directorate	Justice Delivery Directorate	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross expenditure	1,431,979	120,605	168,483	250,685	1,971,752
Income	(50,221)	(37,254)	(5,048)	(23,733)	(116,256)
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>1,381,758</b>	<b>83,351</b>	<b>163,435</b>	<b>226,952</b>	<b>1,855,496</b>

\*Restated to reflect the elimination of an omitted intra-departmental transaction between PSNI Main and PSNI Pension Accounts. This restatement does not affect the net operating expenditure or overall financial position of the Departmental Group. This is discussed further in Note 2.

**(i) - Safer Communities Directorate** is responsible for the lead interface with PSNI and work on Community Safety.

Financial information relating to the following Agency and NDPBs is reported within this segment:

- Forensic Science Northern Ireland;
- Northern Ireland Police Fund;
- Northern Ireland Policing Board;
- Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland;
- Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland and PSNI Police Pensions;
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland; and
- RUC George Cross Foundation.

**(ii) - Access to Justice Directorate** is responsible for criminal justice policy and legislation and improving access to justice through design of the court and tribunal structures and reform of the Legal Aid system.

Financial information relating to the following Agency, NDPB and Pension Scheme is reported within this segment:

- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service;
- Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland; and
- Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme.

**(iii) - Reducing Offending Directorate** is responsible for the oversight of the Prison Service, responsible for the management of offenders in custody and the reform and operation of prisons across Northern Ireland, and the Youth Justice Agency. It also leads the development of Reducing Offending policy in the Department.

Financial information relating to the following Agencies is reported within this segment:

- Northern Ireland Prison Service; and
- Youth Justice Agency.

### 3. Statement of Operating Expenditure by Operating Segment (continued)

(iv) - **Justice Delivery Directorate** provides Finance, HR, IT and other central services to the Department. Financial information relating to AccessNI and Compensation Services for victims of crime is included in this segment along with the following Agency:

- Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland.

#### 3.1 Reconciliation between Operating Segments and Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2024-25				
	Safer Communities Directorate	Access to Justice Directorate	Reducing Offending Directorate	Justice Delivery Directorate	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Total net expenditure reported for Operating Segments	1,295,163	85,572	172,491	147,584	1,700,810
Reconciling items	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total net expenditure per Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</b>	<b>1,295,163</b>	<b>85,572</b>	<b>172,491</b>	<b>147,584</b>	<b>1,700,810</b>
	2023-24				
	Safer Communities Directorate	Access to Justice Directorate	Reducing Offending Directorate	Justice Delivery Directorate	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Total net expenditure reported for Operating Segments	1,381,758	83,351	163,435	226,952	1,855,496
Reconciling items	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total net expenditure per Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</b>	<b>1,381,758</b>	<b>83,351</b>	<b>163,435</b>	<b>226,952</b>	<b>1,855,496</b>

#### 3.2 Reconciliation between Operating Segments and Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

'Total Assets' are only required to be disclosed in reporting segments where total assets for segments are regularly reported to the Chief Operating Decision Maker. As total assets for segments are not regularly reported to the Chief Operating Decision Maker, the Department has adopted this option. This does not have a material impact on the Department's financial statements.

## 4. Other administration expenditure

	Note	2024-25		2023-24	
		Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Staff costs*</b>					
Wages and salaries		22,670	22,670	22,445	22,445
Social security costs		2,819	2,819	2,384	2,384
Other pension costs		7,452	7,452	6,655	6,655
		<b>32,941</b>	<b>32,941</b>	<b>31,484</b>	<b>31,484</b>
<b>Purchase of goods and services</b>					
Accommodation costs, maintenance and utilities		434	434	694	694
IT, communications and office services		1,581	1,581	1,762	1,762
Consumables, equipment and transport costs		26	26	18	18
Contracted out and managed services		4,144	4,144	3,931	3,931
Professional and consultancy services		785	785	1,023	1,023
Rentals under operating leases		52	52	32	32
Staff related costs		1,119	1,119	888	888
Other costs		407	407	372	372
Commissions, Panels and Tribunals costs		17	17	20	20
		<b>8,565</b>	<b>8,565</b>	<b>8,740</b>	<b>8,740</b>
<b>Non-cash items</b>					
Loss on disposal of non-current assets	7, 8	7	7	2	2
		<b>8,572</b>	<b>8,572</b>	<b>8,742</b>	<b>8,742</b>
<b>Depreciation and impairment charges</b>					
Depreciation	7	1,085	1,085	1,055	1,055
Amortisation	8	1,642	1,642	1,136	1,136
Revaluation released to SoCNE	7, 8	(3)	(3)	1	1
		<b>2,724</b>	<b>2,724</b>	<b>2,192</b>	<b>2,192</b>
<b>Finance expense</b>					
		<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Total Administration costs including finance expense</b>		<b>44,245</b>	<b>44,245</b>	<b>42,426</b>	<b>42,426</b>

\* Further analysis of Staff costs is located in the Staff Report within the Accountability Report.

## 5. Programme expenditure

	Note	2024-25		2023-24 (Restated*)	
		Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Staff costs<sup>^</sup></b>					
Wages and salaries		117,125	591,451	111,930	585,558
Social security costs		11,886	66,123	12,076	64,425
Other pension costs		32,620	56,450	29,298	63,547
Pension provision		-	92,955	-	97,607
		<b>161,631</b>	<b>806,979</b>	<b>153,304</b>	<b>811,137</b>
<b>Purchase of goods and services</b>					
Accommodation costs, maintenance and utilities		22,636	67,387	21,723	60,297
IT, communications and office services		4,467	43,290	4,363	43,226
Consumables, equipment and transport costs		3,422	21,553	3,827	21,304
Contracted out and managed services		29,814	63,745	26,447	57,937
Professional and consultancy services		9,401	20,389	8,961	27,197
Client and other programme operating costs		24,704	31,890	23,366	30,472
Rentals under operating leases		177	1,877	8	1,401
Staff related costs		2,391	12,032	2,378	10,704
Other costs		2,483	3,586	697	5,586
Auditor's remuneration		7	303	-	264
Commissions, Panels and Tribunals costs		12,858	13,060	12,258	12,404
PFI service charges		3,071	3,071	2,986	2,986
Judicial costs		12,991	12,991	11,235	11,235
Judicial costs - Consolidated Fund		10,662	10,662	10,172	10,172
		<b>139,084</b>	<b>305,836</b>	<b>128,421</b>	<b>295,185</b>
<b>Non-cash items</b>					
Loss/(profit) on disposal of non-current assets	7, 8	1	(166)	479	388
Other non-cash items		(227)	(136)	(343)	(282)
		(226)	(302)	136	106
		<b>138,858</b>	<b>305,534</b>	<b>128,557</b>	<b>295,291</b>
<b>Total purchase of goods and services</b>					
<b>Depreciation and impairment charges</b>					
Depreciation	7	28,680	86,992	28,239	87,603
Amortisation	8	2,730	4,564	2,569	4,212
Revaluation released to SoCNE	7, 8	(165)	6,105	852	4,998
		<b>31,245</b>	<b>97,661</b>	<b>31,660</b>	<b>96,813</b>
<b>Provisions expense</b>					
Provided in year	15	149,645	182,592	128,354	290,798
Written back in year	15	(11,546)	(17,078)	86,184	71,655
		<b>138,099</b>	<b>165,514</b>	<b>214,538</b>	<b>362,453</b>
<b>Grants</b>					
Grant-in-aid to NDPBs		1,175,125	-	1,084,888	-
Other grants		9,839	14,045	10,478	14,401
		<b>1,184,964</b>	<b>14,045</b>	<b>1,095,366</b>	<b>14,401</b>
<b>Finance expense</b>					
Interest payable and similar charges		458	550	505	580
Borrowing costs on provisions	15	3,365	27,115	2,876	25,030
Pension liability interest charges	16	302	361,170	259	315,415
		<b>4,125</b>	<b>388,835</b>	<b>3,640</b>	<b>341,025</b>
		<b>1,658,922</b>	<b>1,778,568</b>	<b>1,627,065</b>	<b>1,921,120</b>
<b>Total Programme costs including finance expense</b>					

\*Restated to reflect the elimination of an omitted intra-departmental transaction between PSNI Main and PSNI Pension Accounts. This restatement does not affect the net operating expenditure or overall financial position of the Departmental Group. This is discussed further in Note 2.

<sup>^</sup> Further analysis of Staff costs is located in the Staff Report within the Accountability Report.

## 6. Income

	2024-25		2023-24 (Restated*)	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><u>Administration income</u></b>				
<b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b>				
Fees, levies and charges	186	186	174	174
Sales of goods and services	600	600	581	581
	<b>786</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>755</b>
<b>Other operating income</b>				
Seconded costs	586	586	224	224
Rental income	-	-	-	-
Other non-trading income	-	-	170	170
	<b>586</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>394</b>
<b>Total Administration operating income</b>	<b>1,372</b>	<b>1,372</b>	<b>1,149</b>	<b>1,149</b>
<b><u>Programme income</u></b>				
<b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b>				
Fees, levies and charges	53,748	46,236	51,152	43,779
Sales of goods and services	5,054	5,350	4,969	5,227
	<b>58,802</b>	<b>51,586</b>	<b>56,121</b>	<b>49,006</b>
<b>Other operating income</b>				
Recovery of seconded costs	-	874	-	568
Rental income	556	783	527	756
Other non-trading income	21,396	35,160	18,813	27,489
Grant income	52	626	66	584
EU grant income	-	59	-	113
Pension scheme contributions - employees	-	40,563	-	36,570
	<b>22,004</b>	<b>78,065</b>	<b>19,406</b>	<b>66,080</b>
<b>Total Programme operating income</b>	<b>80,806</b>	<b>129,651</b>	<b>75,527</b>	<b>115,086</b>
<b>Total operating income</b>	<b>82,178</b>	<b>131,023</b>	<b>76,676</b>	<b>116,235</b>
<b>Finance income</b>	8	16	9	21
<b>Total income after finance income</b>	<b>82,186</b>	<b>131,039</b>	<b>76,685</b>	<b>116,256</b>

\*Restated to reflect the elimination of an omitted intra-departmental transaction between PSNI Main and PSNI Pension Accounts. This restatement does not affect the net operating expenditure or overall financial position of the Departmental Group. This is discussed further in Note 2.

## 6. Income (continued)

Disaggregation of Revenue from contracts with customers per operating segment is as follows:

	2024-25				
	Safer Communities Directorate	Access to Justice Directorate	Reducing Offending Directorate	Justice Delivery Directorate	Core Department and Agencies
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Fees, levies and charges	11,311	38,670	-	3,953	53,934
Sales of goods and services	34	-	5,054	566	5,654
<b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b>	<b>11,345</b>	<b>38,670</b>	<b>5,054</b>	<b>4,519</b>	<b>59,588</b>

	2024-25				
	Safer Communities Directorate	Access to Justice Directorate	Reducing Offending Directorate	Justice Delivery Directorate	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Fees, levies and charges	3,799	38,670	-	3,953	46,422
Sales of goods and services	330	-	5,054	566	5,950
<b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b>	<b>4,129</b>	<b>38,670</b>	<b>5,054</b>	<b>4,519</b>	<b>52,372</b>

	2023-24				
	Safer Communities Directorate	Access to Justice Directorate	Reducing Offending Directorate	Justice Delivery Directorate	Core Department and Agencies
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Fees, levies and charges	11,111	36,077	-	4,138	51,326
Sales of goods and services	34	-	4,969	547	5,550
<b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b>	<b>11,145</b>	<b>36,077</b>	<b>4,969</b>	<b>4,685</b>	<b>56,876</b>

	2023-24				
	Safer Communities Directorate	Access to Justice Directorate	Reducing Offending Directorate	Justice Delivery Directorate	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Fees, levies and charges	3,738	36,077	-	4,138	43,953
Sales of goods and services	293	-	4,969	546	5,808
<b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b>	<b>4,031</b>	<b>36,077</b>	<b>4,969</b>	<b>4,684</b>	<b>49,761</b>

## 7. Property, plant and equipment

	2024-25					
	Land	Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Machinery	Information Technology	Assets Under Construction	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>						
At 1 April 2024	110,405	1,458,277	256,844	213,615	122,819	2,161,960
Adjustments to NDPBs opening balances	-	1,664	12	-	-	1,676
Additions	14	16,236	2,360	849	57,006	76,465
Disposals	-	(850)	(5,275)	(9,100)	-	(15,225)
Reclassification	-	5,218	10,214	22,768	(42,206)	(4,006)
Revaluation released to SoCNE	-	(5,345)	(744)	12	2	(6,075)
Revaluation	-	29,503	7,066	6,147	-	42,716
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>110,419</b>	<b>1,504,703</b>	<b>270,477</b>	<b>234,291</b>	<b>137,621</b>	<b>2,257,511</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2024	11	437,822	166,363	138,107	-	742,303
Adjustments to NDPBs opening balances	-	424	11	-	-	435
Charged in year	12	47,950	21,691	18,424	-	88,077
Disposals	-	(850)	(5,013)	(8,780)	-	(14,643)
Reclassification	-	-	(20)	20	-	-
Revaluation released to SoCNE	-	26	(3)	5	-	28
Revaluation	-	3,922	5,036	3,833	-	12,791
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>489,294</b>	<b>188,065</b>	<b>151,609</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>828,991</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>110,396</b>	<b>1,015,409</b>	<b>82,412</b>	<b>82,682</b>	<b>137,621</b>	<b>1,428,520</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>110,394</b>	<b>1,020,455</b>	<b>90,481</b>	<b>75,508</b>	<b>122,819</b>	<b>1,419,657</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>						
Owned	110,310	962,332	82,260	81,583	137,621	1,374,106
Finance leased*	86	10,254	152	1,099	-	11,591
PPP/PFI contracts*	-	42,823	-	-	-	42,823
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>110,396</b>	<b>1,015,409</b>	<b>82,412</b>	<b>82,682</b>	<b>137,621</b>	<b>1,428,520</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
Core Department and Agencies	51,221	538,926	19,249	3,592	30,453	643,441
NDPBs	59,175	476,483	63,163	79,090	107,168	785,079
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>110,396</b>	<b>1,015,409</b>	<b>82,412</b>	<b>82,682</b>	<b>137,621</b>	<b>1,428,520</b>

\* Further details regarding the Department's Leases are contained in Note 18.

