



2019-20 BUSINESS PLAN

Better Workplaces

VISION: To be widely recognised as Northern Ireland’s leading authority in promoting productive working relationships for the benefit of individuals and organisations and to support the creation of a thriving and inclusive economy.

PURPOSE: To improve employment relations, promote best employment practice and resolve workplace disputes through the delivery of quality, impartial and independent services.

VALUES: To achieve our vision and purpose, our values are to be:

Progressive – forward thinking, outward looking, and creative in seeking better ways to support the economy;

Ethical – always acting with integrity, impartiality and utmost professionalism, and demonstrating openness and accountability;

Exemplary – challenging ourselves to be the best we can be and a role model in how we conduct employment relations; and,

Responsive – listening to our customers and staff, adapting to ensure our services meet customers’ needs.

These values underpin all that we do.

FOREWORD

This Business Plan implements the third year of our 2017-21 Corporate Plan, which sets out our commitment to deliver high quality services that promote productive working relationships for the benefit of individuals and organisations. This year's plan has a very specific focus on outcome-based performance management in line with recent guidance published by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO).¹

2019-20 will be a hugely important year for the Agency with the opportunities and challenges that flow from implementation of the new Early Conciliation (EC) service from January 2020. EC represents a fundamentally different approach to dispute resolution. Under current arrangements, an employee who believes their employment rights have been infringed may seek the assistance of the Agency in attempting to achieve a resolution. They can also submit a claim directly to the Office of the Industrial and Fair Employment Tribunal (OITFET) without any interaction with the Agency. Under EC, all potential tribunal claimants will be required to notify the Agency in the first instance, to explore the possibility of resolving the dispute without the need for formal litigation.

The Agency's preparations for the introduction of EC are well underway, working in partnership with OITFET and the Department for the Economy (DfE). The needs of employees, employers and their representatives are at the heart of our planning processes. We want to ensure that EC notifications are handled efficiently, ensuring that the new service is readily accessible to all customers. Those parties who wish to explore conciliation will receive every assistance to ensure that they take well-informed decisions on the merits of settling their case. However, those that remain committed to seeking legal redress will be able to do so without any unnecessary barriers.

In raising awareness of the new EC service and the benefits of alternative dispute resolution, we have an opportunity to promote the Agency's other services designed to prevent disputes and build capacity within the labour market.

EC also provides an opportunity to review all of our operational processes to ensure they are as lean as possible and directly focused on customer needs. Customer journey mapping is central to our EC design process; it will also be used to review all employment relations services to identify ways in which they can be delivered more efficiently, with a particular focus on making best use of technology.

EC brings some unique challenges in terms of operational capacity due to systemic resource pressures. Our sponsor Department, DfE, has been very supportive in securing additional funding for EC implementation. However, a number of budget cuts in recent years, as well as the cumulative impact of pay and price increases since 2010, has necessitated a reduction in our overall staff complement. This means that the Agency may be required to direct resources away from other core services to meet the

¹ Performance management for outcomes – good practice guide for public bodies, NIAO, June 2018 (available at: https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/sites/niao/files/media-files/NIAO_performance%20management%20for%20outcomes.pdf).

operational demands of EC. The Agency is putting in place detailed plans to seek to minimise the impact on what are highly valued frontline services.

It is difficult to predict the take up of EC, but we do anticipate that delivery of this service will be more resource-intensive during the initial implementation phase, as new systems and ways of working bed-in. Thereafter, a more considered view of resource requirements will be taken to ensure that other key services are not adversely impacted.

Aside from EC, there are a number of very positive developments. We welcome the appointment of Mark McAllister as the Agency's new Director of Employment Relations Services. We plan to launch a new, more customer-focused website and to make greater use of social media to enhance the Agency's profile with current and future service users. And, our Regional Office will relocate to new, more accessible premises in Derry/Londonderry in June 2019.

We recognise the important role that all of our stakeholders play in promoting the work of the Agency and the economic and social return from good employment and industrial relations. The Agency will continue to work with our stakeholders and delivery partners on projects that contribute to a more cohesive labour market.

