

**Health and Social Care Pension
Scheme Statement for the year
ended 31 March 2020**

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

3 November 2020



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Health and Social Care Pension Scheme Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020

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A) ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

REPORT OF THE MANAGERS

Background to the Scheme

Statutory basis for the Scheme

The Health and Social Care (HSC) Pension Scheme is an unfunded occupational scheme, which is open to all HSC employees and employees of other approved organisations. The Scheme provides pensions in varying circumstances for employees of participating employers. The Scheme receives contributions from employees and employers to defray the costs of pensions and other benefits payable.

Scheme provisions are governed by the following regulations:

- The Health and Personal Social Services (Superannuation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, as amended
- The Health and Social Care (Pension Scheme) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008, as amended
- The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, as amended
- The Health and Personal Social Services (Compensation for Premature Retirement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1983, as amended
- The Health and Personal Social Services (Superannuation) (Additional Voluntary Contributions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, as amended

On 1 April 2008 a section of the HSC Pension Scheme was introduced for new members (the 2008 Section). Most members of the Pension Scheme who joined prior to 1 April 2008 will be in the old section (the 1995 Section). New joiners, between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2015, will be members of the 2008 Section.

On 1 April 2015 a career average scheme was introduced for new members and members of the 1995 Section and 2008 Section who were more than 13 years and 5 months from their normal retirement age on 1 April 2012.

Eligibility to join the Scheme

The employers of HSC Pension Scheme members are classified as Employing Authorities or Direction Bodies. Employing Authorities are defined in the Regulations and their staff have automatic entry to the Scheme. Non-HSC employers can apply for Direction Body status in order that their staff may join the Scheme provided they meet specific criteria.

Main features of the Scheme, including benefits and how they are funded

The HSC Pension Scheme (1995 and 2008 Sections) is a final salary scheme. Members of the 1995 Section receive a pension of 1/80th of the best of the last three year's pensionable pay for each year of membership.

Members who are practitioners as defined by the Scheme Regulations have their annual pensions based upon 1.4% of total pensionable earnings over the relevant pensionable service. The lump sum is normally three times the annual pension payment.

Members of the 2008 Section receive a pension of 1/60th of the average of the best three consecutive year's pensionable pay in the last ten for each year of membership. Members who are practitioners as defined by the Scheme Regulations have their annual pensions based upon 1.87% of total pensionable earnings over the relevant pensionable service. There is no automatic lump sum entitlement; however, members can choose to receive a lump sum which may be a maximum of 25% of the value of their fund at retirement.

The 2015 Scheme is a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Scheme, with benefits based on a proportion of pensionable earnings each year. The pension is built up at a rate of 1/54th of each year's pensionable earnings. Active members accrued pension benefits are revalued in line with the Consumer Prices Index plus 1.5%. There is no automatic lump sum entitlement; however members can choose to receive a lump sum by giving up some of their accrued pension.

Management of the Scheme

From 1 April 2009 the HSC Pension Service, part of the Business Services Organisation (BSO), has been responsible for the administration of the HSC Pension Scheme.

The Scheme is managed by the Department of Health, which is responsible for Scheme legislation.

HSC employers are required to comply with Scheme Regulations, including submission of pension data to the HSC Pension Service.

Contributions

Employers' contributions to the Scheme are determined by the Scheme Actuary (the Government Actuary's Department) and are on the basis of salary bands, which are reviewed annually and are a percentage rate of the member's pensionable earnings. The percentage rates payable are reviewed as part of the periodical actuarial review which takes place at least every 4 years.

Key developments in year

Changes in contributions

The employer contribution rate increased from 16.3% to 22.5% from 1 April 2019. The employee contribution rates remained unaltered.

Changes in benefits

There was a 2.4% pension increase for 2019-20 from 8 April 2019.

Scheme Changes – Legislative Changes 2019-20

Statutory Rule S.R. 2019 No. 65 came into operation on 1 April 2019. The purpose of this legislation was to introduce the new employer contribution rate of 22.5%.

Issues for 2019-20

The government has launched a consultation on proposed changes to public service pensions to remove discrimination arising from transitional protection arrangements. Based on this, the past service cost has been recalculated, resulting in a £170 million adjustment (reduction) for 2019-20.

COVID-19

In November 2019 a novel strain of coronavirus was detected and spread rapidly, leading the World Health Organisation to declare a pandemic on 11 March 2020. The pandemic caused significant economic disruption just before the financial year end. The ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic has created significant economic uncertainty, and this uncertainty is expected to continue throughout 2020. At this point in time there is no material effect on the Scheme. It is considered too early to speculate on any potential impact on long term assumptions used in the valuation of the Scheme (Report of the Actuary, page 14).

Membership statistics

Active members			
Active members at 1 April 2019			83,445
Retrospective adjustment*			(1,982)
Add:	New entrants		9,296
Less:	Retirements in the year		(1,496)
	Transfers out		-
	Undecided leavers		(7,142)
	Refunds		-
	Deaths		(22)
	Leaving with deferred rights		(5)
Active members at 31 March 2020			82,094
Deferred members			
Deferred members at 1 April 2019			13,678
Retrospective adjustment*			22
Add:	Members leaving with deferred rights		20
Less:	Taking up deferred rights		(539)
	Transfers out		(8)
	Deaths		(5)
Deferred members at 31 March 2020			13,168

Pensioners in payment		Members	Dependents	Total
Pensioners in payment at 1 April 2019		23,413	3,953	27,366
Retrospective adjustment*		66	(10)	56
Add:	Retiring at normal retirement age	1,446	-	1,446
	New dependents	-	301	301
	Retiring previously deferred	374	-	374
Less:	Commutated pension	(14)	-	(14)
	Death in year	(341)	(199)	(540)
Pensioners in payment at 31 March 2020		24,944	4,045	28,989
Compensation payments > 60				
Members in receipt of compensation payments at 1 April 2019				1,918
Retrospective adjustment*				15
Less:	Retiring at normal retirement age			(8)
	Deaths before normal retirement age			(75)
Members in receipt of compensation payments at 31 March 2020				1,850
Ill health retirement				
Ill health retirement members at 1 April 2019				8,394
Retrospective adjustment*				36
Add:	Members retiring on ill health grounds			232
Less:	Deaths in year			(249)
Ill health retirements at 31 March 2020				8,413
Compensation payments < 60				
Members in receipt of compensation payments at 1 April 2019				13
Retrospective adjustment*				(8)
Members in receipt of compensation payments at 31 March 2020				5
Undecided leavers**				
Undecided leavers at 31 March 2020				9,428
Undecided leavers at 31 March 2019				7,915

*A retrospective adjustment to a member's status comes about when an action on the member's record is carried out at a point later than the actual date the requirement for action occurred, due to the data gathering process required to enable the action to take place.

**Undecided leavers are reported by headcount as this reflects the basis on which GAD have calculated the pension scheme liability for this pension scheme statement.

Financial position as at 31 March 2020

The movements in the Scheme during the year are summarised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Net expenditure for the year is £1,077,444k. Income mainly comprises contributions from employers of £473,528k and employee contributions of £201,328k (Note 3). Other receipts include transfers in of £9,455k from other schemes (Note 4) and other pension income of £1,239k (Note 5).

The charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure recognises the movements in the scheme liability. This comprises the current service cost of £1,070,003k, a past service cost credit of £30,000k, enhancements of (£2,000k), transfers in of £9,455k and interest on scheme liabilities of £714,000k. The past service cost movement of (£330,000k) has arisen following revision of the provision recognised in 2018-19 of £300,000k in relation to transitional protection litigation impacting all public sector pension schemes. The UK Government launched a consultation in July 2020 on proposed changes to public service pensions to remove discrimination arising from the transitional protection arrangements that were introduced when the schemes were reformed in 2014-15 and subsequently, the NI government launched a similar consultation in August 2020. The impact of the proposed changes have been reflected in these 2019-20 accounts as a reduction in the past service costs previously recognised of £170,000k. This is offset by the current year past service cost of £100,000k which relates to an additional liability for indexation and equalisation under Guaranteed Minimum Pension. In addition, a legal challenge has been received against another UK public pension scheme regarding the provision of survivor benefits which has confirmed read across to other public sector pension schemes, the current estimated impact included for 2019-20 is £40,000k. Other pension expenditure of £1,536k is also included as per Note 10 to the financial statements.

Disclosure of information to auditor

The Principal Accounting Officer, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health, has taken all steps that he ought to have taken to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Scheme's auditor is aware of such information. So far as he is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Scheme's auditor is unaware.

Events after the reporting period

In July 2020, the UK Government launched a consultation on changes to public service pensions to remove discrimination arising from the transitional protection arrangements that were introduced when the schemes were reformed in 2014-15. The impact of the proposed changes has been reflected in these accounts as a reduction in past service cost. A Northern Ireland consultation setting out proposals to remedy the discrimination was launched on 19 August 2020. Past service costs recognised to date represent management's best estimate and may require reconsideration as further information and clarity on final remedy are obtained.

Information for members

Further information about the Scheme, and its sections, can be found on the HSC Pensions website www.hscpensions.hscni.net which is accessible to all members and employers.

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs), Free-Standing Additional Voluntary Contributions (FSAVCs) and Stakeholder Pensions

The Pension Scheme has continued to offer a range of in-house top up money purchase AVC and Stakeholder Pension facilities from Standard Life and an AVC only facility from Equitable Life which is closed to new members.