\*\* Further details regarding the Department's PFI contract are contained in Note 19.

## 7. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

	2023-24					
	Land	Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Machinery	Information Technology	Assets Under Construction	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>						
At 1 April 2023	100,756	1,416,522	251,167	197,431	154,782	2,120,658
Opening balance adjustment	-	(161)	161	-	-	-
Additions	29	5,795	1,992	808	75,915	84,539
Disposals	-	(3,421)	(13,205)	(6,265)	-	(22,891)
Reclassification	-	55,606	17,664	31,314	(107,768)	(3,184)
Revaluation released to SoCNE	34	(3,491)	(608)	(1,301)	(110)	(5,476)
Revaluation	9,586	(12,573)	(327)	(8,372)	-	(11,686)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>110,405</b>	<b>1,458,277</b>	<b>256,844</b>	<b>213,615</b>	<b>122,819</b>	<b>2,161,960</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2023	5	432,153	158,520	132,206	-	722,884
Charged in year	6	48,916	21,642	18,094	-	88,658
Disposals	-	(2,738)	(12,429)	(6,246)	-	(21,413)
Reclassification	-	(330)	319	10	-	(1)
Revaluation released to SoCNE	-	(469)	145	(152)	-	(476)
Revaluation	-	(39,710)	(1,834)	(5,805)	-	(47,349)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>437,822</b>	<b>166,363</b>	<b>138,107</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>742,303</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>110,394</b>	<b>1,020,455</b>	<b>90,481</b>	<b>75,508</b>	<b>122,819</b>	<b>1,419,657</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>100,751</b>	<b>984,369</b>	<b>92,647</b>	<b>65,225</b>	<b>154,782</b>	<b>1,397,774</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>						
Owned	110,310	967,799	90,238	74,317	122,819	1,365,483
Finance leased*	84	9,114	243	1,191	-	10,632
PPP/PFI contracts**	-	43,542	-	-	-	43,542
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>110,394</b>	<b>1,020,455</b>	<b>90,481</b>	<b>75,508</b>	<b>122,819</b>	<b>1,419,657</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
Core Department and Agencies	51,215	542,015	19,399	4,013	22,370	639,012
NDPBs	59,179	478,440	71,082	71,495	100,449	780,645
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>110,394</b>	<b>1,020,455</b>	<b>90,481</b>	<b>75,508</b>	<b>122,819</b>	<b>1,419,657</b>

\* Further details regarding the Department's Leases are contained in Note 18.

\*\* Further details regarding the Department's PFI contract are contained in Note 19.

## 7. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

	At 31 March 2025			
	Net Book Value (NBV) of land and buildings £000	NBV as a % of total for Departmental Group %	Date of most recent valuation by Land and Property Services (LPS)	Basis of LPS valuations
Police Service of Northern Ireland	530,834	47.2%	A rolling valuation is undertaken each year to ensure that the full Estate will be valued every five years.	Operational specialised assets, such as police stations, are valued at depreciated replacement cost. Operational non-specialised assets, such as offices, are valued at market value based on existing use.
Northern Ireland Prison Service	319,065	28.3%	1 April 2021	Depreciated replacement cost.
Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service	229,537	20.4%	31 March 2024	Depreciated replacement cost.
Core Department and other Agencies/NDPBs	46,369	4.1%	Various	Existing use value, market value and depreciated replacement cost.
<b>Departmental Group</b>	<b>1,125,805</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		

Land and buildings were externally valued by the Land and Property Services (LPS) in accordance with the RICS Appraisal and Valuation Manual on the basis of existing use value, market value and depreciated replacement cost as appropriate to the individual assets. Indexation is applied between asset revaluations to update the asset register, taking into account the general market in land and property values and building costs.

DoJ uses Producer Price Indices published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in order to apply indexation to the value of non-property assets at year-end. In line with previous years, the December indices have been applied in 2024-25. Ordinarily, an assessment is carried out after the year-end, following the publication of the March indices by ONS, to ascertain that the impact of the movement in the indices between December and March is immaterial. However, in March 2025, ONS issued a statement indicating that they had identified a problem with the chain-linking methods used to calculate these indices, affecting the years from 2008 onwards, and that they would consequently be pausing publication of Producer Price Index data while the issue is rectified. At the time these accounts are being prepared, it has not been possible to ascertain the potential impact of this issue. However, given the value of the non-property assets potentially affected, DoJ does not expect an adjustment to indexation to have a material impact on the 2024-25 accounts. It is anticipated that ONS will recommence publication of the Producer Price Indices at some point during the 2025-26 financial year and the indexation of non-property assets will be brought up to date in the 2025-26 accounts.

## 8. Intangible assets

	2024-25		
	Software and Licences	Assets Under Construction	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 April 2024	67,286	2,578	69,864
Adjustments to NDPBs opening balances	(12)	-	(12)
Additions	7,249	2,194	9,443
Disposals	(667)	-	(667)
Reclassification <sup>5</sup>	4,971	(967)	4,004
Revaluation released to SoCNE	4	-	4
Revaluation	1,414	-	1,414
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>80,245</b>	<b>3,805</b>	<b>84,050</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>			
At 1 April 2024	42,954	-	42,954
Adjustments to NDPBs opening balances	(19)	-	(19)
Charged in year	6,206	-	6,206
Disposals	(667)	-	(667)
Reclassification	-	-	-
Revaluation released to SoCNE	3	-	3
Revaluation	823	-	823
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>49,300</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>49,300</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>30,945</b>	<b>3,805</b>	<b>34,750</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>24,332</b>	<b>2,578</b>	<b>26,910</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>			
Owned	30,945	3,805	34,750
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>30,945</b>	<b>3,805</b>	<b>34,750</b>
<b>Of which:</b>			
Core Department and Agencies	21,365	3,795	25,160
NDPBs	9,580	10	9,590
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>30,945</b>	<b>3,805</b>	<b>34,750</b>

<sup>5</sup> Reclassifications include PSNI software items that had been included within Property, Plant & Equipment.

## 8. Intangible assets (continued)

	2023-24		
	Software and Licences	Assets Under Construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 April 2023	59,475	3,728	63,203
Additions	2,429	2,277	4,706
Disposals	(2,670)	-	(2,670)
Reclassification	6,610	(3,427)	3,183
Revaluation released to SoCNE	(10)	-	(10)
Revaluation	1,452	-	1,452
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>67,286</b>	<b>2,578</b>	<b>69,864</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>			
At 1 April 2023	39,567	-	39,567
Charged in year	5,348	-	5,348
Disposals	(2,658)	-	(2,658)
Reclassification	-	-	-
Revaluation released to SoCNE	(11)	-	(11)
Revaluation	708	-	708
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>42,954</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>42,954</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>24,332</b>	<b>2,578</b>	<b>26,910</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>19,908</b>	<b>3,728</b>	<b>23,636</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>			
Owned	24,332	2,578	26,910
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>24,332</b>	<b>2,578</b>	<b>26,910</b>
<b>Of which:</b>			
Core Department and Agencies	18,025	2,340	20,365
NDPBs	6,307	238	6,545
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>24,332</b>	<b>2,578</b>	<b>26,910</b>

## 9. Financial instruments

### 9.1 Disclosures

Due to the non-trading nature of its activities and the way in which Government departments are financed, the Department of Justice is not exposed to the degree of financial risk faced by business entities. The Department has no powers to borrow or invest surplus funds. Financial assets and liabilities are generated by day-to-day operational activities and are not held to change risks facing the Department in undertaking its activities.

#### ***Classification of financial instruments***

All Departmental financial instruments are measured at amortised cost. The Department's financial assets are classified as loans and receivables and comprise trade and other receivables (Note 13), cash and cash equivalents (Note 12) and financial assets. The Department's financial liabilities comprise payables excluding tax assets, accruals and deferred income (Note 14). The carrying value of these financial assets and liabilities, as disclosed in the notes to the Accounts, approximates to fair value because of their short maturities. The Department recognises the components of net gain/loss through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Interest on financial instruments is recognised as a finance expense under Programme Costs in Note 5.

#### ***Risk Management***

Financial risks include credit risk, liquidity risk and market risks (interest rate and currency).

#### ***Credit risk***

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The Department is exposed to credit risk in relation to the carrying amounts of the trade receivables carried in the Statement of Financial Position. The size of the risk is reflected in the receivables impairment (Note 13.1).

#### ***Liquidity risk***

Liquidity risk is the risk that an entity will have difficulties in paying its financial liabilities. The Department's net revenue resource requirements are financed by resources voted annually by the Assembly, as is capital expenditure. The Department is therefore not exposed to significant liquidity risks.

#### ***Interest rate risk***

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. All of the Department's financial assets and liabilities carry nil or fixed rates of interest. The Department is therefore not exposed to any interest rate risk.

#### ***Currency risk***

Currency risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in foreign exchange rates. The Department does not have the authority to manage currency risk through hedging.

## 9. Financial instruments (continued)

### Embedded derivatives

In accordance with IFRS 9 Financial Instruments, the Department reviews contracts for embedded derivatives that are required to be separately accounted for if they do not meet certain requirements set out in the standard. In relation to the Laganside PFI contract for NICTS, there is a payment mechanism that determines the charge that NICTS will pay from 2009 to 2026 which is based on the UK Retail Price Index (RPI) and UK Gross Domestic Product Index (GDP). The embedded derivative is deemed to be closely related to the host contract as the amounts charged are in relation to the economic environment in which NICTS operates.

### Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) Housing Loans

In accordance with IFRS 9 balances in respect of NIPS Home Loans are stated in the statement of financial position at their amortised cost, being the carrying amount discounted to present value at the effective rate of interest of 2.15% (2023-24: 2.05%). They have not been affected by current credit risk as repayments are deducted directly from payroll and are not considered a significant medium or long-term risk to NIPS.

## 9.2 Financial guarantees, indemnities and letters of comfort

The Department has not entered into any unquantifiable guarantees, indemnities or provided letters of comfort. There are no contingent liabilities within the meaning of IFRS 9 since the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote.

The Department has not entered into any quantifiable guarantees, indemnities or provided letters of comfort that fall to be measured under IFRS 9.

## 10. Assets classified as held for sale

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies £000	Departmental Group £000	Core Department and Agencies £000	Departmental Group £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 April	60	3,034	701	3,675
Disposals	-	(170)	-	-
Transfers and reclassifications	-	-	(641)	(641)
Revaluation released to SoCNE	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-
<b>Carrying value at 31 March</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>2,864</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3,034</b>

## 11. Inventories

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Raw materials and consumables	963	6,400	886	6,254
Fuel	292	1,546	300	1,705
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,255</b>	<b>7,946</b>	<b>1,186</b>	<b>7,959</b>

## 12. Cash and cash equivalents

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	(5,503)	(3,542)	(2,562)	399
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	788	740	(2,941)	(3,941)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(4,715)</b>	<b>(2,802)</b>	<b>(5,503)</b>	<b>(3,542)</b>
The following balances at 31 March are held at:				
Northern Ireland Banking Pool	(4,765)	(2,875)	(5,544)	(3,607)
Commercial banks and cash in hand	50	73	41	65
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(4,715)</b>	<b>(2,802)</b>	<b>(5,503)</b>	<b>(3,542)</b>
Balances for Cash and cash equivalents are disclosed in the Statement of Financial Position as follows:				
Current assets	1,973	4,067	3,297	5,332
Current liabilities	(6,688)	(6,869)	(8,800)	(8,874)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(4,715)</b>	<b>(2,802)</b>	<b>(5,503)</b>	<b>(3,542)</b>

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### 13. Trade receivables, financial and other assets

Note	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>				
VAT recoverable	2,933	8,484	2,409	12,934
Trade receivables	11,553	17,849	10,771	12,647
Other receivables	1,215	1,475	15,190	15,322
Prepayments and accrued income	24,740	31,052	15,302	23,987
Amounts due from the Consolidated Fund in respect of supply	5,091	5,091	6,469	6,469
	<b>45,532</b>	<b>63,951</b>	<b>50,141</b>	<b>71,359</b>
<b>Amounts falling due after more than one year:</b>				
Other receivables	705	87	834	61
Prepayments and accrued income	-	6,663	-	6,713
	<b>705</b>	<b>6,750</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>6,774</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,237</b>	<b>70,701</b>	<b>50,975</b>	<b>78,133</b>

Included within 'Other receivables' is £344,222 (2023-24: £458,817) that will be due to the Consolidated Fund once the debts are collected.

#### 13.1 Impairment

Trade receivables are stated net of the following impairment:

Note	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Trade receivables at 31 March - Gross	12,579	18,875	12,085	13,961
Less: Impairment:				
Impairment at 1 April	1,314	1,314	1,464	1,464
Increase in impairment during the year	331	331	335	335
Impairment written back during the year	(619)	(619)	(485)	(485)
Impairment at 31 March	<b>1,026</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>1,314</b>
Trade receivables at 31 March - Net	<b>11,553</b>	<b>17,849</b>	<b>10,771</b>	<b>12,647</b>

£0.979m of the total impairment at 31 March 2025 relates to LSANI (31 March 2024: £1.247m).

## 14. Trade payables, financial and other liabilities

Note	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>				
Bank overdraft	6,688	6,869	8,800	8,874
Other taxes and social security	-	19,375	-	20,706
Trade payables	1,499	7,814	975	5,049
Other payables	2,025	23,153	14,471	59,217
Accruals and deferred income	73,743	134,118	72,799	142,410
Current part of lease liabilities	1,242	2,565	1,015	2,176
Current part of imputed finance lease element of 'on-balance sheet' (SoFP) PPP/PFI contracts	2,027	2,027	1,936	1,936
Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts to be paid to the Consolidated Fund:				
- Received	375	719	965	1,425
- Receivable	344	-	460	-
	<b>87,943</b>	<b>196,640</b>	<b>101,421</b>	<b>241,793</b>
<b>Amounts falling due after more than one year:</b>				
Other payables, accruals and deferred income	299	299	359	359
Leases	2,380	6,772	2,265	6,873
Imputed finance lease element of 'on-balance sheet' (SoFP) PPP/PFI contracts	1,507	1,507	3,534	3,534
	<b>4,186</b>	<b>8,578</b>	<b>6,158</b>	<b>10,766</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,129</b>	<b>205,218</b>	<b>107,579</b>	<b>252,559</b>

Included within 'Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts to be paid to the Consolidated Fund: Received' at a Departmental Group level is £301,591 (2023-24: 905,303) held on trust on behalf of the Consolidated Fund in respect of fines and other income collected by Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service. Further details about the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Trust Statement can be found at [www.justice-ni.gov.uk/courts-and-tribunals](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/courts-and-tribunals).

## 15. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	352,647	1,092,587	272,455	933,772
Adjustments to NDPBs opening balances	-	444	-	-
Provided in the year	149,841	182,790	128,531	290,975
Provisions not required written back/re-measurement of opening balance	(8,881)	(14,413)	86,184	71,655
Provisions utilised in the year	(142,464)	(186,430)	(133,230)	(173,656)
Borrowing costs	3,365	27,115	2,876	25,030
Actuarial loss/(gain)	3,550	(14,510)	(4,030)	(55,050)
Provisions settled from Consolidated Fund	(373)	(373)	(139)	(139)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>357,685</b>	<b>1,087,210</b>	<b>352,647</b>	<b>1,092,587</b>
<b>Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows</b>				
Not later than one year	152,031	418,755	113,186	219,992
Later than one year but not later than five years	114,876	307,362	136,977	464,303
Later than five years	90,778	361,093	102,484	408,292
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>357,685</b>	<b>1,087,210</b>	<b>352,647</b>	<b>1,092,587</b>

## Provisions by type

	2024-25					Departmental Group £000
	Injury On Duty and Early Departure Costs	Legal Aid	Litigation Claims	Compensation Payments	Other	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Balance at 1 April	540,765	174,674	291,320	84,816	1,012	1,092,587
Adjustments to NDPBs opening balances	-	-	444	-	-	444
Provided in the year	7,660	111,119	50,761	12,877	373	182,790
Provisions not required written back/re-measurement of opening balance	(59)	24,468	(7,548)	(31,235)	(39)	(14,413)
Provisions utilised in the year	(43,691)	(119,731)	(7,325)	(15,624)	(59)	(186,430)
Borrowing costs	26,553	-	562	-	-	27,115
Actuarial (gain)	(14,593)	-	83	-	-	(14,510)
Provisions settled from Consolidated Fund	-	-	(373)	-	-	(373)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>516,635</b>	<b>190,530</b>	<b>327,924</b>	<b>50,834</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>1,087,210</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
Core Department and Agencies	69,583	190,530	45,505	50,831	1,236	357,685
NDPBs	447,052	-	282,419	3	51	729,525
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>516,635</b>	<b>190,530</b>	<b>327,924</b>	<b>50,834</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>1,087,210</b>
<b>Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows</b>						
Not later than one year	42,152	96,509	265,056	14,593	455	418,755
Later than one year but not later than five years	152,678	79,774	59,351	14,886	673	307,362
Later than five years	321,815	14,247	3,517	21,355	159	361,093
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>516,635</b>	<b>190,530</b>	<b>327,924</b>	<b>50,834</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>1,087,210</b>

## 15. Provisions for liabilities and charges (continued)

## Provisions by type (continued)

	2023-24					
	Injury On Duty and Early Departure Costs	Legal Aid	Litigation Claims	Compen- sation Payments	Other	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	602,572	158,052	140,805	31,381	962	933,772
Provided in the year	7,019	102,847	173,432	7,501	176	290,975
Provisions not required written back/ re-measurement of opening balance	(64)	27,275	(16,136)	60,706	(126)	71,655
Provisions utilised in the year	(37,962)	(113,500)	(7,422)	(14,772)	-	(173,656)
Borrowing costs	24,275	-	755	-	-	25,030
Actuarial loss/(gain)	(55,075)	-	25	-	-	(55,050)
Provisions settled from Consolidated Fund	-	-	(139)	-	-	(139)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>540,765</b>	<b>174,674</b>	<b>291,320</b>	<b>84,816</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>1,092,587</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
Core Department and Agencies	65,533	174,674	26,760	84,816	864	352,647
NDPBs	475,232	-	264,560	-	148	739,940
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>540,765</b>	<b>174,674</b>	<b>291,320</b>	<b>84,816</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>1,092,587</b>
<b>Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows</b>						
Not later than one year	40,303	91,217	75,950	12,144	378	219,992
Later than one year but not later than five years	147,571	70,580	209,846	35,672	634	464,303
Later than five years	352,891	12,877	5,524	37,000	-	408,292
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>540,765</b>	<b>174,674</b>	<b>291,320</b>	<b>84,816</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>1,092,587</b>

## 15.1 Injury on duty and Early departure costs - £516.635m (2023-24: £540.765m)

				2024-25
	PSNI	NIPS	Other	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	474,124	64,931	1,710	540,765
Provided in the year	5,370	1,325	965	7,660
Provisions not required written back	-	-	(59)	(59)
Provisions utilised in the year	(39,568)	(3,991)	(132)	(43,691)
Borrowing costs	23,320	3,243	(10)	26,553
Actuarial loss/(gain)	(18,060)	3,467	-	(14,593)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>445,186</b>	<b>68,975</b>	<b>2,474</b>	<b>516,635</b>
				2023-24
	PSNI	NIPS	Other	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	532,694	68,161	1,717	602,572
Provided in the year	5,680	1,164	175	7,019
Provisions not required written back	-	-	(64)	(64)
Provisions utilised in the year	(34,740)	(3,129)	(93)	(37,962)
Borrowing costs	21,510	2,790	(25)	24,275
Actuarial (gain)	(51,020)	(4,055)	-	(55,075)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>474,124</b>	<b>64,931</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>540,765</b>

**15.1 Injury on duty and Early departure costs - £516.635m (2023-24: £540.765m) (continued)**

	2024-25				2023-24			
	PSNI	NIPS	Other	Total	PSNI	NIPS	Other	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Injury on duty awards	445,186	68,400	-	513,586	474,124	64,250	-	538,374
Early departure costs	-	575	2,474	3,049	-	681	1,710	2,391
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>445,186</b>	<b>68,975</b>	<b>2,474</b>	<b>516,635</b>	<b>474,124</b>	<b>64,931</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>540,765</b>

**Injury on duty awards - £513.586m (2023-24: £538.374m)**

Provision is made for the costs of providing injury awards to employees based on the current number of injury awards, and also on estimated life expectancy of these individuals. The allowance is payable to the former employee for life.

The injury awards are valued under IAS 19 by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD). IAS 19 requires the employer to value the expected injury awards for active members, who may become injured in the future, and include the value in the Accounts. Liabilities for Injury awards are valued on an actuarial basis using the Projected Unit Credit Method.

In 2019-20 the assumptions for incidence of injury award were updated based on data provided for the years 2015 to 2020, which was aggregated with the PSNI injury award data for 2006 to 2015. The relevant assumptions underpinning the actuarial valuation of the liability remain unchanged as follows for both 2023-24 and 2024-25:

- rate of future injury award - 3.5%; and
- current service cost - 6.0%.

The demographic assumptions adopted for the assessment of the NIPS liabilities as at 31 March 2025 are those proposed for the 2020 valuation of the PCSPS (NI) since NIPS employees are members of this pension scheme. The use of the proposed 2020 valuation assumptions is a consistent approach to 2023-24.

The 2020-based population mortality projections allow for the short-term impacts of Covid-19 for 2019 to 2024 in line with the average views of an expert independent panel. The 2022-based population projections consider Covid-19 as a mortality shock event, applying an appropriate short-term adjustment rather than projecting its effects forward. Death rates from Covid-19 in excess of that already allowed for in the mortality assumptions and reflected in the membership data would emerge as an experience gain in future years' accounts.

**15.1 Injury on duty and Early departure costs - £516.635m (2023-24: £540.765m) (continued)****Injury on duty awards - £513.586m (2023-24: £538.374m) (continued)**

	2024-25		2023-24	
	PSNI	NIPS	PSNI	NIPS
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Liability in respect of:				
Active members	50,710	9,390	62,990	8,170
Pensions in payment (injury awards)	394,476	59,010	411,134	56,080
<b>Total</b>	<b>445,186</b>	<b>68,400</b>	<b>474,124</b>	<b>64,250</b>
<b>Key financial assumptions:</b>	%	%	%	%
Rate of discounting scheme liabilities	5.15%	5.15%	5.10%	5.10%
Rate of CPI inflation	2.65%	2.65%	2.55%	2.55%
Pension increase awarded	2.65%	2.65%	2.55%	2.55%
Long-term rate of increase in salaries	3.4%	3.4%	3.55%	3.55%
<b>Key demographic assumptions:</b>	Years	Years	Years	Years
Average expected future life at age 65 for:				
Male currently aged 65	21.9	21.4	21.9	21.4
Female currently aged 65	23.9	22.8	23.6	22.5
Male currently aged 45	23.3	22.9	23.6	23.2
Female currently aged 45	25.2	24.3	25.1	24.1
<b>Incidence of injury awards:</b>	%	%	%	%
Liability (proportion of liability of active members in respect of non-injury Pension Scheme benefits)	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Current service cost (proportion of current service cost in respect of main Pension Scheme benefits)	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%
<b>Actuarial losses/(gains):</b>	£000	£000	£000	£000
Experience (gains)/ losses arising on the pension liabilities	(18,080)	3,620	(2,920)	3,650
Changes in financial assumptions	3,320	260	(48,100)	(7,670)
Changes in demographic assumptions	(3,300)	(330)	-	-
	<b>(18,060)</b>	<b>3,550</b>	<b>(51,020)</b>	<b>(4,020)</b>
<b>Analysis of movement in scheme liability:</b>	£000	£000	£000	£000
Net deficit at 1 April	474,124	64,250	532,694	67,410
Current service cost	5,370	970	5,680	980
Past service cost	-	350	-	200
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability	23,320	3,210	21,510	2,760
Benefits paid (recurring element)	(36,838)	(3,580)	(33,990)	(2,880)
Benefits paid (lump sums)	(2,730)	(350)	(750)	(200)
Re-measurements of the net defined liability	(18,060)	3,550	(51,020)	(4,020)
<b>Net deficit at 31 March</b>	<b>445,186</b>	<b>68,400</b>	<b>474,124</b>	<b>64,250</b>

**15.1 Injury on duty and Early departure costs - £516.635m (2023-24: £540.765m) (continued)****Injury on duty awards - £513.586m (2023-24: £538.374m) (continued)****Sensitivity analysis - sensitivity to changes in assumptions\***

	31 March 2025	31 March 2025
	PSNI	NIPS
	£000	£000
+0.5% increase in rate of discounting liabilities	(25,000)	(4,400)
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in salaries	-	200
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in pensions/deferred revaluation	26,000	4,300
One further year than assumed for life expectancy	14,000	1,700

\* *Opposite changes in the assumptions will produce approximately equal and opposite changes in the liability. Doubling the changes in the assumptions will produce approximately double the change in the liability. The sensitivities show the change in assumption in isolation. In practice such assumptions rarely change in isolation and given the interdependencies between the assumptions the actual impact may be different from simply combining the changes above.*

**Early departure costs - £3.049m (2023-24: £2.391m)****(i) NIPS - £0.575m (2023-24: £0.681m)**

This provision relates to pension costs associated with the early departure of staff and benefits payable in respect of loss of earning capacity (or loss of support in respect of a death). The pension costs are payable to NILGOSC over the lifetime of the retired staff member and his/her spouse (where applicable).