The names and addresses of the Scheme's:

Accounting Officer: Mr R Pengelly
Permanent Secretary
Department of Health
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

Administrator: Business Services Organisation
Waterside House
75 Duke Street Derry
County Londonderry
BT47 6FP

Actuary: Government Actuary's Department
Finlaison House
15-17 Furnival Street London
EC4A 1AB

Legal Advisers: Departmental Solicitors Office
Victoria Hall
12 May Street
Belfast
BT1 4NL

Legal Department
Business Services Organisation Headquarters
2 Franklin Street
Belfast
BT2 8DQ

Auditor: Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Bankers: Danske Bank
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

Employers:

Principal employers:

Health and Social Care Board
Health and Social Care Trusts
Health and Social Care Bodies

Additional bodies permitted to join:

General Practitioners
Staff employed by General Medical Practitioners
Direction Bodies
GP Federations

Contact for enquiries and complaints

Any enquiries or complaints about the HSC Pension Scheme should be addressed to:

Mr M Bradley
The Scheme Administrator
HSC Pension Service
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Londonderry
BT47 6FP

REPORT OF THE ACTUARY

Introduction

This statement has been prepared by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) at the request of the Department of Health (DoH). It provides a summary of GAD's assessment of the scheme liability in respect of the Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (HSCPS) as at 31 March 2020, and the movement in the scheme liability over the year 2019-20, prepared in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 9 of the 2019-20 version of the Financial Reporting Manual.

The HSCPS is a defined benefit scheme providing pension and lump sum benefits on retirement, death and resignation. The Scheme is wholly unfunded. I am not aware of any informal practices operated within the Scheme which lead to a constructive obligation.

The assessment has been carried out by calculating the liability as at 31 March 2016 based on the data provided as at 31 March 2016 and rolling forward that liability to 31 March 2020.

Membership data

Tables A to C summarise the principal membership data as at 31 March 2016 used to prepare this statement.

Table A – Active members

	Number (000s)	Total pensionable pay* (p.a.) £ million
Males	13	475
Females	49	1,250
Total	62	1,725

* Pensionable pay is the Actual figure.

Table B – Deferred members

	Number	Total deferred pension* (p.a.) £ 000
Males	3,535	12,349
Females	13,152	29,249
Total	16,687	41,598

* Pension amounts include the pension increase granted in April 2016.

Table C – Pensions in payment

	Number	Annual pension* (p.a.) £ million
Males	7,594	120
Females	23,841	177
Total	31,435	297

* Pension amounts include the pension increase granted in April 2016.

Methodology

The present value of the liabilities as at 31 March 2020 has been determined using the Projected Unit Credit Method (PUCM), with allowance for expected future pay increases in respect of active members, and the demographic and financial assumptions applying as at 31 March 2020. The current service cost (expressed as a percentage of pensionable pay) in respect of accruing costs in the year ended 31 March 2020 was determined using the PUCM and the demographic and financial assumptions applicable at the start of the year, that is, those adopted as at 31 March 2019 in the 2018-19 accounts.

This statement takes into account the benefits normally provided under the Scheme, including age retirement benefits, ill-health retirement benefits and benefits applicable following the death of the member. It does not include the cost of injury benefits (in excess of ill-health benefits). It does not include premature retirement and redundancy benefits in respect of current active members, although the assessment of liabilities includes pensions already in payment in respect of such cases.

Financial assumptions

The principal financial assumptions adopted to prepare this statement are shown in Table D.

Table D – Principal financial assumptions

Assumption	31 March 2020 p.a.	31 March 2019 p.a.
Nominal discount rate	1.80%	2.90%
Rate of pension increases	2.35%	2.60%
Rate of general pay increases	4.10%	4.10%
Rate of short-term general pay increase	n/a	n/a
Real discount rate in excess of:		
Pension increases	(0.50)%	0.29%
Long-term pay increases	(2.20)%	(1.15)%
Expected return on assets	n/a	n/a

The assessment of the liabilities allows for the known pension increases up to and including April 2020.

Demographic assumptions

Table E summarises the mortality assumptions adopted to prepare this statement, which were derived from the specific experience of the Scheme membership and with regard to the corresponding experience of the NHS Pension Scheme (England & Wales). The table refers to the standard mortality tables prepared by the Continuous Mortality Investigation (part of the Actuarial Profession) known as the 'S2 tables' with the percentage adjustments to those tables derived from Scheme experience.

Table E – Post-retirement mortality assumptions

Baseline mortality	Standard table	Adjustment
Males		
Retirements in normal health	S2NMA	83%
Current ill-health pensioners	S2IMA	83%
Future ill-health pensioners	S2IMA	100%
Dependants	S2NMA	100%
Females		
Retirements in normal health	S2NFA	85%
Current ill-health pensioners	S2IFA	85%
Future ill-health pensioners	S2IFA	100%
Dependants	S2DFA	100%

These assumptions in table E above are the same as those adopted for the 31 March 2016 funding valuation of the Scheme and the accounts as at 31 March 2019.

For the 2018-19 accounts, future improvements in mortality were assumed to be in line with the 2016-based principal population projections published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Mortality improvements are now assumed to be in line with the latest 2018-based projections for the United Kingdom published by the ONS in October 2019, which leads to a reduction in life expectancies.

Liabilities

Table F summarises the assessed value as at 31 March 2020 of benefits accrued under the Scheme prior to this date based on the data, methodology and assumptions described above. The corresponding figures for the previous year are shown for comparison. The liabilities at 31 March 2019 and 2020 both include an allowance for the higher cost of benefits accruing under McCloud.

Table F – Statement of Financial Position

	31 March 2020	31 March 2019
	£ billion	£ billion
Total market value of assets	nil	nil
Value of liabilities	30.35	24.30
Surplus/(Deficit)	(30.35)	(24.30)
of which recoverable by employers	n/a	n/a

Accruing costs

The cost of benefits accrued in the year ended 31 March 2020 (the current service cost) is assessed as 51.0% of pensionable pay.

For the avoidance of doubt, the actual rate of contributions payable by employers and employees is not the same as the current service cost assessed for the accounts. Members contributed between 5.0% and 14.5% of pensionable pay, depending on the level of their pay. The actual employer contribution rate was determined as part of a funding valuation using different assumptions. Table G shows the employer and employee contributions during the year 2019-20 as a percentage of pensionable pay and compares the total contributions with the current service cost assessed for the 2019-20 accounts.

Table G – Contribution rate

	2019-20	2018-19
	% of pay	% of pay
Employer contributions	22.5%	16.3%
Employee contributions (average)	9.6%	9.2%
Total contributions	32.1%	25.5%
Current service cost (expressed as a % of pay)	51.0%	52.6%

The key difference between the assumptions used for funding valuations and accounts is the discount rate, although price inflation and salary increases are also determined differently. The discount rate for accounts is set each year by HM Treasury to reflect the requirements of the accounting standard IAS 19.

The pensionable payroll for the financial year 2019-20 was £2.11 billion (derived from contributions payable by employers over the year). Based on this information, the accruing cost of pensions in 2019-20 (at 51.0% of pay) is assessed to be £1.07 billion. This includes an allowance for the higher cost of benefits accruing over the year under McCloud.

Past service costs arise when an employer undertakes to provide a different level of benefits than previously promised. A past service cost of £0.10 billion has been determined in respect of the additional liabilities for the indexation and equalisation of Guaranteed Minimum Pensions (GMP) in public service pension schemes for members reaching State Pension age after 6 April 2021. A past service cost of £0.04 billion has been determined in respect of a legal challenge regarding survivor benefits provided in public service schemes. A negative past service cost of £0.17 billion has been determined in respect of the change of scope of members covered by the McCloud judgment. I am not aware of any other events that have led to a material past service cost over 2019-20.

I am not aware of any events that have led to a material settlement or curtailment gain or loss over 2019-20.

Sensitivity analysis

The results of any actuarial calculation are inherently uncertain because of the assumptions which must be made. In recognition of this uncertainty I have been asked to indicate the approximate effects on the actuarial liability as at 31 March 2020 of changes to the most significant actuarial assumptions.

The most significant financial assumptions are the discount rate, general earnings increases and pension increases (currently based on CPI). A key demographic assumption is pensioner mortality.

Table H shows the indicative effects on the total liability as at 31 March 2020 of changes to these assumptions (rounded to the nearest 0.5%).

Table H – Sensitivity to significant assumptions

Change in assumption	Approximate effect on total liability		
Financial assumptions			
(i) discount rate*:	+0.5% p.a.	- 11.5%	- £3.5 billion
(ii) (long-term) earnings increase*:	+0.5% p.a.	+ 2.5%	+ £0.8 billion
(iii) pension increases*:	+0.5% p.a.	+ 8.0%	+ £2.4 billion
Demographic assumptions			
(iv) additional 1 year increase in life expectancy at retirement		+ 3.5%	+ £1.1 billion
(v) 1995 section members retire at Normal Pension Age (approximately equivalent to assuming members retire around 2 years earlier)		+ 1.0%	+ £0.3 billion

* Opposite changes in the assumptions will produce approximately equal and opposite changes in the liability.

Covid-19 implications

The 2019-20 Resource Accounts are being produced at a time when the UK is in the midst of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. I have considered the potential implications of how this pandemic could impact on the actuarial calculations required for the Resource Accounts.

The assumptions for the discount rate and pension increases are specified by HM Treasury in the PES (2019) 11 Revised, dated 6 December 2019, and remain unchanged for these accounts. The PES assumptions reflect market conditions at the previous 30 November and are typically not amended for any changes between November and the accounting date.

The long-term salary assumption is set by DoH, having taken actuarial advice, and is intended to be an average over the future careers of Scheme members, with a recognition that increases in any particular year may be lower or higher than the assumption. The increase in the amount of Government debt being taken on to pay for its response to the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to affect salary growth. However, at this stage, it is too early to speculate on the potential impacts for the long-term salary growth. Therefore I do not believe there is any information to justify changing the salary assumption.

The current population mortality projections make no specific allowance for the impact of Covid-19 or any other pandemics. The starting rates of mortality improvement are based on projections of past trends in UK mortality and the effects of past pandemics will already be reflected in these trends. In general, the effects of pandemics on mortality rates are usually expected to be short term, with rates going back to what they would have been before the pandemic after a year or two, unless the pandemic remains over several years. My view is that it is too early in the pandemic to determine whether Covid-19 changes the long-term view of life expectancy in the UK. It is therefore not unreasonable to retain the existing mortality assumptions. A death rate from Covid-19 in excess of that already allowed for in the mortality assumptions would emerge as an experience gain over the next year's accounts.