**(ii) NICS and NILGOSC costs - £0.608m (2023-24: £0.604m)**

The Department and its Agencies meet the additional costs of benefits beyond the normal NICS pension arrangements and NILGOSC benefits in respect of employees who retire early by paying the required amounts annually to the NICS pension arrangements and NILGOSC over the period between early departure and normal retirement date, and in some cases for the lifetime of the retired staff member and his/her spouse. The Department and its Agencies provide for this in full when the early retirement programme becomes binding by establishing a provision for the estimated payments.

**(iii) Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) – Ill-health retirements and retrospective injury on duty awards - £1.866m (2023-24: £1.106m)**

This provision relates to outstanding cases where serving and ex-serving PSNI officers apply for medical retirement and/or injury on duty awards.

## 15.2 Legal Aid - £190.530m (2023-24: £174.674m)

### How the figures are derived

The Agency estimates the value of unbilled 'live' cases each year to arrive at the amounts disclosed as a provision within the financial statements. 'Live' cases are deemed to be those that are ongoing, based on the information available to the Agency, and within the statutory time limits. A provisions model is used to estimate the volume of cases and costs required to settle any obligations at the end of the reporting period.

### Summary position

The Legal Aid provisions at the reporting date can be summarised as follows:

	2024-25	2023-24
	£000	£000
Civil legal services	122,858	105,079
Criminal legal aid	67,672	69,595
<b>Total</b>	<b>190,530</b>	<b>174,674</b>

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Volume of cases	Value of cases	Volume of cases	Value of cases
	Number	£000	Number	£000
Cases costed at an average cost	53,780	146,495	68,630	132,578
Cases costed where an average cost is not applicable	1,151	44,035	1,145	42,096
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,931</b>	<b>190,530</b>	<b>69,775</b>	<b>174,674</b>

### Volumes

The Agency's new Legal Aid Management System (LAMS) came into operation on 1 July 2019. A feature of this new case management system includes closure functionality, auto-closure, which automatically closes cases when a set of predefined conditions have been satisfied including payment in full and manual closure to close manually when appropriate. This functionality is fully operational and helps maintain a cleansed volume of cases held on LAMS. As a result, the requirement for manual intervention and assumptions historically applied to the data reported from the system has reduced significantly for the purposes of calculating provisions.

Following a significant project of work by the Data Management Team to cleanse the system of old inactive cases, only a small cadre of old cases remain under review. Facilitated by the inactivity prompt functionality, which was activated in LAMS in December 2022, a systematic programme of inactivity reviews has continued throughout 2024-25. This has meant that any case that has been inactive for more than a pre-defined period of months has been flagged for review and targeted action taken as necessary. Over the course of 2024-25 the Agency has continued to refine inactivity settings whilst ensuring volumes of prompts are manageable for both the Agency and practitioners.

In prior years, an adjustment would have been made to the volume reported from LAMS to reflect those cases falling under the scope of the Team's work and those cases flagged by the new inactivity prompt which fall outside 'normal' lifecycles. An adjustment continues to be made but due to the significant progress made on old cases, this adjustment now only needs to address those cases flagged through the inactivity prompt and outside 'normal' lifecycles.

## 15.2 Legal Aid - £190.530m (2023-24: £174.674m) (continued)

### Costs

There are two categories of costs applied to the volume of 'live' cases in LAMS at the end of the reporting period in order to calculate an estimated cost of the provision:

#### i. cases costed at an average cost

The provisions model extracts a volume of 'live' cases from LAMS per primary nature/matter and applies an average cost to each case to determine a provision value.

A system driven report generates an average cost from the volume and payment information of all completed and assessed closed cases held on LAMS.

During 2024-25 the Minister made a commitment as part of the Legal Aid Reform Programme to apply an increase to certain types of legal aid fees with an implementation date of 1 December 2024. In practice, this means that all eligible certificates granted from 1 December 2024 and which remain 'live' at the 31 March 2025, will be valued in the provision at the average cost (as noted above) plus the relevant percentage fee uplift.

#### ii. cases costed where an average cost is not applicable

The majority of Legal Aid provisions are estimated using LAMS volumes and average costs, however other case types have been separately reviewed. There are three categories of cases which require segregation for review as the average cost methodology above is not applicable:

- **Exceptional Funding (previously known as Statutory Exceptional Grant Payment Scheme)** - the Agency's Exceptionality and Criminal Authorities Team record and continuously monitor a list of Exceptional Funding cases. Each case is separately reviewed and costed by the Agency based on authorities granted less payments made to date.
- **Exceptionality** - the Agency's Exceptionality and Criminal Authorities record and continuously monitor a list of Exceptionality criminal cases. Each case is separately reviewed and costed by the Agency.
- **Court of Appeal** - the Taxing Master provides a list of the cases currently held along with the associated claimed and assessed value. This is reviewed by the Agency and the liability is calculated using the information provided.

### Judgements made by management

The determination of provisions remains a key area where management's judgement is required. There are two key assumptions applied in the calculation of the provisions which are detailed below:

- **average costs** - based on an analysis of historical payment values and volumes of closed cases, a series of average costs are calculated by primary nature within each Legal Aid level of service. This series of averages is then applied to the open certificate volume provided in line with the latest historical payment profile; and
- **lifecycle of certificates** - an analysis of the reports authorised for payment, aged to the certificate granted date to determine a lifecycle per certificate within each business area of the LSANI. As a result of the significant progress made by the Agency to cleanse LAMS of inactive cases, the application of life cycles is now limited to the review of a small volume of cases.

## 15.2 Legal Aid - £190.530m (2023-24: £174.674m) (continued)

### Uncertainties

#### *Inactivity*

A systematic programme of inactivity reviews has continued throughout 2024-25 and since December 2022 approximately 35,000 cases have been reviewed. Inactivity settings continue to be refined periodically to further reduce the time required to elapse before the prompt where appropriate.

Given there remains a focus on addressing inactive cases albeit the volume of inactive cases is now greatly reduced, the following approach is taken for calculating provisions:

- where a case is identified as inactive and is also outside the lifecycles previously applied to cleanse volume i.e. it is older than the average case duration, the possibility that no further liability exists is considered higher and the case is removed from the provisions liability calculation; or
- where a case is identified as inactive but is within the lifecycles previously applied, the case is included within the provisions liability calculation.

#### *Reporting*

The average costs are calculated from the information held on closed cases on LAMS. A report is produced which reviews all cases closed on the system and the value of all associated assessed payments. As the dataset of historical payment information on closed cases continues to grow the average costs produced become more robust.

A suite of provision reports is produced from LAMS which have improved and refined the provisions methodology. These reports ensure that the data is driven directly from the system where possible and manual intervention is kept to a minimum. These reports are continually kept under review and refined to best meet provision calculation and reporting needs.

#### *Timings*

The timing of the payment of civil legal services and criminal legal aid is determined by when solicitors or counsel submit their final bill after a case has concluded. The timing of each submission is outside the direct control of LSANI, but every effort is made to encourage legal representatives to submit their bills as expeditiously as possible. There is a statutory obligation for practitioners to submit claims within a three month time limit after the conclusion of the proceedings to which the criminal aid or civil legal services certificate relates or from the date the last legal advice and assistance was provided.

The Agency has power to extend the statutory time limit and to entertain a claim if there is "good reason" for the late submission or if there is not "good reason" the Agency may only extend time in "exceptional circumstances". In this event, the relevant legislation also requires the Agency to consider whether it is reasonable in the circumstances to reduce the costs of cases if time is extended for exceptional circumstances.

The provision for legal aid has been discounted to reflect the time value of money. Further details are contained at Note 1.13. Previously, the future cash flows were presented on an undiscounted basis. Following a reassessment by LSA and in accordance with IAS 37, these cash flows are now discounted to more accurately represent their present value. The impact of discounting has been applied prospectively from 2024-25 onwards within these financial statements.

### 15.3 Litigation claims - £327.924m (2023-24: £291.320m)

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Litigation claims	45,505	327,924	26,760	291,320
<b>Of which:</b>				
Core Department and Agencies	45,505	45,505	26,760	26,760
NDPBs		282,419	-	264,560
	<b>45,505</b>	<b>327,924</b>	<b>26,760</b>	<b>291,320</b>

The figures for litigation claims include the following:

#### (i) - Court of Appeal judgement on backdated holiday pay

The Court of Appeal (CoA) judgement from 17 June 2019 (PSNI v Agnew) determined that claims for Holiday Pay shortfall can extend as far back as 1998. However, the PSNI appealed the CoA judgement to the Supreme Court. The hearing was held in December 2022 and the judgement was delivered on 4 October 2023.

#### Core Department and Agencies

The 2024-25 Holiday Pay provision has been estimated by HR and covers the period from November 1998 to 31 March 2020. There are still some significant elements of uncertainty around this estimate for a number of reasons:

- lack of accessible data for years previous to 2011; and
- ongoing negotiations with Trade Unions and their legal representatives.

#### PSNI

Provision has been made for the ongoing holiday pay legal case which was appealed before the Supreme Court in December 2022 and a judgement given on 4 October 2023. The provision uses data to calculate liability where full and accurate records exist and uses one potential remedy to estimate costs for an historical period during which records are not complete or not accessible.

Ongoing discussions between the parties to remedy the case have resulted in a change in accounting estimate made under IAS 8 which has required an additional £12.34m to be provided in 2024-25.

The provision comprises two major elements:

- an estimate of costs from 2004 for police staff and 2007 for police officers, based on actual payroll data for all police officers and staff where full and accurate records exist; and
- an estimate of costs from 1998 to 2004 for police staff and 2007 for police officers, based on an assessed average per claimant.

The provision also includes interest on the claims.

A number of matters are still under consideration and therefore uncertain and are disclosed in Note 17 Contingent liabilities.

**15.3 Litigation claims - £327.924m (2023-24: £291.320m) (continued)*****(ii) - PSNI Data Loss***

In relation to the data loss on 8 August 2023, a liability has been provided for based on latest legal advice which indicates that, based on the current number of cases, costs are likely to lie in the range of approximately £76m to £108m including claimants legal costs. A mid-point within the range of possible outcomes has been selected as the basis of the provision. A further estimate of £16m is made in relation to potential claimants. These cases are still under consideration and therefore a number of assumptions have been made to arrive at the provision, including the quantum and number of claimants accepting a settlement offer and an estimate of levels of award and the proportion of cases for those not accepting the offer. While the provision is the best estimate currently available, the number of assumptions made mean that the eventual outturn is inherently uncertain and will continue to be refined in the future as more information becomes available. The overall provision has not been discounted as it is expected to be paid within one year, subject to settlement and funding considerations.

***(iii) - Other legal claims***

The litigation provision relates to claims against the Department, Agencies and its NDPBs by staff, prisoners and third parties for injuries and other damages including fair employment and industrial tribunal cases. The provision reflects all known claims where it is considered that it is probable that the claim will be successful and the amount can be reliably estimated. The timing of the settlement of claims depends on the circumstances of each case.

## 15.4 Compensation payments - £50.834m (2023-24: £84.816m)

### How the figures are derived

The Department estimates the value of open cases received under statutory criminal compensation schemes to arrive at the amounts disclosed as a provision within the financial statements. Open cases are deemed to be those that have yet to be concluded either with a final award settlement payment to the claimant or a closure of the claim without an award offer to the claimant. A provisions model is used to estimate the volume of cases and costs required to settle any obligations at the end of the reporting period.