Garry Swann FIA
Actuary
Government Actuary's Department
6 August 2020

STATEMENT OF THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, the Department of Finance has directed the Department of Health HSC Pension Scheme to prepare for each financial year financial statements in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction.

The financial statements must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Scheme at the year end and of the net resource outturn and cash flows for the year then ended. The financial statements are required to provide disclosure of any material expenditure or income that has not been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly or material transactions that have not conformed to the authorities that govern them. In addition, the financial statements must be prepared so as to ensure that the contributions payable to the Scheme during the year have been paid in accordance with the Scheme Rules and the recommendations of the Actuary.

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

- Observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department of Finance including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards, as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on a going-concern basis; and
- Confirm that the HSC Pension Scheme Statement as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and takes personal responsibility for the HSC Pension Scheme Statement 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 for the HSC Pension Scheme. 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 pension scheme are set out in the Accounting Officers' Memorandum issued by the Department of Finance and published in *Government Accounting Northern Ireland*.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Introduction

This statement is given in respect of the Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (HSCPS) for 2019-20. It outlines the Department's governance framework for directing and controlling the function and how assurance is provided to support me in my role as Accounting Officer for the Department of Health and is also applicable to the management of the HSCPS. The Board of the Department of Health is accountable for internal control. As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the Department's policies, aims and objectives. I also have responsibility for safeguarding the public funds and departmental assets in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved from 26 January 2017 with an election taking place on 2 March 2017, on which date Ministers ceased to hold office. An Executive was not formed following the 2 March election. As a consequence there has been no Minister in place in the Department during most of the 2019-20 financial year. The situation changed on 11 January 2020 when the Executive re-formed and Ministers were appointed. The Department's strategic objectives have been updated to reflect both Ministerial priorities and those developed by the Executive as part of the New Decade New Approach (NDNA). However, the recent health emergency, prompted by the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, has caused the Department to enter into Business Continuity and the Executive is now operating under Emergency Planning structures.

As Accounting Officer, I have a duty to satisfy myself that the HSCPS administrators have adequate governance systems and procedures in place to promote the effective and efficient conduct of their business and to safeguard financial propriety and regularity.

Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice 2013

The Department applies the principles of good practice outlined in the Code and continues to further strengthen its governance arrangements. The Department does this by undertaking continuous assessment of its compliance in line with the Corporate Governance Code.

Governance Framework

In my role as Accounting Officer, I function with the support of the Departmental Board (the Board). This includes highlighting to the Board specific business implications or risks and, where appropriate, the measures that could be employed to manage these risks or implications. I am also required to combine my Accounting Officer role with my responsibilities to the Minister, which includes providing advice on the allocation of Departmental resources and the setting of appropriate financial and non-financial performance targets for the Business Services Organisation (BSO) as HSCPS administrator.

The Departmental Board

The Departmental Board (the Board) represents the collective and strategic leadership within the Department, in conjunction with the experience and contribution of two Independent Board Members. The Board supports me as Accounting Officer in directing the business of the Department as effectively as possible, to achieve the strategic objectives and priorities set by the Minister. The Board has a key role in overseeing the sound financial management and corporate governance of the Department including the HSCPS and closely monitors the Department's progress in the achievement of key objectives and priorities set out in the Departmental Business Plan, including Programme for Government commitments.

The Departmental Board applies the principles of good practice in Corporate Governance and continues to strengthen its governance arrangements. The Board does this by assessment of its compliance with Corporate Governance best practice as part of a wider review of the Departmental Board.

The Board ensures that appropriate risk management procedures are in place within the Department and it scrutinises the governance and performance of ALBs and the HSCPS.

The strategic aims, policies and strategies for the Department are set by the Minister. The role of the Departmental Board is to support me, as the Accounting Officer, in establishing the necessary governance and assurance mechanisms to ensure effective and efficient delivery of Ministerial priorities and other statutory functions of the Department. In line with best practice, the operational procedures of the Departmental Board are kept under continuous review and a more detailed evaluation is conducted every few years. The last detailed evaluation was undertaken in 2016-17. The Board decided for the 2019-20 business planning year that the Departmental Business Plan and Risk Register would be 'rolled-forward' from 2018-19 due to extraordinary pressures relating to Departmental planning for EU Exit. The membership of the Board and attendance for the period is set out in the table below.

Executive Board Members 2019-20		No. of meetings attended
Mr R Pengelly	Permanent Secretary and Chair	5/6
Dr M McBride	Chief Medical Officer	5/6
Mr S Holland	Deputy Secretary, Social Care Policy Group	4/6
Prof C McArdle	Chief Nursing Officer	5/6
Mrs D McNeilly	Deputy Secretary, Resource and Corporate Management Group	2/6
Mr J Johnston	Deputy Secretary, Health Care Policy Group	5/6
Mrs. S Gallagher	Deputy Secretary, Transformation Planning and Performance	5/6
Mrs N Lloyd	Director of Finance, Resource and Corporate Management Group	6/6
Mr D West	Chief Digital Information Officer (Appointed 7 May 2019)	5/6

Independent Board Members 2019-20		No. of meetings attended
Mr M Little	Independent Board Member	6/6
Mr F Caddy	Independent Board Member	6/6

Management Information

The Board reviews regular reports from the HSCPS to challenge performance against targets. These reports have been the subject of considerable refinement over recent years and are continually revised to allow them to identify and respond to emerging challenges.

In April 2018, the Board agreed an updated Framework for Business Planning, Risk Management and Assurance. The Framework provides a clear and common understanding of business planning, risk management and assurance processes in the Department, along with associated guidance.

The requirements of HSCPS Governance within the Department have evolved to ensure that the accountability review process is more balanced in terms of governance and performance. Submission and acceptability of Board level information and reports is subject to challenge.

Quality of Information

The Board receives a range of management information about matters such as Finance, Human Resources, the Departmental Business Plan, the Departmental Risk Register and the Governance and Performance of ALBs including the HSCPS, to assist it in discharging its role. Regular formal reviews of the operation of the Board include the quality of information provided. In addition, Board members, collectively and individually, keep the quality of reported information under continuous review and seek enhancements as necessary to support the Board and its committees.

Departmental Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (DARAC)

DARAC Members 2019-20		No. of meetings attended
Mr M Little	IBM and Chair of DARAC	3/4
Mr F Caddy	IBM and DARAC Member	4/4
Ms C Archbold	Departmental Solicitor's Office	3/4
Mr T Connolly	Head of Business Engagement, Department for the Economy (until September 2019)	2/2
Mr S McMurray	Director of Finance, Department for the Economy (from September 2019)	2/2

The DARAC is a Committee of the Board and usually meets a minimum of four times per year, with additional topic focused meetings held as necessary.

DARAC comprises four members, each of whom is independent of Departmental management. In line with their terms of appointment, each IBM's function is to provide external advice and expertise. Other officials in attendance at DARAC meetings include the Departmental Accounting Officer, the Senior Finance Director, the Finance Director, the Head of Internal Audit (HIA) and officials from the NIAO.

Mr Trevor Connolly completed two terms as a member of DARAC during 2019-20 and was replaced by Mr Stephen McMurray prior to September 2019 meeting.

The DARAC gives detailed attention to internal governance issues, including the quality of risk management and corporate governance within the Department. DARAC also considers any HSC-wide issues or any other issues with the Department that affect my role as the Department's Accounting Officer.

An example of this in respect of the adequacy of the arrangements by which I hold ALB Accounting Officers to account for the performance and governance of their organisations. Systems for responding to recommendations made by authoritative external bodies, including the Public Accounts Committee, NIAO, and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), are also examined. The DARAC advises the Board and me as Accounting Officer on its conclusions and recommendations with regard to identified governance weaknesses.

DARAC – Responsibilities and Performance

In line with best practice set out in the HMT Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook, the Chair of DARAC sets an agreed core programme of work for each of its quarterly meetings, which includes:

- Scrutiny of the Departmental and HSCPS accounts;
- Consideration of internal audit strategy;
- Review of internal and external audit findings; and
- Monitoring of residual audit recommendations.

The Department provides regular reports to DARAC on risk management and assurance in the Department and the accountability and assurance of its ALBs. In addition, DARAC considers and comments on individual issues of internal governance and their implications for wider governance arrangements.

The DARAC conducts a self-assessment according to guidelines issued by the National Audit Office on a regular basis. The findings of the self-assessment are presented to DARAC for action as appropriate. In addition, the Chair of the DARAC delivers an annual report to both the Departmental Board and the DARAC and also reports to the Board following each quarterly meeting of the DARAC.

The DARAC has also considered the HSC Pension Scheme Statement for 2019-20 and on the basis of the evidence presented, has recommended the HSCPS to the Departmental Accounting Officer for approval.

Top Management Group

As Accounting Officer, I am supported by my Top Management Group, which comprises the Executive Board Members. It provides a forum for the consideration and endorsement of corporate business and the handling of the emerging issues.

Departmental Framework for Business Planning, Risk Management and Assurance

Business planning and risk management is at the heart of governance arrangements to ensure that statutory obligations and Ministerial priorities are properly reflected in the management of business at all levels within the Department.

The Framework for Business Planning, Risk Management and Assurance provides a clear and common understanding of business planning, risk management and assurance processes in the Department, along with associated guidance. In order to ensure its continued effectiveness, a review of the Framework was undertaken in 2017, with a further minor update in 2018. The revised Framework was approved by the Board.

Business Planning

In establishing its strategic objectives, the Department takes its lead from the statutory framework governing the functions of the Department and the specific priorities set by the Minister and the Executive, including those outlined in the Programme for Government. The Departmental Business Plan also takes account of the governance arrangements that the Department must put in place for the proper discharge of its responsibilities as a Government Department and public authority e.g. financial probity, equality, human rights etc. Within a budget period, the existing Departmental Business Plan is rolled forward into a new fiscal year.

The Departmental Board is the custodian of the Departmental Business Plan's affordability and deliverability. Progress against the Departmental Business Plan is addressed at Board meetings and includes formal quarterly written reports in Red, Amber or Green (RAG) format against each of the targets in the fiscal year.

It is the responsibility of Executive Board Members to ensure that the Directorates under their control have appropriate plans in place. It is essential that linkages between plans at Departmental and Directorate level are clearly stated. Similarly, there must be a clear connection at all levels between objectives and associated risks. This is evidenced through risk management, business planning and assurance processes operated within the Department.

The Departmental Guidance document 'Framework for Business Planning, Risk Management and Assurance' sets out guidance on the processes to be followed to ensure connections and linkages are identified and considered throughout the process. Included within the Framework are draft templates for directorate business plans and risk registers. Each of these contains sections for the inclusion of links to directorate risks, departmental risks and departmental business plan references.

Risk Management

Risk management is an organisation-wide responsibility. In the Department there are two key levels at which the risk management process is formally documented:

- The Departmental Risk Register focuses on the principal risks to the Department's delivery of its statutory responsibilities and strategic objectives including those of the HSCPS; and
- Directorate risk registers focus primarily on the risks to the achievement of Directorate objectives including those of the HSCPS.

Directorate business plans must be directly linked to the delivery of the Departmental Business Plan. Similarly there must be a clear connection at all levels between objectives and associated risks. Formal processes exist to escalate objectives and associated risks from Directorate to Departmental level, subject to the approval of the Departmental Board.

The Departmental Risk Register is reviewed at the beginning of the financial year to update all risks, controls and actions and is maintained in conjunction with the Departmental Business Plan. It is therefore subject to the same Departmental Board reporting arrangements.

Executive Board Members are responsible for ensuring that the Directorates under their control have a business plan and fully-linked risk register. I require bi-annual formal written assurances from Directors, signed off by Executive Board members, about the proper operation of business planning and risk management within their business areas. Where a risk identified at Directorate level becomes unmanageable within the Directorate's resources, or where it threatens to impact on Departmental objectives or across Directorates, it must be escalated to the Departmental Board and considered for inclusion on the Departmental Risk Register.

The system of internal governance is designed to help manage risk rather than to eliminate it and controls must at all times be commensurate with the nature of the risk. A set of risk assessment criteria has been developed, agreed and applied by those Departmental officials involved in the risk assessment process.

The system of internal governance is based on an on-going process to identify and prioritise the risks to the discharge of the Department's statutory responsibilities, including the delivery of its strategic objectives. The system also determines the controls and analyses the risks in terms of their impact and likelihood of realisation in conjunction with the controls.

The system of internal governance has been in place in the Department for the year ending 31 March 2020 and continues up to the date of approval of the HSC Pension Scheme Annual Report and Accounts. This accords with Department of Finance (DoF) guidance.

The system of internal governance entails monitoring and reporting on: a) the delivery of Ministerial/Departmental Policy; b) the use of resources (including financial, human, estate and information); c) compliance with statutory requirements; d) statistical and other performance monitoring reports; e) the content of external and internal audit reports; f) serious adverse incident reporting; g) RQIA and other reports prepared by inspecting/regulatory/licensing bodies; h) inquiry reports; i) compliance with standards and guidance; j) the discharge of statutory functions; k) corporate governance and, l) business planning arrangements. These are with respect to both the Department and its ALBs.

The DARAC also plays a key role in providing advice on the quality of risk management and assurance within the Department. Additionally, risk monitoring and management processes within the ALBs are monitored by the Department through separate processes, as highlighted in the 'Governance and Accountability within DoH ALBs including the HSCPS' section below.

Information Risk

Safeguarding the Department's information is a critical aspect of supporting the Department in the delivery of its objectives. Central to achieving this is the effective management of information risk. The arrangements in place to manage this risk include:

- The Assistant Departmental Security Officer (ADSO) regularly reviews Departmental information to ensure that it is appropriately protected;
- A Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Information Asset Owners (IAOs) are in place to reduce the risk to personal information within the Department;
- A Data Protection Officer (DPO) provides independent advice and guidance regarding the processing and protection of personal information in line with GDPR and DPA 2018;
- The updated Information Asset Register solution, rolled out during 2019-20, has enhanced monitoring and management of such assets;
- Annual assurance from IAOs regarding the personal information assets they manage;
- IAOs are aware of their responsibilities to ensure information is securely stored, access-controlled and disposed of appropriately; and
- Established data incident and breach management procedures and reporting are in place.

In line with the revised Departmental policy on Controls Assurance Statements, an Information Management Assurance Checklist (IMAC) process was introduced to simplify provision of required HSC Information Governance assurances.

In preparation for the UK exit from the EU, in 2019-20 appropriate mitigations were put in place within the Department and across the HSC to ensure that the required health, social care and public safety information could continue to be exchanged with authorities in the Republic of Ireland.

Regular mandatory awareness training continues to be delivered to Departmental staff, providing them with an up-to-date understanding of information governance issues and risks.

Restrictions exist to protect access to and disposal of electronic and paper records and the Department has an Information and Records Management Policy Statement underpinning its records management arrangements. Appropriate guidance, central controls and a disposal schedule process all govern the retention and disposal of Departmental Records.

Eight data incidents were recorded in the Department although no data loss was involved. In each case appropriate mitigations were put in place. None of the eight cases were in respect of the HSCPS. No reportable Information Commissioner's Office breaches occurred in 2019-20.

Cyber Security

IT Assist, within the DoF Enterprise Shared Services (ESS) Division, is responsible for the provision of IT services, including Cyber security environments, to all NICS Core Departments. To provide assurance to Departmental organisations using ESS services, the services provided by IT Assist, and other ESS bodies (RecordsNI, HR Connect, AccountNI, NI Direct), have been accredited by the NICS Risk and Information Assurance Council as meeting NICS security policy and suitable for secure controlled access to external organisations. IT Assist services also has annual compliance certification to the Public Service Network for interconnectivity to GB Public Sector Organisations.

The HSC Cyber Security Programme was established in 2018/19 and this year has seen the launch of a shared Cyber Security Incident Response Action in March 2020. This was the result of several months of collaborative working between HSC organisations, BSO ICT services and SIROs. The action plan provides a protocol for collective HSC organisations to follow in the event of a Cyber Security related incident and has already been used on a number of occasions.

The Department continues to work closely with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), and the NI Cyber Security Centre to enhance cyber security and compliance with the Network Information Systems Regulations across the HSC.

Fraud

The Department takes a zero tolerance approach to fraud in order to protect and support our key public services. We have put in place an Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan to outline our approach to tackling fraud, define staff responsibilities and the actions to be taken in the event of suspected or perpetrated fraud, whether originating internally or externally to the organisation. The Department promotes fraud awareness, co-ordinates investigations in conjunction with the BSO Counter Fraud and Probity Services team and provides advice to personnel on fraud reporting arrangements. All staff are provided with mandatory fraud awareness training in support of the Anti- Fraud Policy and Fraud Response plan, which are kept under review and updated as appropriate every five years. The Department attends and participates in the NICS Fraud Forum, which is a best practice advisory group. The Forum consists of representatives from all NI departments meeting at least two times per year.

Governance and Accountability within DoH ALBs including the HSCPS

Governance and Accountability can be considered under the following headings:

- HSCPS Assurance and Accountability;
- Departmental Assurance;
- Statutory Duty of Quality; and
- Service Frameworks.

HSCPS Assurance and Accountability

The Department, including the HSCPS, achieves its corporate objectives through direct Departmental action and through its 17 ALBs. The Chief Executives of ALBs (as ALB Accounting Officers) are directly accountable to me (Permanent Secretary of the Department) as Principal Accounting Officer. ALBs through their Boards are held to account for the delivery of their prescribed functions and Ministerial/Departmental priorities and ensuring compliance with other statutory responsibilities. The HSCB also performs a key role, alongside the Department, in relation to the performance and financial management of HSC Trusts.

As part of the review of Assurance and Accountability Arrangements, a Sponsorship Handbook was developed in 2016-17 which replaced the Assurance and Accountability Framework. The handbook sets out the Department's approach to sponsorship of its Arm's Length Bodies to ensure, as far as possible, that there is consistency of approach and proportionality of application. The guidance and arrangements described within the handbook reflect the responsibilities placed on the Department, under Managing Public Money NI, for the sponsorship of ALBs operating under the control of DoH.

The handbook details the roles and responsibilities of all Departmental staff, including Executive Board Members and sponsor branches, in addition to describing the format and structure of the biannual accountability process. Through its sponsor branches, the Department engages directly with each ALB, commensurate with the level of assessed risk. ALB risks can either be escalated in the Department, through the ALB accountability review process, or highlighted to the Department through the other formal and informal interactions that the sponsors, Executive Board Members and professional staff maintain with ALBs.

Departmental Assurance

The Department receives much of its assurance through an on-going process of monitoring of the BSO acting as the HSCPS administrator, including Corporate Governance, Use of Resources and the Delivery and Quality of Services. In addition to regular monitoring information derived primarily from management information systems, the Department periodically tests the assurance provided by initiating external reviews, audits, inquiries, ad-hoc and self-assessment exercises which are designed to sample aspects of the governance arrangements and performance of the BSO administration of the HSCPS. This monitoring is based on assessing the operation and performance of ALBs against standards, guidance and targets; statutory and licensing requirements and Departmental policy and strategy. Examples of these are the Statutory Duty of Quality and Service Frameworks.

Sources of Independent Assurance

The Department obtains independent assurance from the following sources in relation to the HSCPS:

- Departmental Internal Audit Group;
- Northern Ireland Audit Office; and
- Business Services Organisation Internal Audit.

Departmental Internal Audit Group (IAG)

The Department utilises an internal audit function which operates to defined standards and whose work is informed by an analysis of risk to which the body is exposed and annual audit plans are based on this analysis.