### Summary position

The provisions in relation to criminal compensation claims administered can be summarised as follows:

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Volume of cases	Value of cases	Volume of cases	Value of cases
	Number	£000	Number	£000
Cases costed at an average cost	4,520	12,650	4,622	12,565
Cases costed where an average cost is not applicable	73	38,184	77	72,251
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,593</b>	<b>50,834</b>	<b>4,699</b>	<b>84,816</b>

### Volumes

The Department identifies the number of criminal compensation cases that remain open at the end of the financial year from the Criminal Compensation Case Management System (CIDMIS). The system associates a status flag with each case that is updated by caseworkers to record the current status of each case. Cases are classified as closed when a set of predefined conditions have been satisfied including payment of a final award.

### Costs

There are two categories of costs applied to the volume of open cases in CIDMIS at the end of the reporting period in order to calculate an estimated cost of the provision:

#### i. cases costed at an average cost

The provisions model extracts a volume of open cases from CIDMIS per compensation scheme and applies the following to determine a provision value: (a) expected percentage of cases, based on historical analysis that may be successful and result in an award of compensation; and (b) an average cost to each case. The payment reports used for deriving the average cost use the volume and payment information for all closed cases over a defined period.

#### ii. cases costed where an average cost is not applicable

The majority of criminal compensation provisions are estimated through the application of historical volumes and average costs associated with claims that have concluded with an award of compensation. However, other categories of cases are provided on a separate basis. The approach to determining the provision value for these categories of cases reflects the most likely settlement value at the time of reporting reflecting all available information, associated business intelligence and legal guidance.

## 15.4 Compensation payments - £50.834m (2023-24: £84.816m) (continued)

Three categories of cases require segregation for review as the average cost methodology is not applicable:

- **high value cases received under the Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2002 and 2009 (“Tariff” scheme)** - cases that due to their nature, characteristics and materiality need to be separately identified and assigned an estimated settlement value based on a more bespoke assessment from all other Tariff scheme cases. Each case is reviewed based on available evidence.
- **high value cases received under the Criminal Damage (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977** - cases that due to their nature, characteristics and materiality need to be separately identified and assigned an estimated settlement value based on a more bespoke assessment from all other Criminal Damage scheme cases. Each case is reviewed based on available evidence.
- **all remaining claims under the Criminal Injuries (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1988** - this scheme was closed to new applications following the introduction of the Tariff scheme in 2002. Given the nature of the small volume of remaining cases to be settled, the application of historical averages would not be an appropriate basis to calculate the liability. The liability is based on a case-by-case basis reflecting the nature and characteristics of each case and available evidence.

### Judgements made by management

The determination of provisions remains a key area where management’s judgement is required. The key assumptions applied in the calculation of the provisions are detailed below:

- **personal injury discount rate** - a discount rate is applied by courts to a lump-sum award of damages for future financial loss in a personal injury case, to take account of the return that can be earned from investment. The rate is currently 0.5% as set, with effect from 27 September 2024, by the Government Actuary under the Damages Act 1996 (as amended by the Damages (Return on Investment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022). The rate impacts the quantum associated with those Personal Injury related compensation claims (Tariff and Criminal Injury 1988 Order) where a future financial loss claim is received. This may encompass loss of future earnings, pension costs and the cost of covering future specialist care and rehabilitation requirements arising from the impacts of the injury suffered by the applicant. The lower the value of the discount rate is, the higher the settlement of a claim will be. The actuarial tables developed by the Government Actuary’s Department (GAD), commonly referred to as the ‘Ogden tables’, are the defined set of statistical tables and other information that are used to calculate future losses in Personal Injury and Fatal Accident cases at the 0.5% rate.
- **estimated settlement value for high value Personal Injury related and Criminal Damage cases** - there is no defined schedule of compensation rates to cover:
  - (a) claims for financial loss under the Tariff Scheme;
  - (b) damage and consequential financial loss claims under the Criminal Damage scheme; and
  - (c) claims for both injury and any associated financial loss under Criminal Injuries (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1988.

The provisions model determines the estimated settlement value for the above categories of cases classified as high value based on a review of current case evidence, the amount claimed by the applicant and the lowest current assessed settlement position as determined by the Department.

- **average compensation cost** - this is based on an analysis of historical payment values and volumes of closed cases across the Tariff and Criminal Damage schemes that have resulted in an award of compensation. This excludes any cases classified as high value across both schemes. An average cost by scheme is applied to the volume of open cases per scheme excluding those cases identified as high value cases.

#### 15.4 Compensation payments - £50.834m (2023-24: £84.816m) (continued)

- **cases received that result in an award of compensation** - it is expected that a proportion of claims received will ultimately result in an award for compensation. The provision model analyses historical claim data from the CIDMIS system to derive an estimated percentage of cases that will result in an award of compensation. This percentage is applied to the open claim volume to calculate a volume of claims to be provided for.

##### *Timings*

Those cases which are valued at the average compensation cost (£12.65m) are estimated to be paid within a time period not exceeding two years, therefore the Department has not discounted future cash flows arising from these claims. However, the personal injury discount rate is applied to those high value cases where the average cost is not applicable (£38.184m).

#### 15.5 Other provisions - £1.287m (2023-24: £1.012m)

Provision has been made for dilapidation costs or 'exit costs' which are payable by the Departmental Group to the landlord at the end of building leases. These costs are attributable to restoring the buildings to the original pre-lease state. Under IFRS 16, these costs have also been capitalised as part of the cost of the right of use assets.

The remaining provision relates to the removal of security items and decommissioning of sites prior to sale and other miscellaneous provisions.

## 16. Pension liabilities

	Note	2024-25		2023-24	
		Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Unfunded Schemes:</b>					
Liabilities	16.5	3,587	7,339,950	5,923	7,220,246
<b>Funded Schemes:</b>					
Liabilities		-	99,772	-	115,386
Assets		-	(99,632)	-	(115,229)
Net liabilities	16.6	-	140	-	157
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>3,587</b>	<b>7,340,090</b>	<b>5,923</b>	<b>7,220,403</b>

### Unfunded Schemes

#### *Police Pension Schemes*

PSNI administers three pension schemes for police officers. The Police Pension Scheme 1988 (now referred to as the 'closed' scheme), the new Police Pension Scheme 2006 (or 'new' scheme), and from 1 April 2015 the 2015 Police Pension Scheme (or 'CARE' scheme).

The regulations under which the schemes operate are as follows:

- Closed Scheme operates under the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the RUC Pensions Regulations 1988 with subsequent amendments. The regulations are modified for members of the PSNI Full Time Reserve in accordance with the RUC Reserve (Full Time) Pension Regulations 1994 and subsequent amendments.
- New Police Pension Scheme operates under the Police Pensions (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2007 which apply from 6 April 2006. Entry to the New Scheme was closed on the 31 March 2015.
- 2015 Police Pension Scheme is a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Scheme governed by the Police Pensions Regulations (NI) 2015. This was the only Scheme open to new entrants during the 2024-25 financial year.

All Schemes are unfunded defined benefit schemes, to which police officers and the PSNI, as employer, contribute. The rates of contributions and benefits are set by the Department of Justice (DoJ) as directed by Central Government and the Department of Finance (DoF).

DoJ is the Regulatory Authority and is responsible for setting the benefits to be provided by the Schemes, amending regulations as necessary and making the policy decisions in relation to the operation of the Schemes. The NI Policing Board (NIPB) is the PSNI Pension Schemes Manager. As Scheme Manager, NIPB is responsible for ensuring the accurate management of benefits and provision of information to members in line with the Schemes rules. The NIPB has delegated these functions to PSNI to carry out on their behalf. PSNI Financial Services carries out the day to day administration of the Schemes, including the day to day management of payments and receipts, and correspondence with Scheme members.

Full details of the Police Pension Schemes are contained in the PSNI Police Pension Accounts 2024-25 available on the [Police Service of Northern Ireland website](#).

## 16. Pension liabilities (continued)

### Unfunded Schemes (continued)

#### ***Core Department Broadly by Analogy (BBA) Scheme***

The Department is responsible for the BBA pension schemes of public appointments within its Departmental boundary and also entities for which it retains lead policy responsibility. A BBA pension arrangement entitles the recipient to benefits similar to the classic scheme in the NICS pension arrangements. The Department and members are obliged to make contributions in line with the NICS pension arrangements and the Department is responsible for paying accrued benefits.

The BBA pension provision is unfunded, with benefits being paid as they fall due and guaranteed by the Department for service provided.

#### ***Core Department Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme (NIJPS)***

The NIJPS is a career-average revalued earnings scheme open to specified judicial officeholders in Northern Ireland. It is an unfunded, defined benefit scheme providing pension and lump sum benefits on retirement, death and resignation.

On 1 April 2023 current members of the Scheme moved to the new UK wide 2022 judicial pension scheme managed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). All pension accruals in respect of service from 1 April 2023 are in accordance with the terms of the new MoJ scheme. NIJPS closed for future pension accrual from 1 April 2023 and active members became deferred members of the Scheme. As a result of these changes the assets and liabilities of the Scheme are accounted for within the main DoJ Accounts with effect from 1 April 2023.

DoJ is responsible for managing and administering the scheme. The day-to-day administration of the scheme is contracted out to XPS Administration by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) as part of a contract for administering all UK judicial pension schemes.

The Government Actuary Department (GAD) has provided an assessment of the scheme liability as at 31 March 2025 and the movement in the scheme liability over the year 2024-25, in accordance with the requirements of the 2024-25 FReM.

### **Funded Schemes**

Probation Board NI (PBNI) makes employer contributions to NILGOSC. The disclosures below relate to the funded liabilities within the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund (the "Fund") which is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (the "LGPS").

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit plan with benefits earned up to 31 March 2015 being linked to final salary. Benefits after 31 March 2015 are based on a Career Average Revalued Earnings Scheme. Details of the benefits earned over the period covered by this disclosure are set out in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The funded nature of the LGPS requires participating employers and its employees to pay contributions into the Fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets. Information on the framework for calculating contributions to be paid is set out in LGPS Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement. The last actuarial valuation was at 31 March 2022 and the contributions to be paid until 31 March 2026 resulting from that valuation are set out in the Fund's Rates and Adjustment Certificate. The Fund Administering Authority, Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee is responsible for the governance of the Fund.

The assets allocated to the Employer in the Fund are notional and are assumed to be invested in line with the investments of the Fund for the purposes of calculating the return to be applied to those notional assets over the accounting period. The Fund is large and holds a significant proportion of its assets in liquid investments. As a consequence, there will be no significant restriction on realising assets if a large payment is required to be paid from the Fund in relation to an employer's liabilities. The assets are invested in a diversified spread of investments and the approximate split of assets for the Fund as a whole (based on data supplied by the

## 16. Pension liabilities (continued)

Committee) is shown in the disclosures. The Committee may invest a small proportion of the Fund's investments in the assets of some of the employers participating in the Fund if it forms part of their balanced investment strategy.

### **Covid-19 and climate change**

Covid-19 and climate change are areas where there remains significant uncertainty, which could affect both future economic and demographic experience. In line with previous years, the assumptions used in the preparation of the 2024-25 financial statements allow for the current impacts of Covid-19 and climate change to the extent that they are reflected in the market data used to set or derive assumptions.

The 2020-based population mortality projections allow for the short-term impacts of Covid-19 for 2019 to 2024 in line with the average views of an expert independent panel. The 2022-based population projections consider Covid-19 as a mortality shock event, applying an appropriate short-term adjustment rather than projecting its effect forward. Death rates from Covid-19 in excess of that already allowed for in the mortality assumptions and reflected in the membership data would emerge as an experience gain in future years' financial statements.