The Department's Head of Internal Audit (HIA) reports directly to the Departmental Accounting Officer and attends and provides reports to the DARAC. As such, HIA therefore plays a crucial role in the review of the effectiveness of risk management, controls and governance by:

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

The remit of Internal Audit includes an assessment of internal financial controls and the wider internal environment which affects the achievement of Departmental objectives. Internal Audit submits regular reports to management and the DARAC, which includes the HIA's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Department's system of internal control, together with recommendations for improvement.

The HIA has provided me with an overall 'satisfactory' opinion. The Internal Audit opinion reflects the internal audit activity carried out during 2019-20 and cumulative assurances derived from the previous three years (2016 to 2019).

Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)

The NIAO provides an opinion on whether an organisation's financial statements give a true and fair view, have been prepared in accordance with the relevant accounting standards and are in accordance with the guidance issued by relevant authorities. The results of the NIAO's financial audit work continue to be reported to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The NIAO also seeks to promote better value for money through highlighting and demonstrating ways in which improvements could be made to realise financial savings or reduce costs; safeguard against the risk of fraud, irregularity and impropriety; attain improvements in service provision; support and enhance management, administrative and organisational processes.

A representative of the NIAO attends the DARAC quarterly meetings at which corporate governance and risk management matters are considered.

Business Services Organisation (BSO) Internal Audit

The Business Services Organisation (BSO) Internal Audit Unit provides an internal audit service to all 17 Arms' Length Bodies of DoH, including BSO itself. Internal Audit of HSC Pension processes is included in BSO's 3 year Internal Audit programme.

The Department reviews the Head of Internal Audit's (HIA) mid and end-year independent opinions, on the adequacy and effectiveness of each of the ALBs system of internal control, together with any recommendations for improvement. The opinion for 2019-20 was that overall there was a satisfactory system of internal control designed to meet the BSO's objectives. There was an internal audit of HSC Pensions during the 2019-20 year and satisfactory assurance was provided.

At this time all previously made recommendations from the previous audit which took place in 2017-18 have been actioned. However the Priority 1 recommendation in the 2017-18 audit report in respect of the underpayment of employers' superannuation has been replaced with a Priority 2 recommendation focused on the remaining action required to fully resolve this longstanding issue – namely bringing the related system change request into production to automate the correction. The implementation of this recommendation will be followed up as part of BSO Internal Audit's follow up work during 2020-21.

UK exit from the EU

Throughout 2019-20, the Department undertook a range of activities to scope the potential implications of leaving the EU on health and social care and to determine the decisions and actions that need to be taken to ensure readiness for Day 1. For most of 2019 there remained a risk of a no deal exit and as such, the Department had to keep its 'no deal' contingency plans under review. The Department worked closely with key stakeholders including its ALBs, its counterparts in other Northern Ireland Departments, England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland throughout this period of uncertainty and when the UK left the EU, on 31 January 2020, the Department moved into the period of transition. This is set to end on 31 December 2020, therefore, the UK is currently in negotiation with the EU regarding their future relationship. As uncertainty still exists regarding the NI Protocol, this remains an area of risk which the Department continues to keep under review, in conjunction with our key stakeholders.

Review of Effectiveness of the System of Internal Governance

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal governance. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance is informed by the work of the Department's Internal Audit and the Executive Board Members within the Department, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports. I have been advised by the DARAC on the implications of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place. This is evidenced through DARAC's review of the Departmental Governance Statement and the DARAC Chair's annual report to me as Accounting Officer.

Internal Governance Divergences

Prior Year Issues

The following governance matters arising in prior years have now been addressed and no longer represent reportable internal control divergences for 2019-20:

Pension Band Review process

During August 2018, the BSO Payroll Shared Services Centre concluded a review of pension band tiers for all HSC employees. This review was required to determine whether appropriate pension contribution rates were being paid by HSC employees, based on their pensionable pay from the 1st April 2018. At a regional meeting of HSC HR and Finance Directors it was agreed that the backdated impact of this review would be recovered in a single amount from employees in August 2018, with loans being made available for any staff who subsequently requested them. The Payroll Shared Services Centre moved quickly to issue loans to all members of staff who requested them and out of the approx. 5,000 staff who were adversely impacted by the pension band review process, approx. 500 were given a loan.

However due to a failure to communicate in a timely and effective manner with individual affected employees, the resulting impact on certain staff led to significant media and Trade Union interest and concern. To avoid such an issue arising in the future HSC HR representatives worked with Trade Unions and the BSO Payroll Shared Services Centre to agree a formal protocol for the communication process for any future reviews of this nature which are identified as having an impact on net pay for any group of staff.

This protocol was initiated in the 2018-19 pay award and pension band review process in February 2019, and the issues previously experienced around media and Trade Union interest and concern did not re-occur. Subsequently, Payroll Shared Service Centre continued to refine communication and operational processes to ensure lessons learnt were mainstreamed into business as usual activities and 2019-20 saw the introduction of monthly pension band review methodology. This resulted in all employees now being assessed for pension contribution rates each month, removing the need for annual retrospective assessments and ensuring employees pay the correct amount of pension contributions each month on an ongoing basis.

A number of governance matters arising in prior years are still considered to represent internal control divergences for 2019-20. These include:

Underpayment of Employers' Superannuation Contributions

During February 2017 it was brought to the attention of the BSO Payroll Shared Services Centre, by one of the HSC bodies, that there was a potential error in how the HRPTS system was calculating employers' superannuation contributions during periods of sickness and ordinary and stretch maternity leave. This error in the specification of the system dates back to the introduction of HRPTS which went 'live' in BSO in December 2012 and was rolled out throughout HSC on a phased basis thereafter.

Subsequent significant investigations resulted in the identification of a material regional liability in respect of underpayments of these contributions dating back to the introduction of the new HRPTS system in each individual HSC body. All HSC employers made payments of the estimated liability to the Pension Scheme in 2017-18 and 2018-19. The mechanism to correct the system was implemented in 2019-20. While the system solution at this stage does not address the requirement in full, sufficient additional manual processes have been implemented to obtain regional agreement that the control divergence has been addressed. A further system change is currently undergoing testing and will be implemented in 2020-21.

Interface from Payroll Systems to Pensions Systems

Pensions Service (HSCPS) Altair system receives an electronic interface from the BSO Shared Services payroll system, updating members' records on a monthly basis. At the outset of procuring a new payroll solution this interface requirement was identified and included as part of the new system requirements. In May 2012 an initial specification was submitted to the system supplier, detailing Altair data interface requirements and subsequently the interface went live on 25 May 2016.

Although the interface is operating as per design, errors are occurring due to incomplete information within the payroll system. At December 2017 there were approximately 7,500 data queries. Legacy queries were reduced to circa 2000, through a Pensions Payroll remediation team, but subsequently increased to levels of circa 4,500. A transfer of pension related functions from the Payroll Shared Services Centre to HSC Pension Services (HSCPS) to streamline pension activity and improve customer service was completed. With queries remaining at circa 4,500, a comprehensive change request was agreed, an impact assessment completed and software change developed. This solution awaits detailed System Testing, with the need of a combined team of testers from HR, Shared Services Payroll and Pensions Payroll. Unfortunately COVID-19 lockdown has delayed testing and deployment, and this is a priority when lockdown restrictions are eased in 2020.

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is required to carry out a valuation of the HSC Pension Scheme every four years. GAD has highlighted that obtaining the required data for the 2016 Scheme valuation was somewhat protracted owing to interface issues between HSC Payroll and HSC Pensions. Whilst this was not expected to materially detract from the valuation results GAD highlighted that action is required to rectify underlying data issues.

In order to address these issues GAD has asked the scheme administrator (HSC Pension Service) and the Department to work with them as a matter of some urgency to identify and agree what actions can be taken to improve data for future valuations and this work is ongoing.

GAD has already identified a number of areas that contributed to the valuation data quality issues and are continuing to work with the HSC Pension Service and Department to work out where the underlying issues arise and to agree corrective actions / adaptations that may be needed from all parties to improve data provision going forward. Progress on this is closely monitored by the HSC Pension Board.

New Issues for 2019-20

No new governance issues were identified for 2019-20.

Conclusion

The Department of Health has a rigorous system of accountability which I can rely on as Accounting Officer to form an opinion on the probity and use of public funds, as detailed in Managing Public Money NI. The system operates on a principle of devolved authority and the accountability framework structure across the Department's operating base.

Further to considering the accountability framework within the Department, including the BSO, and in conjunction with assurances given to me by the DARAC, I am content that the DoH and the HSC Pension Scheme have operated a sound system of internal governance throughout 2019-20.

STATEMENT OF ASSEMBLY SUPPLY AND RELATED NOTES

Statement of Assembly Supply

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) requires the Health and Social Care Pension Scheme to prepare a Statement of 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 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 their Supply Estimate, called control limits, their 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 DoF website.

The supporting notes detail the following: A reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure in the SOCNE, to tie the SoAS to the financial statements (note 1); a reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement (note 2); an analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund (note 3), and a reconciliation of income recorded within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund (note 4).

Summary tables – mirror Part II and III of the Estimates

Summary table, 2019-20, all figures presented in £000

Type of spend	Note	Outturn			Estimate			Outturn vs Estimate saving / (excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total 2018-19
		Gross Expenditure	Accruing Resources	Net Total	Gross Expenditure	Accruing Resources	Net Total	Net Total	
Request for Resources									
Providing a pension scheme for persons employed in health and social care									
Annually Managed Expenditure		1,762,994	(671,490)	1,091,504	1,957,453	(671,490)	1,285,963	194,459	
Total Resources	SoAS 1	1,762,994	(671,490)	1,091,504	1,957,453	(671,490)	1,285,963	194,459	233,324

Net Cash requirement 2019-20, all figures presented in £000

Item	Note	Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, saving/(excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total, 2018-19
Net Cash requirement	SoAS 2	-	-	-	-

Summary of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

In addition to accruing resources, the following income relates to the Scheme and is payable to the Consolidated Fund (cash receipts being shown in italics)

	Note	Forecast 2019-20		Outturn 2019-20	
		Income	<i>Receipts</i>	Income	<i>Receipts</i>
Total amount payable to the Consolidated Fund	SoAS 3	-	<i>154,515</i>	166,518	<i>152,458</i>

Notes to the Statement of Assembly Supply, 2019-20 (£000s)

SoAS note 1. Reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure

Item	Note	Outturn	Supply Estimate	Outturn compared with Estimate	Prior Year Outturn Total 2018-19
Net Resource Outturn		1,091,504	1,285,963	194,459	1,489,200
Non-supply income (CFERs)	SoAS 3	(14,060)	-	14,060	-
Net Operating Expenditure in Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	SOCNE	1,077,444	1,285,963	208,519	1,489,200

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 operating expenditure, linking the SoAS to the financial statements.

SoAS note 2 (a). Reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement

This note mirrors Part II of the Estimates: Resource to Cash Reconciliation.

Item	Note	Outturn total	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate Saving/ (excess)
Resource outturn	SoAS 1	1,091,504	1,285,963	194,459
Accruals to cash adjustments <i>Adjustments to remove non-cash items:</i>				
New provisions and adjustments to previous provisions	16	(1,761,458)	(1,956,420)	(194,962)
Changes in working capital other than cash	SoAS 2(b)	26,909	13,100	(13,809)
Use of provisions	16	490,587	502,842	12,255
Excess cash receipts surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund	SoAS 3	152,458	154,515	2,057
Net cash requirement		-	-	-

As noted in the introduction to the SoAS above, outturn and the Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, not on a cash basis. This reconciliation bridges the resource outturn to the net cash requirement.

SoAS note 2 (b). Movements in working capital other than cash

This note is provided to enhance the explanation for reconciling items within SoAS 2(a) above.

	Note	2019-20	2018-19
		£000	£000
Decrease/(Increase) in receivables related to supply	12	(35,614)	4,296
Decrease/(Increase) in receivables not related to supply (injury benefit)	12	(1,432)	794
Increase/(Decrease) in payables falling due within one year	14	(3,923)	1,981
Movement in working capital		(40,969)	7,071
Movement in CFERS excess accruing resources	SOAS 3	14,060	(20,890)
Movement in working capital		(26,909)	(13,819)

SoAS note 3. Analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

This note mirrors Part III of the Estimates: Extra Receipts Payable to the Consolidated Fund.

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

Item	Note	Forecast 2019-20		Outturn 2019-20	
		Income £000	<i>Receipts</i> £000	Income £000	<i>Receipts</i> £000
Operating income and receipts – excess Accruing Resources	SoAS 4	-	-	14,060	-
Excess cash surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund	SoAS 2	-	<i>154,515</i>	152,458	<i>152,458</i>
Total amount payable to the Consolidated Fund		-	<i>154,515</i>	166,518	<i>152,458</i>

SoAS note 4. Reconciliation of income recorded within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund

Item	Note	2019-20 £000	2018-19 £000
Operating income	SoCNE	685,550	532,365
Income authorised to be Accruing Resources		(671,490)	(532,365)
Operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund	SoAS 3	14,060	-

OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY DISCLOSURES

Losses and Special Payments

Losses Statement

	2019-20	2018-19
Total number of losses	126	92
Total value of losses (£000)	2	1
Details of losses over £250,000	-	-

Special Payments

	2019-20	2018-19
Total number of special payments	23	23
Total value of special payments (£000)	78	77
Details of special payments over £250,000	-	-



Mr R Pengelly
Accounting Officer
19 October 2020

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 Health's HSC Pension Scheme Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The financial statements comprise Statements of: Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and the related notes including significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the Statement of Assembly Supply, and the related notes.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the scheme's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of its combined net operating expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Department of Finance directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects:

- the Statement of Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals for the year ended 31 March 2020 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 of opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate. My staff and I are independent of the Department of Health in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, 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

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require me to report to you where:

- the Department of Health's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Department of Health has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Department of Health's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis.

Other Information

The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information included in the Accountability Report. The other information comprises the information included in the Accountability Report other than the Statement of Assembly Supply and my audit certificate and report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Finance directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001; and
- the other information given in the Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to 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 evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs 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.

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

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the Statement of Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals and that those totals have not been exceeded. 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.

Matters on which I report by exception

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

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

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



KJ Donnelly

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

30 October 2020

B) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE

for the year ended 31 March 2020

	Note	2019-20	2018-19
		£000	£000
Income			
Contributions receivable	3	674,856	520,788
Transfers in	4	9,455	11,532
Other pension income	5	1,239	45
		685,550	532,365
Expenditure			
Service cost	6	(1,040,003)	(1,380,000)
Enhancements	7	2,000	1,000
Transfers in	8	(9,455)	(11,532)
Pension financing cost	9	(714,000)	(630,000)
Other expenditure	10	(1,536)	(1,033)
		(1,762,994)	(2,021,565)
Net Expenditure		(1,077,444)	(1,489,200)
Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure			
Pension re-measurements:			
Actuarial (loss) / gain	16.4	(4,780,000)	1,659,000
Total Comprehensive Net (Expenditure)/ Income for the year		(5,857,444)	169,800

Notes 1 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 March 2020

	Note	2019-20	2018-19
		£000	£000
Current assets			
Receivables	12	86,059	49,013
Cash and cash equivalents	13	152,458	55,648
Total current assets		238,517	104,661
Current liabilities			
Payables (within 12 months)	14	(173,572)	(66,625)
Total current liabilities		(173,572)	(66,625)
Net current assets, excluding pension liability		64,945	38,036
Pension liability	16.1	(30,354,154)	(24,303,283)
Net liabilities, including pension liabilities		(30,289,209)	(24,265,247)
Taxpayers' equity			
General fund		(30,289,209)	(24,265,247)
		(30,289,209)	(24,265,247)

Notes 1 to 20 form part of these financial statements.



Mr R Pengelly
Accounting Officer
19 October 2020

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAXPAYERS' EQUITY

for the year ended 31 March 2020

	Note	General Fund	
		2019-20	2018-19
		£000	£000
Balance at 1 April		(24,265,247)	(24,379,399)
Excess accruing resources	SoAS 4	(14,060)	-
Excess cash receipts payable to the Consolidated Fund	Note 13	(152,458)	(55,648)
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year		(1,077,444)	(1,489,200)
Actuarial (loss) / gain		(4,780,000)	1,659,000
Net change in Taxpayers' Equity		(6,023,962)	114,152
Balance at 31 March		(30,289,209)	(24,265,247)

Notes 1 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

for the year ended 31 March 2020

	Note	2019-20	2018-19
		£000	£000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net expenditure for the year		(1,077,444)	(1,489,200)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
(Increase)/Decrease in receivables related to supply	12	(35,614)	4,296
(Increase)/Decrease in receivables not related to supply	12	(1,432)	794
(Decrease)/Increase in payables	14	(3,923)	1,981
Increase in pension provision	16.1	1,754,003	2,010,000
Increase in pension provision - enhancements and transfers in	16.1	7,455	10,532
Use of provisions - pension liability	16.2	(486,087)	(457,124)
Use of provisions - refunds and transfers	16.3	(4,500)	(4,740)
Net cash inflow from operating activities		152,458	76,539
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period before adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund		152,458	76,539
Payments of amounts due to the Consolidated Fund		(55,648)	(76,917)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period after adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund		96,810	(378)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	13	55,648	56,026
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	13	152,458	55,648

Notes 1 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Basis of preparation of the Health and Social Care Pension Scheme financial statements

The financial statements of the HSC Pension Scheme (“the Scheme”) have been prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 2019-20 *Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM)* issued by the Department of Finance. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards as adapted or interpreted for the public sector. IAS 19 *Employee Benefits* and IAS 26 *Accounting and Reporting by Retirement Benefit Plans* are of particular relevance to these statements.

In addition to the primary statements prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards, as adapted or interpreted for the public sector, the FReM also requires the Scheme to prepare an additional statement - a Statement of Assembly Supply. This statement, and its supporting notes, show outturn against Estimate in terms of the net resource requirement and the net cash requirement.

1.1 HSC Pension Scheme

The HSC Pension Scheme is an unfunded, defined benefit pay-as-you-go occupational pension scheme which is operated by the Business Services Organisation on behalf of the Department of Health and is open to all HSC employees and employees of other approved organisations.

Contributions to the Scheme by employers and employees are set at rates determined by the Scheme’s Actuary and approved by the Department of Health. The contributions fund payments made by the Scheme. The administrative expenses associated with the operation of the Scheme are borne by the Business Services Organisation (BSO) and reported in their financial statements.

The financial statements of the Scheme show the financial position of the HSC Pension Scheme at the year end and the income and expenditure during the year. The Statement of Financial Position shows the unfunded net liabilities of the Scheme; the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure shows, amongst other things, factors contributing to the change in the net liability analysed between the pension cost, enhancements and transfers in, and the interest on the Scheme liability. Further information about the actuarial position of the Scheme is dealt with in the Report of the Actuary, and the Scheme financial statements should be read in conjunction with that Report.

The financial statements also have regard to the Health and Personal Social Services (Superannuation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 as amended, the Health and Social Care (Pension Scheme) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 as amended, The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 as amended and the Health and Personal Social Services (Compensation for Premature Retirement) Regulations 1983 as amended.

2. Statement of accounting policies

The accounting policies contained in the FReM follow International Financial Reporting Standards to the extent that they are meaningful and appropriate in the public sector context.

Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which has been judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Scheme for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The accounting policies adopted have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the Scheme financial statements.

2.1 Accounting convention

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

2.2 Contributions receivable

Employers' normal pension contributions are accounted for on an accruals basis. Employers' special pension and compensation contributions are accounted for in accordance with the agreement under which they are paid or, in the absence of such an agreement, on a cash basis.

Employees' pension contributions and amounts received in respect of the purchase of added years are accounted for on an accruals basis. The associated increase in the Scheme liability is recognised as expenditure. Neither Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) (refer to Note 11) nor payments to providers of Stakeholder Pensions are brought into account in these financial statements.