## 16.1 Pensions by type

	2024-25							
	PSNI Closed Scheme	PSNI New Scheme	PSNI CARE Scheme	Core Broadly By Analogy	NI Judicial Pension Scheme	Total	PBNI NILGOSC	Departmental Group
	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Funded	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Liabilities	6,378,075	296,011	662,277	1,007	2,580	7,339,950	99,772	7,439,722
Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	(99,632)	(99,632)
<b>Net liabilities</b>	<b>6,378,075</b>	<b>296,011</b>	<b>662,277</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>7,339,950</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>7,340,090</b>
<b>Of which:</b>								
Core Department and Agencies	-	-	-	1,007	2,580	3,587	-	3,587
NDPBs	6,378,075	296,011	662,277	-	-	7,336,363	140	7,336,503
<b>Net liabilities</b>	<b>6,378,075</b>	<b>296,011</b>	<b>662,277</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>7,339,950</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>7,340,090</b>
	2023-24							
	PSNI Closed Scheme	PSNI New Scheme	PSNI CARE Scheme	Core Broadly By Analogy	NI Judicial Pension Scheme	Total	PBNI NILGOSC	Departmental Group
	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Funded	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Liabilities	6,384,865	286,131	543,327	966	4,957	7,220,246	115,386	7,335,632
Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	(115,229)	(115,229)
<b>Net liabilities</b>	<b>6,384,865</b>	<b>286,131</b>	<b>543,327</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>4,957</b>	<b>7,220,246</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>7,220,403</b>
<b>Of which:</b>								
Core Department and Agencies	-	-	-	966	4,957	5,923	-	5,923
NDPBs	6,384,865	286,131	543,327	-	-	7,214,323	157	7,214,480
<b>Net liabilities</b>	<b>6,384,865</b>	<b>286,131</b>	<b>543,327</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>4,957</b>	<b>7,220,246</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>7,220,403</b>

16.2 Scheme membership

	2024-25							
	PSNI Closed Scheme	PSNI New Scheme	PSNI CARE Scheme	Core Broadly By Analogy	NI Judicial Pension Scheme	Total	PBNI NILGOSC	Departmental Group
	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Funded	Total
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Active members	-	-	6,406	-	-	6,406	410	6,816
Deferred members	961	265	437	-	33	1,696	238	1,934
Pensioners in payment members	14,400	71	801	2	1	15,275	332	15,607
Pensioners in payment dependents	2,257	12	28	-	-	2,297	-	2,297
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,618</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>7,672</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25,674</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>26,654</b>

	2023-24							
	PSNI Closed Scheme	PSNI New Scheme	PSNI CARE Scheme	Core Broadly By Analogy	NI Judicial Pension Scheme	Total	PBNI NILGOSC	Departmental Group
	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Funded	Total
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Active members	-	-	6,364	-	-	6,364	410	6,774
Deferred members	986	256	377	-	55	1,674	238	1,912
Pensioners in payment members	14,318	49	571	2	1	14,941	332	15,273
Pensioners in payment dependents	2,194	9	17	-	-	2,220	-	2,220
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,498</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>7,329</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>25,199</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>26,179</b>

16.3 Key assumptions

	2024-25					
	PSNI Closed Scheme	PSNI New Scheme	PSNI CARE Scheme	Core Broadly By Analogy	NI Judicial Pension Scheme	PBNI NILGOSC
	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Funded
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Financial assumptions:</b>						
Salaries increase rate	3.40	3.40	3.40	-	-	4.00
Pensions increase rate	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.50
Inflation rate (CPI)	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.50
Discount rate	5.15	5.15	5.15	5.15	5.15	5.80
CARE revaluation rate	-	-	3.90	-	-	-
<b>Mortality:</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>
Male pensioners currently aged 65	21.9	21.9	21.9	25.2	23.7	21.6
Female pensioners currently aged 65	23.9	23.9	23.9	27.4	25.7	24.5
Male pensioners currently aged 45	23.3	23.3	23.3	27.4	25.3	22.2
Female pensioners currently aged 45	25.2	25.2	25.2	30.0	26.9	25.2

	2023-24					
	PSNI Closed Scheme	PSNI New Scheme	PSNI CARE Scheme	Core Broadly By Analogy	NI Judicial Pension Scheme	PBNI NILGOSC
	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Funded
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Financial assumptions:</b>						
Salaries increase rate	3.55	3.55	3.55	-	3.55	4.10
Pensions increase rate	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.60
Inflation rate (CPI)	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.60
Discount rate	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.10	4.80
CARE revaluation rate	-	-	3.80	-	-	-
<b>Mortality:</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>
Male pensioners currently aged 65	21.9	21.9	21.9	24.2	23.8	21.7
Female pensioners currently aged 65	23.6	23.6	23.6	26.4	25.4	24.6
Male pensioners currently aged 45	23.6	23.6	23.6	26.4	25.3	22.7
Female pensioners currently aged 45	25.1	25.1	25.1	29.0	26.9	25.6

## 16.4 Sensitivity analysis

The sensitivity analysis is intended to provide an indication of the impact on the value of the Scheme's liabilities from the risks highlighted below. Opposite changes in the assumptions will produce approximately equal and opposite changes in the liability. Doubling the changes in assumptions will produce approximately double the change in the liability. The sensitivities show the change in assumptions in isolation. In practice such assumptions rarely change in isolation and given the interdependencies between the assumptions the impacts may offset to some extent.

### PSNI - Closed Scheme - Unfunded

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024
	Impact on liability	Impact on liability
	£000	£000
+0.5% increase in rate of discounting scheme liabilities	(415,000)	(410,000)
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in salaries	33,000	32,000
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in pensions/deferred revaluation	419,000	414,000
One further year than assumed for life expectancy	151,000	157,000

### PSNI - New Scheme - Unfunded

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024
	Impact on liability	Impact on liability
	£000	£000
+0.5% increase in rate of discounting scheme liabilities	(38,000)	(36,000)
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in salaries	21,000	20,000
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in pensions/deferred revaluation	22,000	21,000
One further year than assumed for life expectancy	5,000	5,000

### PSNI - CARE Scheme - Unfunded

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024
	Impact on liability	Impact on liability
	£000	£000
+0.5% increase in rate of discounting scheme liabilities	(85,000)	(70,000)
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in salaries	-	-
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in pensions/deferred revaluation	101,000	83,000
One further year than assumed for life expectancy	12,000	9,000

### Core Department - Broadly By Analogy - Unfunded

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024
	Impact on liability	Impact on liability
	£000	£000
+0.5% increase in rate of discounting scheme liabilities	(44)	(44)
+0.5% increase in rate of inflation (CPI)	43	48
One further year than assumed for life expectancy	40	27

### Core Department - NI Judicial Pension Scheme - Unfunded

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024
	Impact on liability	Impact on liability
	£000	£000
+0.5% increase in rate of discounting scheme liabilities	(231)	(496)
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in salaries	-	198
+0.5% increase in rate of increase in pensions/deferred revaluation	270	545
One further year than assumed for life expectancy	64	149

## 16.4 Sensitivity analysis (continued)

### PBNI - NILGOSC - Funded

	31 March 2025	31 March 2024
	Impact on liability	Impact on liability
	£000	£000
+0.1% increase in rate of discounting scheme liabilities	(1,494)	(1,959)
+0.1% increase in rate of increase in salaries	199	230
+0.1% increase in rate of increase in pensions/deferred revaluation	1,395	1,728
One further year than assumed for life expectancy	2,292	2,996

## 16.5 Reconciliation of net pension liabilities - Unfunded Schemes

	2024-25					
	PSNI Closed Scheme	PSNI New Scheme	PSNI CARE Scheme	Core Broadly By Analogy	NI Judicial Pension Scheme	Departmental Group
	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Liabilities</b>						
Balance at 1 April	6,384,865	286,131	543,327	966	4,957	7,220,246
Current service cost	-	10	89,740	-	-	89,750
Past service cost	-	-	-	-	(2,665)	(2,665)
Pension financing cost	316,590	14,560	29,790	49	253	361,242
Total recognised in SoCNE	<b>316,590</b>	<b>14,570</b>	<b>119,530</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>(2,412)</b>	<b>448,327</b>
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pension payments	(359,030)	(1,290)	(6,450)	(58)	(9)	(366,837)
Pension payments to and on account of leavers	-	-	(660)	-	-	(660)
Total cash flows	<b>(359,030)</b>	<b>(1,290)</b>	<b>(7,110)</b>	<b>(58)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(367,497)</b>
Experience loss/(gain)	13,750	1,780	(1,370)	5	10	14,175
Changes in financial and demographic assumptions	21,900	(5,180)	7,900	45	34	24,699
Total actuarial loss/(gain)	<b>35,650</b>	<b>(3,400)</b>	<b>6,530</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>38,874</b>
<b>Liabilities at 31 March</b>	<b>6,378,075</b>	<b>296,011</b>	<b>662,277</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>7,339,950</b>
	2023-24					
	PSNI Closed Scheme	PSNI New Scheme	PSNI CARE Scheme	Core Broadly By Analogy	NI Judicial Pension Scheme	Departmental Group
	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded	Unfunded
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Liabilities</b>						
Balance at 1 April	6,824,385	314,531	567,187	969	5,291	7,712,363
Current service cost	-	10	94,590	-	-	94,600
Past service cost	(120)	(20)	-	-	-	(140)
Pension financing cost	276,740	13,040	25,420	40	219	315,459
Total recognised in SoCNE	<b>276,620</b>	<b>13,030</b>	<b>120,010</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>409,919</b>
Transfers in	-	-	790	-	-	790
Pension payments	(315,040)	(730)	(3,340)	(54)	(8)	(319,172)
Pension payments to and on account of leavers	-	-	(480)	-	-	(480)
Total cash flows	<b>(315,040)</b>	<b>(730)</b>	<b>(3,030)</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(318,862)</b>
Experience loss	285,920	13,340	3,680	84	246	303,270
Changes in financial and demographic assumptions	(687,020)	(54,040)	(144,520)	(73)	(791)	(886,444)
Total actuarial loss/(gain)	<b>(401,100)</b>	<b>(40,700)</b>	<b>(140,840)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>(545)</b>	<b>(583,174)</b>
<b>Liabilities at 31 March</b>	<b>6,384,865</b>	<b>286,131</b>	<b>543,327</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>4,957</b>	<b>7,220,246</b>

## 16.6 Reconciliation of net pension liabilities/(assets) - Funded Schemes

	2024-25	2023-24
	PBNI NILGOSC	PBNI NILGOSC
	Funded	Funded
	£000	£000
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>		
Balance at 1 April	115,386	116,015
Current service cost	3,205	2,355
Past service cost	-	2
Pension financing cost	5,447	5,362
Administration expense	88	59
Total recognised in SoCNE	8,740	7,778
Pension payments	(5,052)	(4,705)
Contribution by members	1,119	749
Total cash flows	(3,933)	(3,956)
Total actuarial (gain)	(20,421)	(4,451)
<b>Liabilities at 31 March</b>	<b>99,772</b>	<b>115,386</b>
<b><u>Assets</u></b>		
Balance at 1 April	128,634	118,169
Interest income on assets	5,519	5,406
Total recognised in SoCNE	5,519	5,406
Contributions by members	1,119	749
Contributions by employer	3,339	2,235
Benefits paid	(5,052)	(4,705)
Total cash flows	(594)	(1,721)
Total actuarial (gain) / loss	(789)	6,780
<b>Assets at 31 March</b>	<b>132,770</b>	<b>128,634</b>
<b>Net (assets) at 31 March</b>	<b>(32,998)</b>	<b>(13,248)</b>
Unrecognised asset due to restriction of surpluses	33,138	13,405
<b>Net liabilities at 31 March</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>157</b>
<b><u>Fair value of assets</u></b>		
Equities	54,834	56,213
Government bonds	20,845	22,382
Corporate bonds	5,178	5,403
Multi-asset credit	17,260	17,108
Property	12,613	12,477
Cash	14,206	7,204
Other	7,834	7,847
<b>Total fair value of assets</b>	<b>132,770</b>	<b>128,634</b>

## 17. Contingent liabilities

The Department has the following contingent liabilities with settlement dates unknown in all cases:

### *(i) Judicial Review on Fine Enforcement within NICTS*

Following a decision by the Divisional Court in 2013 that ruled that the longstanding procedure for the enforcement of unpaid fines in Northern Ireland was unlawful, NICTS introduced a settlement scheme. A number of claims were refused compensation having been deemed out of time as, pursuant to section 7(5) of the Human Rights Act 1998, proceedings alleging a breach of a Convention right must be brought within one year, beginning with the date on which the act complained of took place. Subsequently, approximately 170 writs and civil bills were submitted challenging NICTS' decision to refuse compensation.

Following court hearings and Senior Counsel advice, a settlement strategy was implemented by NICTS in relation to wrongful imprisonment associated with Fine Default and the associated liability is recognised in Provisions. There is the potential that further claims may be received, however it is not possible to quantify the number of claims or the settlement amounts with any accuracy.

### *(ii) Compensation Services within DoJ Core Department*

Within its Compensation Services, the Department has unquantifiable liabilities relating to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, including a small number of high value complex 'tariff' scheme cases. Given the nature of these cases, it can take time to gather the required, expert evidence to quantify the claim following receipt, particularly in relation to any longer-term care needs. In the main, these cases are still in the early stages of their lifecycle and therefore the quantifiable element of the claim only reflects the assessed injury element, based on the evidence and information available at the time, and it is this amount that has been included within provisions as part of note 15.4. In the absence of claims however and in turn, expert evidence, financial liability cannot be reliably estimated for this element of these cases and accordingly, no provision has been made in the financial statements for this element.

### *(iii) PSNI*

The PSNI has the following contingent liabilities:

#### **Hearing loss cases**

The PSNI is named Defendant in a number of claims from current and ex-police officers and police staff for occupational hearing loss. Claims up to 31 March 2025 are reflected in Provisions (Note 15). Claims have also been received from members/ex-members of NIPS who received firearms training from the RUC/PSNI. However, the number of claims likely to be received in the future is uncertain and cannot be reliably estimated. Each case will be considered on its own merits and any settlement based on the severity of hearing loss.

#### **Holiday pay**

Provision has been made for the ongoing holiday pay legal case which was appealed before the Supreme Court in December 2022 and a judgement given on 4 October 2023. Note 15 outlines the methodology used by the PSNI to calculate the provision.

A number of legal issues of remedy have been subject to negotiations but still require formal agreement of all parties.