2.3 Pre-funding of contributions from employing bodies

Amounts receivable from employing bodies to reduce or extinguish their liabilities in respect of future payment of benefits arising from the early retirement of their employees are accounted for on an accruals basis.

2.4 Transfers in and out

Transfers in, in respect of individual members, are normally accounted for as income and expenditure (representing the associated increase in the Scheme liability) on a cash basis.

2.5 Other income

Other income, including Contributions Equivalent Premium (CEP) and refunds of pension overpayments, are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Contributions Equivalent Premium income relates to the refund of National Insurance Contributions from the Contributions Agency relating to members who left the Scheme but subsequently returned to the Scheme before the end of their 13-month disqualifying period.

Other income includes refunds of gratuities, pension overpayments, final pay control and miscellaneous income. Pension overpayments can arise as a result of Pensioner error, Departmental error or Exchequer loss.

2.6 Current service cost

The current service cost is the increase in the present value of the Scheme liabilities arising from current members' service in the current period and is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. The cost is based on the nominal discount rate applicable at 1 April 2019, being 2.9%.

2.7 Past service cost

The past service cost is the increase in the period in the present value of the Scheme liabilities arising from current members' past service in the current period and is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

2.8 Interest on Scheme liabilities

The interest cost is the increase during the period in the present value of the Scheme liabilities because the benefits are one period closer to settlement and is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. The cost is based on the nominal discount rate applicable at 1 April 2019, being 2.9%.

2.9 Other expenditure

Other expenditure includes final pay control charges and it is accounted for on an accruals basis. CEP payments relate to National Insurance Contributions due to the Contributions Agency in respect of members who have left the Scheme.

2.10 Scheme liability

Provision is made for liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits in the future. The Scheme liability is measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and is discounted at the rate applicable at the close of 31 March 2020, being a 1.80% nominal discount rate. The discount rate and inflation assumptions are as set out in the Public Expenditure System (PES) note issued by HM Treasury: PES (2019) 11 Revised, dated 6 December 2019.

As per the requirements of IAS 19 and IAS26, as amended by FReM, full actuarial valuations by a professionally qualified actuary are required at intervals not exceeding four years.

In accordance with this, a full actuarial valuation for HSCPS Resource Accounts was carried out as at 31 March 2016. For the purposes of the resource accounts, the assessment has been carried out by calculating the liability as at 31 March 2016 based on the data provided and rolling forward that liability to 31 March 2020.

2.11 Pension benefits payable

Pension benefits payable are accounted for as a decrease in the Scheme liability on an accruals basis.

2.12 Pension payments to those retiring at their normal retirement age

Where a retiring member of the pension scheme has no choice over the allocation of benefits receivable between the value of the lump sum and the annual pension, the transaction is accounted for as a decrease in the Scheme liability on an accruals basis.

Where a retiring member of the pension scheme has a choice over the allocation of benefits receivable between the value of the lump sum and the annual pension, the transaction is accounted for as a decrease in the Scheme liability on a cash basis.

2.13 Pension payments to and on account of leavers before their normal retirement age

Where a member leaving the Scheme before normal retirement age is entitled only to a refund of contributions, the transaction is accounted for as a decrease in the Scheme liability on an accruals basis.

Where a member leaving the Scheme before normal retirement age has the option of receiving a refund of contributions or a deferred pension, the transaction is accounted for as a decrease in the Scheme liability on a cash basis.

2.14 Lump sums payable on death in service

Lump sum payments payable on death in service are accounted for on a cash basis. They are funded through the normal pension contributions and are a charge on the pension provision.

2.15 Actuarial gains/losses

Actuarial gains and losses, arising from any new valuation and from updating the latest actuarial valuation to reflect the conditions at the Statement of Financial Position date, are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year.

2.16 Additional Voluntary Contributions

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) are deducted from employees' salaries and are paid over directly by the employing organisations to the approved AVC providers. Details on AVCs are at note 11 to the financial statements.

2.17 Administration expenses

All costs of administering the HSC Pension Scheme are borne by the DoH and the Business Services Organisation.

2.18 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents represent cash balances held at bank as adjusted for any outstanding payments and receipts that have yet to be processed through the account.

2.19 Currency and rounding

The functional currency is sterling and all figures are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds. Totals may not sum on occasion due to rounding.

2.20 Impending application of newly issued Accounting Standards not yet effective

There have been no changes which would impact on these financial statements.

2.21 Going Concern

The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2020 shows net liabilities of £30,289,209k, reflecting liabilities due in future years. It is considered appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of the financial statements as it is anticipated that HSC Pension Scheme funding will continue for the foreseeable future through the ability for future funding to be met through Consolidated Fund Supply through the Estimates process, if necessary.

3. Contributions receivable

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Employers	473,528	333,488
Employees	201,328	187,300
	674,856	520,788

£697,793k contributions are expected to be payable to the Scheme in 2020-21.

4. Transfers in

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Individual transfers in from other schemes	9,455	11,532
	9,455	11,532

5. Other pension income

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Refund of pension payments	1	-
Final Pay Control	1,238	45
	1,239	45

6. Service cost¹

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Current service cost	1,070,003	1,080,000
Past service cost	(30,000)	300,000
	1,040,003	1,380,000

The past service cost for 2018-19 was in relation to a legal case (McCloud) which resulted in the need to make changes in respect of transitional protection arrangements introduced as part of public service pension reforms in 2015. In 2019-20, this best estimate cost has been reduced by £170m, resulting in a credit to past service cost, following further clarification on the proposed changes (subject to consultation). This is offset by a past service cost of £100m representing management's best estimate of the impact of the Government's published response to the consultation on indexation and equalisation of Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) in public service pension schemes. An estimated £40m current year past service cost is included in relation to a legal challenge which has been received against another UK public pension scheme regarding the provision of survivor benefits which has confirmed read across to other public sector pension schemes. The overall net impact on the calculated 2019-20 past service cost is (£30m).

¹ Amounts recognised to date are a best estimate and may be updated in due course as further information becomes available and clarification is provided.

7. Enhancements (see also Note 16.1)

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Employers: Pre-funded compensation payments	(2,000)	(1,000)
	(2,000)	(1,000)

8. Transfers in – additional liability

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Individual transfers in from other schemes	9,455	11,532
	9,455	11,532

Amounts receivable in respect of inward transfers increase the pension liability to the same extent. This increase is reflected in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure as expenditure as part of the movement in the pension provision during the year.

9. Pension financing cost (see also Note 16.1)

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Net interest on defined benefit liability	714,000	630,000
	714,000	630,000

10. Other pension expenditure

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Contributions Equivalent Premium	13	24
Contribution refunds	1,523	1,009
	1,536	1,033

11. Additional Voluntary Contributions

The HSC Pension Scheme provides for employees to make Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) to supplement their pension entitlements or to increase life assurance cover. Employees may arrange to have agreed sums deducted from their salaries, for onward payment to one of the approved providers, Equitable Life Assurance Society or Standard Life, or may choose to make their own arrangements by making periodic payments to an insurance company or scheme institution which offers Free Standing Additional Voluntary Contributions (FAVC) Schemes. The managers of the HSC Pension Scheme have responsibility only for the onward payment by employers of members' contributions to the Scheme's approved provider. These AVCs are not recognised in these financial statements. Members participating in the arrangement each receive an annual statement from the approved provider at 31 March each year confirming the amounts held to their account and the movements in the year.

The aggregate amounts of AVC investments are as follows:

The Equitable Life Assurance Society

Employees make contributions to two schemes (W0111) and (WP111) provided by the Equitable Life Assurance Society.

Scheme Number W0111

Movements in the year were as follows:

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	1,992	1,991
New investments (net of transfers/refunds)	39	21
Sales of investments to provide pension benefits	(117)	(140)
Changes in market value of investments	47	120
Balance at 31 March	1,961	1,992

Scheme Number WP111

Movements in the year were as follows:

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	2,018	2,115
New investments (net of transfers/refunds)	(27)	(87)
Sales of investments to provide pension benefits	(85)	(72)
Changes in market value of investments	58	62
Balance at 31 March	1,964	2,018

Standard Life

Movements in the year were as follows:

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	4,104	4,071
New investments (net of transfers/refunds)	79	117
Sales of investments to provide pension benefits	(400)	(84)
Changes in market value of investments	(214)	-
Balance at 31 March	3,569	4,104

12. Receivables - contributions due in respect of pensions

Analysis by type

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Pension contributions due from employers	53,749	28,629
Employees' normal contributions	25,735	16,610
Capitalised cost of enhancement to pensions payable on departure	588	899
Other receivables	4,113	2,433
Sub-total	84,185	48,571
Non-supply receivables:		
Injury benefits receivable	1,874	442
Total amounts falling due within one year	86,059	49,013

Included in pension contributions due is £14,060k (2018-19: £nil) that will be due to the Consolidated Fund once the debts are collected. Included in other receivables are overpaid pensions totalling £280k (2018-19: £426k).

13. Cash and cash equivalents

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	55,648	56,026
Net change in cash balances	96,810	(378)
Balance at 31 March	152,458	55,648
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	152,458	55,648
Balance at 31 March	152,458	55,648

14. Payables - in respect of pensions

Analysis by type

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Pensions	1,874	5,715
HMRC	4,337	4,128
Other creditors	843	1,134
CFERs due to be paid to Consolidated Fund – excess accruing resources current year	14,060	-
CFERs due to be paid to Consolidated Fund – excess accruing resources prior year	-	-
Other CFERs due to the Consolidated Fund – excess cash receipts	152,458	55,648
Total amounts due within one year	173,572	66,625

15. Amounts due to the Consolidated Fund

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Excess cash receipts surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund	(152,458)	(55,648)
Excess ARs payable to Consolidated Fund	(14,060)	-
	(166,518)	(55,648)
Cash and cash equivalents	152,458	55,648
CFERs included in receivables	14,060	-
CFERs received in respect of prior year receivables, yet to be paid	-	-
	166,518	55,648

16. Pension liability

Assumptions underpinning the pension liability

The HSC Pension Scheme is an unfunded defined benefit scheme. The Government Actuary's Department carried out an assessment of the Scheme liabilities as at 31 March 2020. The Report of the Actuary on pages 9 to 14 sets out the scope, methodology and results of the work the actuary has carried out.

The Scheme managers together with the actuary and the auditor have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that identifies, as far as practicable, the range of information that the Scheme managers should make available to the actuary in order to meet the expected requirements of the Scheme auditor.

This information includes, but is not limited to, details of:

- Scheme membership, including age and gender profiles, active membership, deferred pensioners and pensioners;
- benefit structure, including details of any discretionary benefits and any proposals to amend the Scheme;
- income and expenditure, including details of expected bulk transfers into or out of the Scheme; and
- following consultation with the actuary, the key assumptions that should be used to value the Scheme liabilities, ensuring that the assumptions are mutually compatible and reflect a best estimate of future experience.

The key financial assumptions used by the Actuary were:

	31 Mar 20	31 Mar 19	31 Mar 18	31 Mar 17	31 Mar 16
Rate of increase in salaries	4.10%	4.10%	3.95%	4.55%	4.20%
Rate of increase in pensions in payment and deferred pensions	2.35%	2.60%	2.45%	2.55%	2.20%
Inflation assumption	2.35%	2.60%	2.45%	2.55%	2.20%
Nominal discount rate	1.80%	2.90%	2.55%	2.80%	3.60%
Discount rate net of price inflation	(0.50)%	0.29%	0.10%	0.24%	1.37%

These key assumptions are inherently uncertain, since it is impossible to predict with any accuracy future changes in the rate of salary increases, inflation, longevity or the return on corporate bonds. The actuary uses professional expertise in arriving at a view of the most appropriate rates to use in the annual valuation of the Scheme liabilities. However, the Scheme managers acknowledge that the valuation reported in these financial statements is not certain, since a change in any one of these assumptions will either increase or reduce the liability. For example, on its own, even a small rise in the assumed rate of inflation will result in an increase in the pension liability.

The assumption that has the biggest impact on the amount of the reported liability is the discount rate net of price inflation. As set out in the FReM, and as required by IAS 19, the discount rate net of price inflation is based on yields on high quality corporate bonds. The rates are set out in the above table. Any decrease in the discount rate net of price inflation leads to a significant increase in the reported liability.

In accordance with IAS 19 the Scheme Managers are required to undertake a sensitivity analysis for each significant actuarial assumption as of the end of the reporting period, showing how the defined benefit obligation would have been affected by changes in the relevant actuarial assumption that were reasonably possible at that date. This analysis, including details of the methods and assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analyses, the limitations of these methods, and the reasons for any changes in methods and assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analyses, are included in the analysis of the pension liability below.

The key demographic assumption relates to pensioner mortality. The assumptions made are represented by the sample life expectancies set out in note 16.7.

Analysis of the provision for pension liability

	At 31 March 2020 £bn	At 31 March 2019 £bn	At 31 March 2018 £bn	At 31 March 2017 £bn	At 31 March 2016 £bn
Pensions in Payment	6.8	6.3	6.5	6.2	5.1
Deferred Pensions	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.4	0.9
Active Members (Past Service)	22.0	16.7	16.5	15.1	11.0
Total	30.4	24.3	24.4	22.7	17.0

Pension scheme liabilities accrue over employees' periods of service and are discharged over the period of retirement and, where applicable, the period for which a spouse or eligible partner survives the pensioner. In valuing the Scheme liability, the Actuary must estimate the impact of several inherently uncertain variables into the future. These variables include not only the key financial assumptions noted in the table above, but also assumptions about the changes that will occur in the future in the mortality rate, the age of retirement and the age from which a pension becomes payable.

The value of the liability on the statement of financial position may be significantly affected by even small changes in assumptions. For example, if at a subsequent valuation, it is considered appropriate to increase or decrease the assumed rates of inflation or increases in salaries, without changing the discount rate, the value of the pension scheme liability will increase or decrease. The managers of the Scheme accept that, as a consequence, the valuation provided by the actuary is inherently uncertain. The increase or decrease in future liability charged or credited for the year resulting from changes in assumptions is disclosed in note 16.4. The note also discloses 'experience' gains or losses for the year, showing the amount charged or credited for the year because events have not coincided with assumptions made for the last valuation.

16.1 Analysis of movements in the Scheme liability

	Note	2019-20		2018-19	
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Scheme liability at 1 April			24,303,283		24,403,615
Current service cost	6	1,070,003		1,080,000	
Past service cost	6	(30,000)		300,000	
Pension financing cost	9	714,000		630,000	
Enhancements	7	(2,000)	1,754,003	(1,000)	2,010,000
Pension transfers in	8	9,455		11,532	
Benefits payable	16.2	(486,087)	7,455	(457,126)	10,532
Pension payments to and on account of leavers	16.3	(4,500)		(4,740)	
			(490,587)		(461,864)
Actuarial loss /(gain)	16.4		4,780,000		(1,659,000)
Scheme liability at 31 March			30,354,154		24,303,283

The pension scheme liability can be split into £25.5 billion for the closed sections of the scheme (1995 and 2008) and £4.9 billion for the open section (2015 CARE scheme).

During the year ended 31 March 2020, employer contributions represented an average of 22.5% of pensionable pay.

16.2 Analysis of benefits paid

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Pensions or annuities to retired employees and dependents (net of recoveries or overpayments)	376,526	354,204
Commutations and lump sum benefits on retirement	106,866	99,052
Death in service benefits	2,695	3,868
Total benefits paid	486,087	457,124

16.3 Analysis of payments to and on account of leavers

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Individual transfers to other schemes	4,500	4,740
Total payments to and on account of leavers	4,500	4,740

16.4 Analysis of actuarial (loss)/gain

	2019-20	2018-19
	£000	£000
Experience (losses)/gains arising on the scheme liabilities	120,000	110,000
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of scheme liabilities	(4,900,000)	1,549,000
Total actuarial (loss)/gain	(4,780,000)	1,659,000

16.5 History of experience gains/ (losses)

	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Experience gains/(losses) on Scheme liabilities:					
Amount (£000)	120,000	110,000	(710,000)	190,000	140,000
Percentage of the present value of Scheme liabilities	0.4%	0.5%	(2.9)%	0.8%	0.8%
Total amount recognised in statement of Changes in Taxpayers Equity :					
Amount (£000)	(4,780,000)	1,659,000	(470,000)	(4,850,000)	1,520,000
Percentage of the present value of Scheme liabilities	(15.7)%	6.8%	(1.9)%	(21.4)%	9.0%

16.6 Sensitivity analysis

The Government Actuary has been asked to indicate the approximate effects on the actuarial liability as at 31 March 2020 of changes to the main actuarial assumptions.

The key financial assumptions are the rate of return net of price inflation and the rate of return net of salary inflation. A key demographic assumption is members' longevity. The table below indicates the order of magnitude of changes to these assumptions on the Scheme's liability:

Change in assumption	Approximate % change in the total liability	Approximate increase / (decrease) to the total liability
Discount rate increase of ½ % per annum*	Decrease of 11.5%	(£3.5 billion)
Long term earnings increase of ½ % per annum*	Increase of 2.5%	£0.8 billion
Pension increases of ½ % per annum*	Increase of 8.0%	£2.5 billion
Assumed longevity increased by rating the tables assumed up by 1 year	Increase of 3.5%	£1.1 billion
1995 Section members retire at the Normal Pension Age (approximately equivalent to assuming members retire around 2 years earlier)	Increase of 1.0%	£0.3 billion

*Opposite changes in the assumptions will produce approximately equal and opposite changes in the liability.

16.7 Pensioner mortality

The following tables show the average number of years that both current and future pensioners are expected to live after retirement age, under the mortality assumptions used for the Pension Scheme Statements at 31 March 2020.

Average number of years current pensioners expected to live after retiring at age:	Men	Women
60	28.6	30.1
65	23.7	25.1

Average number of years future pensioners expected to live after retiring at current age:	Men	Women
60	30.3	31.7
65	25.3	26.7

17. Financial instruments

As the cash requirements for the HSC Pension Scheme are met through the Estimates process, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector scheme of a similar size. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts for non-financial items in line with the Scheme's expected purchase and usage requirements and the Scheme is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

18. Contingent liabilities disclosed under IAS37

In the unlikely event of a default by one of the approved AVC providers, the Department will guarantee pension payments. This guarantee does not apply to members who make payments to institutions offering Free Standing Additional Voluntary Contributions.

19. Related party transactions

The HSC Pension Scheme falls within the ambit of the Department of Health which is regarded as a related party. During the year, the Scheme has had material transactions with the Department, in addition to other government departments and central government bodies whose employees are members of the Scheme. None of the managers of the Scheme, key managerial staff or other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with the Scheme during the year.

20. Events after the reporting period

In July 2020, the UK Government launched a consultation on changes to public service pensions to remove discrimination arising from the transitional protection arrangements that were introduced when the schemes were reformed in 2014-15. The impact of the proposed changes has been reflected in these accounts as a reduction in past service cost. A Northern Ireland consultation setting out proposals to remedy the discrimination was launched on 19 August 2020. Past service costs recognised to date represent management's best estimate and may require reconsideration as further information and clarity on final remedy are obtained.

The financial statements are being prepared at a time when the UK is in the midst of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. As outlined in the Report of the Actuary, it is too early to speculate on any potential long-term effects of the pandemic on future economic/salary growth, mortality rates or financial assumptions underpinning the pension liability as at 31 March 2020. Details of significant actuarial assumptions adopted in calculating the pension liability for inclusion in the financial statements as at 31 March 2020 are included in note 16, together with sensitivity of the pension liability to changes in the significant actuarial assumptions in note 16.6.

Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised the issue of these financial statements on 30 October 2020.