#### **Data Loss on 8 August 2023**

A reliable estimate of PSNI's own legal cost cannot currently be made, meaning that there is potential for further liability in addition to the amount already provided for.

**17. Contingent liabilities (continued)****(iii) PSNI (continued)****Legacy litigation cases**

The PSNI is named as defendant in over 1,100 litigation claims relating to legacy incidents. In this context legacy incidents are defined as those associated with sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland occurring between 1969 until approximately 2010. Several legacy cases are at a sufficiently advanced stage where negotiations for early settlement have commenced with the plaintiffs, or where a reasonable estimate of liability can be made based on previous settlements. For these cases an amount has been included in Provisions (Note 15). However, for the vast majority of cases litigation is still at a very early stage and no reliable estimate of liability or value can be made.

**(iv) Public sector pensions - McCloud Claims****PSNI**

When new public service pension schemes were introduced in 2015, transitional protection allowed older workers to continue building pension in the legacy schemes while younger workers were moved into the 2015 schemes. Claims of age discrimination were brought in relation to the terms of transitional protection by groups of firefighters and members of the judiciary in the McCloud/Sargeant legal case and the Court of Appeal handed down its judgement on this claim on 20 December 2018, ruling that the transitional protection arrangements were discriminatory on the basis of age.

Following this ruling, a significant number of claims have been received by the Department relating to discrimination on the basis of age. Provision has been made in the accounts for the best estimate of the likely expenditure required to settle these claims.

A number of claims received include an element which the Department considers to be unjustified and which it intends to robustly defend. Consequently, no provision has been made for this element of these claims.

**NICS**

The Department of Finance (DoF) is a named Respondent in a class action affecting employers across the public sector and is managing claims on behalf of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Departments. This is an extremely complex case with potential implications for the NICS and wider public sector. However, given the complexities, the cases are still at an early stage of proceedings and until there is further clarity on potential scope and impact, a reliable estimate of liability cannot be provided.

**(v) Supplier contracts, employment, personnel and legal cases outstanding against the Department**

These claims have not been provided for in the Department's financial statements as they are considered unlikely to be successful or the amount and timing of any potential obligation cannot be reliably measured at this time.

## 18. Leases - Right of use assets

IFRS 16 Leases has been implemented from 1 April 2022 which introduces a single lease accounting model that requires a lessee to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases (with certain exceptions applied). Further details are disclosed in Note 1.11.

### 18.1 Quantitative disclosures around right of use assets

		2024-25				
		Land	Buildings	Plant and Machinery	Information Technology	Departmental Group
Note		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>						
	Balance at 1 April	95	13,795	406	1,459	15,755
	Additions – new leases	14	3,674	9	13	3,710
	Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-
	Impairment / impairment reversals	-	-	-	-	-
	Disposals	-	(336)	-	-	(336)
	Remeasurement – existing leases	-	776	-	-	776
	Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>17,909</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>19,905</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
	Balance at 1 April	11	4,681	163	268	5,123
	Depreciation charged in year	12	2,901	100	105	3,118
	Impairment / impairment reversals	-	174	-	-	174
	Disposals	-	(336)	-	-	(336)
	Reclassifications	-	235	-	-	235
	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7,655</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>8,314</b>
	<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>10,254</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>1,099</b>
	<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>9,114</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>1,191</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
	Core Department and Agencies	8	3,074	123	-	3,205
	NDPBs	78	7,180	29	1,099	8,386
	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>10,254</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>1,099</b>	<b>11,591</b>

## 18.1 Quantitative disclosures around right of use assets

		2023-24				
	Note	Land £000	Buildings £000	Plant and Machinery £000	Information Technology £000	Departmental Group £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>						
Balance at 1 April		66	13,144	406	1,459	15,075
Additions – new leases		29	1,577	-	-	1,606
Revaluations		-	-	-	-	-
Impairment / impairment reversals		-	-	-	-	-
Disposals		-	(926)	-	-	(926)
Remeasurement – existing leases		-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>95</b>	<b>13,795</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>15,755</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
Balance at 1 April		5	2,464	68	134	2,671
Depreciation charged in year		6	2,988	95	134	3,223
Impairment / impairment reversals		-	-	-	-	-
Disposals		-	(771)	-	-	(771)
Reclassifications		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>4,681</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>5,123</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	7	<b>84</b>	<b>9,114</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>10,632</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>		<b>61</b>	<b>10,680</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>12,404</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
Core Department and Agencies		28	3,637	98	-	3,763
NDPBs		56	5,477	145	1,191	6,869
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>9,114</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>10,632</b>

## 18.2 Quantitative disclosures around lease liabilities - maturity analysis

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

	Note	2024-25		2023-24	
		Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
		£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Land and buildings:</i>					
Not later than one year		1,245	2,511	1,042	2,097
Later than one year but not later than five years		2,042	3,356	2,211	3,360
Later than five years		573	3,081	63	2,868
		<b>3,860</b>	<b>8,948</b>	<b>3,316</b>	<b>8,325</b>
Less interest element		(336)	(928)	(161)	(754)
<b>Present value of obligations</b>		<b>3,524</b>	<b>8,020</b>	<b>3,155</b>	<b>7,571</b>
<i>Other:</i>					
Not later than one year		60	189	49	211
Later than one year but not later than five years		42	379	74	458
Later than five years		-	935	7	1,007
		<b>102</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>1,676</b>
Less interest element		(4)	(186)	(5)	(198)
<b>Present value of obligations</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>1,478</b>
<b>Total present value of obligations</b>	14	<b>3,622</b>	<b>9,337</b>	<b>3,280</b>	<b>9,049</b>
Current portion		1,242	2,565	1,015	2,176
Non-current portion		2,380	6,772	2,265	6,873
	14	<b>3,622</b>	<b>9,337</b>	<b>3,280</b>	<b>9,049</b>

## 18.3 Quantitative disclosures around elements in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sub-leasing income	-	(68)	-	(50)
Operating lease over accrual relating to 2021-22	-	-	(110)	(110)
Expense related to short-term leases	130	316	89	308
Expense related to low value leases (excluding short-term leases)	99	1,613	61	1,235

## 18.4 Quantitative disclosures around cash outflows for leases

	2024-25		2023-24 (Restated*)	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital element of lease payments	1,087	2,542	1,287	2,736
Interest element of lease payments	122	213	82	157
<b>Total cash outflow for leases</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>2,755</b>	<b>1,369</b>	<b>2,893</b>

\*Restated to include the interest element of lease payments not previously disclosed within this Note.

## 19. Commitments under PPP/PFI contracts

### 19.1 On-Balance Sheet (SoFP)

The following PPP/PFI transactions have been accounted for in accordance with IFRIC 12 Service Concession Arrangements as being 'on-balance sheet'.

#### Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) - Laganside Complex

In February 1999, NICTS entered into a Public Finance Initiative (PFI) agreement with a private sector provider for the provision and maintenance of a high quality court complex in Belfast. In accordance with the agreement, service charges became payable with effect from February 2002 to December 2026 and these are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. The court complex has been accounted for as an asset and included in the Accounts as Property, plant and equipment. The liabilities to pay for the assets are in substance finance lease obligations and therefore contractual payments comprise two elements - imputed finance lease charges and service charges.

The total amount charged in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in respect of the service element of 'on-balance sheet' (SoFP) transactions was £3.071m (2023-24: £2.986m). Total future obligations under 'on-balance sheet' arrangements are given in the table below for each of the following periods:

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Minimum lease payments:				
Not later than one year	2,182	2,182	2,182	2,182
Later than one year but not later than five years	1,573	1,573	3,755	3,755
Later than five years	-	-	-	-
	<b>3,755</b>	<b>3,755</b>	<b>5,937</b>	<b>5,937</b>
Less interest element	(221)	(221)	(467)	(467)
<b>Present value of obligations</b>	<b>3,534</b>	<b>3,534</b>	<b>5,470</b>	<b>5,470</b>
Service elements due in future periods:				
Not later than one year	1,794	1,794	1,809	1,809
Later than one year but not later than five years	1,303	1,303	3,176	3,176
Later than five years	-	-	-	-
<b>Total service elements due in future periods</b>	<b>3,097</b>	<b>3,097</b>	<b>4,985</b>	<b>4,985</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,631</b>	<b>6,631</b>	<b>10,455</b>	<b>10,455</b>

## 20. Capital and other commitments

### 20.1 Capital commitments

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these financial statements:				
Property, plant and equipment	6,764	45,445	6,738	39,917
Intangible assets	8,754	8,754	143	161
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,518</b>	<b>54,199</b>	<b>6,881</b>	<b>40,078</b>

### 20.2 Other financial commitments

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group	Core Department and Agencies	Departmental Group
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Not later than one year	4,682	4,682	2,879	2,879
Later than one year but not later than five years	786	786	1,156	1,156
Later than five years	177	177	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,645</b>	<b>5,645</b>	<b>4,035</b>	<b>4,035</b>

Of the total commitments noted above, £0.463m (2023-24: £0.945m) relates to the Causeway IT contract. Causeway is a strategically important IT system which supports the operation of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland by sharing information electronically between the five main criminal justice organisations. The current Causeway IT contract was awarded in November 2017 to Fujitsu Services for an initial seven year term from 1 April 2019 for the delivery and enhancement of the Causeway messaging system, with the Department of Finance's Digital Security and Finance Shared Services (DSF) providing and supporting the Causeway infrastructure. Current Causeway services commenced in March 2019 following a 16 month implementation phase.

The remaining balance of £5.182m (2023-24: £3.090m) relates to non-cancellable contracts (which are not leases or PFI contracts) for ICT services, planned maintenance, costs relating to properties, and funding payable to certain voluntary and community sector organisations for the delivery of programmes and initiatives.

## 21. Related party transactions

The Department of Justice consists of the following Executive Agencies in addition to the Core Department:

- Forensic Science Northern Ireland;
- Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland;
- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service;
- Northern Ireland Prison Service; and
- Youth Justice Agency.

The Department of Justice is also the parent Department of a number of entities. During the year the Department had a number of material transactions with the following entities which, for financial reporting purposes, are regarded as related parties:

Executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies:

- Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland;
- Northern Ireland Police Fund;
- Northern Ireland Policing Board;
- Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland;
- Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland; and
- RUC George Cross Foundation.

In addition, the Department had various material transactions with other Government departments and other central government bodies. Most of these transactions have been with the Department of Finance.

Details of related party transactions for staff members working in Agencies within the Departmental boundary are separately disclosed in the individual annual report and accounts of each Agency. See Annex 2 for links to NDPB websites.

## 22. Third-party assets

The Department holds as custodian or trustee monies belonging to third parties, over and above those monies disclosed in Note 12 Cash and cash equivalents. These monies noted are not departmental assets and not included in the Accounts. The assets held at 31 March to which it was practical to ascribe monetary values are set out in the table below and comprise monetary assets such as bank balances, monies on deposit and listed securities.

Departmental Group	1 April 2024	Gross Inflows	Gross Outflows	31 March 2025
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Monetary assets such as bank balances and monies on deposit	104,712	154,866	(133,474)	126,104
Listed securities	259,317	53,920	(34,194)	279,043
<b>Total</b>	<b>364,029</b>	<b>208,786</b>	<b>(167,668)</b>	<b>405,147</b>

### Compensation Services

Bank balances for minors under the Criminal Injuries Compensation (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 are held until the minors attain the age of 18. These balances attract compound interest at variable rates that are dependent on the outstanding balance.

### Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI)

Awards for damages to funded clients may be required by LSANI to offset any liability to the Legal Aid Fund. LSANI places these funds on deposit in separate individual client bank accounts until the liability to the Fund, if any, is determined. Any remaining balance of the damages awarded is refunded once the liability to the Fund has been settled. The amounts retained to cover any shortfall to the Fund are recorded in income as 'Damages retained'.

### Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS)

NICTS provides a banking and investment service, through the Court Funds Office, for funds that are deposited in court. The investment service is carried out by an external service provider. Examples of the types of funds include monies held for minors, certain assets of some mental health patients, and payments into court in satisfaction of a claim as well as statutory deposits and unclaimed balances in court.

There are third party bank accounts maintained by the various court offices and Official Solicitor's Office. These are not NICTS assets and are not included in the accounts. The assets held at the reporting date to which it was practical to ascribe monetary values, comprised monetary assets such as bank balances and monies on deposit, and listed securities.

### Northern Ireland Prison Service

All prisoners have a private account (Prisoners' Private Cash - PPC) into which prison earnings and cash received from visits or through the post are lodged. These accounts are also used by prisoners to fund all purchases from the prison tuckshop. When prisoners are finally discharged they are paid the full balance of their PPC account. Each prison establishment also administers a Prisoners' Amenities Fund. Payments from the fund are used for the welfare/benefit of all prisoners. Fund receipts include income from the sale of tuck shop items, phone credits and donations.

### PSNI

PSNI hold a number of bank accounts and sealed packages which contain evidence or proceeds of criminal activities. As these monies are not assets of the PSNI they are not included in these financial statements. Following the outcome of investigations or court proceedings, the money is returned or paid to appropriate authorities.

## 22. Third-party assets (continued)

### Youth Justice Agency

Young people in custody have a private cash facility for the lodgement of their pocket money and funding of tuckshop purchases. When the young people are discharged they are paid in full the balance on their account. Where a youth conference plan requires a young person to compensate a victim, the money is collected by the Agency and also held in a separate bank account until it is paid over to the victim.

### Assets held

The Official Solicitor may be appointed to act as a financial controller for persons deemed by the courts to be incapable of managing their financial affairs and assets. In such capacity the Official Solicitor acts as custodian of a number of property assets. Title deeds for property may also be held by NICTS as security for bails in relation to legal actions. The Enforcement of Judgements Office provides a centralised enforcement service for civil court judgements. A number of cases result in property repossessions.

Other significant assets held at the balance sheet date to which it was not practical to ascribe monetary values comprised:

	2024-25		2023-24	
	Core Department and Agencies Number	Departmental Group Number	Core Department and Agencies Number	Departmental Group Number
	Property assets	696	696	944

### 23. Entities within the Departmental boundary

The entities within the boundary during 2024-25 were as follows:

#### Executive Agencies:

- Forensic Science Northern Ireland;
- Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland;
- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service;
- Northern Ireland Prison Service; and
- Youth Justice Agency.

#### NDPBs and Pension Schemes:

- Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland;
- Northern Ireland Police Fund;
- Northern Ireland Policing Board;
- Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland;
- Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and PSNI Police Pensions;
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland; and
- RUC George Cross Foundation.

The annual reports and accounts of these Executive Agencies and NDPBs are published separately.

#### Other entities included within Core Department, Executive Agencies and NDPBs:

- Care Tribunal;
- Commissioner for Hearings under Prison Rule 109B;
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel Northern Ireland;
- Health and Personal Social Services Disqualification Tribunal;
- Independent Assessor of PSNI Recruitment Vetting;
- Independent Monitoring Boards;
- Lands Tribunal;
- Northern Ireland Charity Tribunal;
- Northern Ireland Health and Safety Tribunal;
- Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme;
- Northern Ireland Traffic Penalty Tribunal;
- Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal;
- Parole Commissioners;
- Pensions Appeal Commissioners;
- Pensions Appeal Tribunal;
- Planning Appeals Commission;
- Prisoner Ombudsman;
- Review Tribunal;
- Social Security and Child Support Commissioners;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal;
- State Pathologist's Department; and
- Water Appeals Commission.

The Northern Ireland Law Commission is also a NDPB of the Department of Justice but has been non-operational since April 2015 due to budgetary pressures.

#### **24. Events after the reporting period**

There were no events after the reporting period date that required adjustment to or disclosure in these financial statements.

#### **Date for authorisation of issue**

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 3 July 2025.




## ANNEX 1 – ACRONYMS

Acronym	Details
ALBs	Arm's Length Bodies
AME	Annually Managed Expenditure
AMPS	Assembly Members' Pension Scheme
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
BBA	Broadly By Analogy
BCP	Business Continuity Planning
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CARE	Career Average Revalued Earnings
CCM	Cost Cap Mechanism
CETV	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value
CFER	Consolidated Fund Extra Receipt
CJINI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CoA	Court of Appeal
CPD	Construction and Procurement Delivery
CPI	Consumer Prices Index
CSP	Civil Service Pensions
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DARC	Departmental Audit and Risk Committee
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit
DfC	Department for Communities
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice
DPO	Data Protection Officer
EV	Electric Vehicle
FReM	Financial Reporting Manual
FSNI	Forensic Science Northern Ireland
GAD	Government Actuary's Department
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HRA	Human Rights Act
HSENI	Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
IAO	Information Asset Owner
IAS	International Accounting Standards
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
IFRIC	International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IROC	Information Risk Owners' Council
IS	Information Security
JPS	Judicial Pension Scheme
LAMS	Legal Aid Management System
LCM	Legislative Consent Motion
LPS	Land and Property Services
LSANI	Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NEBM	Non-Executive Board Member
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICSHR	Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
NIJPS	Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme
NILGOSC	Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board
NIPF	Northern Ireland Police Fund
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency



**ANNEX 1 - ACRONYMS (continued)**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Details</b>
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPONI	Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PBNI	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
PCSPS(NI)	Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland)
PES	Public Expenditure System
PFI	Public Finance Initiatives
PPC	Prisoners' Private Cash
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRRT	Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PV	Photovoltaics
RICS	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
RoFP	Review of Financial Process
RPI	Retail Price Index
SOAS	Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply
SoCNE	Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure
SoFP	Statement of Financial Position
SCS	Senior Civil Servant
SOLA	Sexual Offences Legal Advisers
VAT	Value Added Tax
VFM	Value for Money
YJA	Youth Justice Agency




**ANNEX 2 - MAIN FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF AGENCIES AND NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES**

Agency	Main functions and activities
	<p>The Agency is responsible for the provision of impartial scientific advice and support, to enhance the criminal justice system. This includes scientific advice for the Public Prosecution Service and the legal profession, and objective expert testimony to the Courts. Services are available to those representing both defence and prosecution interests in criminal cases, and FSNI also carry out work for private clients.</p> <p><a href="#">Forensic Science Northern Ireland website</a></p>
	<p>The Agency supports the justice system to ensure access to justice for everyone by administering publicly funded legal services impartially, effectively and efficiently within the governing legislation and policy framework set by the Minister of Justice. LSANI ensure key principles of a democratic society in all the Agency does; that all are equal before the law and have the right to a fair trial.</p> <p>The Agency also works closely with DoJ in the achievement of the wider strategic objectives. It works in partnership with its users and delivery partners to enhance its customer service delivery ensuring that legal services are available to those who meet the statutory eligibility tests, which support those in greatest need.</p> <p><a href="#">Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland website</a></p>
	<p>The main roles of NICTS include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting: an independent Judiciary; Northern Ireland’s courts; the majority of Northern Ireland’s tribunals; the Coroners Service of Northern Ireland; and the delivery of legacy inquests through the Legacy Inquest Unit;</li> <li>• enforcing civil court judgements through the Enforcement of Judgements Office;</li> <li>• collecting and enforcing outstanding financial penalties through the Fine Collection and Enforcement Service; and</li> <li>• managing funds held in court on behalf of minors and patients.</li> </ul> <p>NICTS also provides administrative support to the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland; the Planning Appeals Commission and Water Appeals Commission; and the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board.</p> <p><a href="#">Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website</a></p>



**ANNEX 2 - MAIN FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF AGENCIES AND NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES (CONTINUED)**

Agency	Main functions and activities
 <p>NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE</p>	<p>The overall aim of the Northern Ireland Prison Service is to improve public safety by reducing the risk of re-offending through the management and rehabilitation of offenders in custody. Its main statutory duties are set out in the <a href="#">Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953</a>.</p> <p>The Prison Service, through its staff, serves the community by keeping in secure, safe and humane custody those committed by the courts and, by working with prisoners and with other organisations, seeks to reduce the risk of re-offending and in so doing aims to protect the public and to contribute to peace and stability in Northern Ireland.</p> <p><a href="#">Northern Ireland Prison Service website</a></p>
 <p>Youth Justice Agency</p>	<p>The Youth Justice Agency aims to make communities safer by helping children to stop offending. The Agency works with children aged 10-17 years who have offended or are at serious risk of offending.</p> <p>The Agency provides a range of services, often delivered in partnership with others, to help children to address their offending behaviour, divert them from crime, assist their integration into the community and to meet the needs of victims of crime. These front-line services delivered by the Youth Justice Services and Custodial Services directorates.</p> <p><a href="#">Youth Justice Agency website</a></p>




**ANNEX 2 - MAIN FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF AGENCIES AND NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES (CONTINUED)**

Non-Departmental Public Body	Main functions and activities
 <p>Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland <i>a better justice system for all</i></p>	<p>CJI has a statutory remit to inspect a wide variety of organisations and bodies and is required to carry out Inspections in relation to these criminal justice bodies or organisations unless the Inspectorate is satisfied they are subject to a satisfactory inspection regime. CJI's remit is broader than this and includes other bodies that also have a regulatory or prosecutorial role that engage with the criminal justice system.</p> <p><a href="#">Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland website</a></p>
 <p>nipf NORTHERN IRELAND POLICE FUND</p>	<p>NIPF's remit is to provide support to police officers injured or killed as a direct result of terrorist attack, and their widows and families. Its overall aim is to improve the quality of life of its clients by providing financial and other support.</p> <p>NIPF achieves its objectives by providing a comprehensive, quality service to its clients. It is proactive in seeking to meet their needs, and provides a range of schemes designed to meet those needs now and in the future.</p> <p><a href="#">Northern Ireland Police Fund   NIPF (nipolicyfund.gov.uk)</a></p>
 <p>Northern Ireland Policing Board</p>	<p>The NIPB's statutory duty is to ensure that the PSNI is effective and efficient and to hold the Chief Constable to account. Its primary responsibilities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to consult with the community to obtain their views on policing and their co-operation with the police in preventing crime;</li> <li>to set and publish outcomes and measures for the PSNI as part of an Annual Policing Plan and to monitor the PSNI's performance against this plan;</li> <li>to appoint all Chief Officers of the PSNI above the rank of Chief Superintendent including police staff equivalents; and</li> <li>to approve the annual budget for policing and monitor expenditure.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Northern Ireland Policing Board website</a></p>

**ANNEX 2 - MAIN FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF AGENCIES AND NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES (CONTINUED)**

Non-Departmental Public Body	Main functions and activities
 <p>The logo for the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland features a stylized blue and green circular emblem to the left of the text "police ombudsman" in a blue serif font, with "FOR NORTHERN IRELAND" in a smaller blue sans-serif font below it.</p>	<p>The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland provides an independent, impartial police complaints system for the people and the police of Northern Ireland. It investigates complaints about the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Belfast Harbour Police, the Belfast International Airport Police, National Crime Agency (NCA) officers in Northern Ireland and Ministry of Defence Police in Northern Ireland. The Office also undertakes investigations into certain complaints about Immigration Officers and Designated Customs Officials when operating in Northern Ireland through a legal framework developed jointly with the Home Office and DoJ.</p> <p>The Police Ombudsman investigates complaints about the conduct of police officers and, where appropriate, makes recommendations in respect of criminal and misconduct matters. The Police Ombudsman also investigates matters referred to her by certain bodies, where appropriate, and reports on these matters to the DoJ, the Policing Board and the Chief Constable.</p> <p><a href="#">Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland website</a></p>
 <p>The logo for the Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust features a green silhouette of a person's head in profile, facing right, set against a red sunburst background. The word "POLICE" is written in white capital letters along the bottom curve of the red shape.</p> <p>Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust</p>	<p>PRRT was established to provide members of the RUC / PSNI and their families with assessment, treatment, training, and support prior to and following cessation of their service. The purpose of PRRT is to enable retired or retiring police clients to achieve and sustain a successful transition into life post policing by providing personal development advice, guidance, training and training support, psychological and physiotherapy therapies. PRRT also provides services to organisations within the DoJ.</p> <p><a href="#">Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust website</a></p>

**ANNEX 2 - MAIN FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF AGENCIES AND NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES (CONTINUED)**

Non-Departmental Public Body	Main functions and activities
	<p>The role of the PSNI is to provide an effective, efficient, impartial, representative and accountable police service for all the people of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) administers three pension schemes for police officers. The Police Pension Scheme 1988 (now referred to as the 'closed' scheme), the new Police Pension Scheme 2006 (or 'new' scheme), and from 1 April 2015 the 2015 Police Pension Scheme (or 'CARE' scheme).</p> <p><a href="#">Police Service of Northern Ireland website</a></p>
	<p>The mandatory functions of the Board are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• secure the maintenance of an adequate and efficient probation service;</li> <li>• make arrangements for persons to perform work under Community Service Orders;</li> <li>• provide such probation officers and other staff as the DoJ considers necessary to perform social welfare duties in Prisons and Young Offender Centres; and</li> <li>• undertake such other duties as may be prescribed.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Probation Board for Northern Ireland website</a></p>
	<p>The Foundation was created for the purpose of <i>'marking the sacrifices and honouring the achievements of the Royal Ulster Constabulary'</i>; <i>"to support the professional development of police officers and innovations in policing"</i>; and <i>"to undertake joint initiatives"</i> with other organisations/persons within the RUC family, as appropriate in matters of common interest.</p> <p>The public benefit of the Foundation's work is primarily targeted towards: commemorating the achievements of the RUC GC; honouring the service of its former members; and, supporting their families. The Foundation's responsibilities include marking the sacrifices of the RUC by managing the RUC GC Memorial Garden and holding remembrance events; supporting the professional development of current police officers with a bursary scheme enabling individual research projects; and, initiating joint initiatives with various groups within the RUC GC family.</p> <p><a href="#">Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation website</a></p>