All things considered, 2019-20 is going to be an exciting year for the Agency.

We commend this plan to our customers and stakeholders.



Marie Mallon
Chairperson



Tom Evans
Chief Executive

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

The ongoing political uncertainty means that the draft Programme for Government (PfG) and draft Industrial Strategy have yet to receive Executive approval. Nevertheless, the Agency's Board has used the draft PfG as the strategic framework for the development of our Corporate and Annual Business Plans under three strategic themes focusing on service delivery, partnership and good governance.

The lack of Ministerial direction has also delayed the introduction of Early Conciliation, already provided for in the Employment Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. This service, which is already in place in Great Britain, would require parties, in the first instance, to consider the offer of the Agency's dispute resolution services as an alternative to an industrial tribunal. DfE has confirmed that the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018 provides the necessary authority to allow the Department to make the Commencement Order and Regulations in the absence of a Minister. DfE has recently given approval for the new Early Conciliation service to be introduced from January 2020. The Agency is already undertaking detailed preparations and will be engaging with key stakeholders to ensure that the service meets the needs of employees and employers and their representatives.

The nature and impact of the UK's exit from the European Union is still to be seen. However, the Agency is undertaking contingency planning, in consultation with DfE, to deal with a potential increase in demand for our services, including information about employment rights potentially impacted by Brexit.

The UK Government published 'The Good Work Plan' in December 2018.² This sets out how the Government intends to improve the labour market in response to the recommendations made by the Taylor review of working practices.³ The Agency will be working with DfE and the Northern Ireland Employment Relations Roundtable to explore how to progress implementation of these recommendations in NI, in a way that supports the delivery of Programme for Government outcomes.

The inward investment that will result from the recently announced 'City Deals' for Belfast and Derry/Londonderry region⁴ will give added impetus to the Agency's partnership work with local councils and Invest NI. These partnerships have resulted in the development of the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice, which aims to support employers improve employment relations and is particularly aimed at new employers.

The Agency's budget for 2019-20 has been set at the same level as last year, meaning that savings need to be realised to offset the effects of pay and price increases. While additional funding is available for Early Conciliation, previous reductions in the Agency's budget mean that the new service will be largely funded from within existing resources.

² Good Work Plan, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, December 2018 (available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-work-plan>).

³ Good work: the Taylor review of modern working practices, Matthew Taylor et al, July 2017 (available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-work-the-taylor-review-of-modern-working-practices>).

⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/secretary-of-state-approves-first-city-deal-for-northern-ireland>.

Demand for the Agency's services remains high. Our workshops and good employment practice briefings on a range of employment relations issues are mostly oversubscribed. We are looking at how we can respond to increasing demand for these workshops through better use of technology that allows our customers greater autonomy in how they access our services.

Call volumes to our Workplace Information Service (WIS) number approximately 18,000 per year. There were a number of innovations regarding this service in 2018-19. It has been given a new, dedicated telephone number (03300 555 300), which should make it easier to promote the service through our new social media channels when they go live in 2019-20. The name of the service has been rebranded (from the Enquiry Point) to make the nature of the service more transparent to customers.

Our dispute resolution services continue to be in high demand. In terms of individual rights almost 4,500 cases were received last year. This figure includes bulk cases (similar cases with the same respondent) mostly derived from case law decisions on the calculation of holiday pay, unlawful deduction from wages and equal pay. In totality, the number of individual cases translated into around 27,000 separate jurisdictional claims, increasing the cumulative total number of claims awaiting a Tribunal decision to 45,000.

Over 2,600 cases were cleared in 2018-19. Of these, around 1,600 were cases where tribunal proceedings had been lodged and over 1,000 were cases that had the potential to proceed to the tribunal. The Agency settled over 1,700 (65%) of the cases cleared.

In terms of the cases cleared where tribunal proceedings had already been lodged, 50% were settled by our conciliators, with a further 23% withdrawn as a result of the Agency's involvement (e.g. the claimant decided not to pursue their dispute to a hearing).

Only 15% of cases cleared were resolved by the tribunal. Of these, 7% were cases in which the Agency could not conciliate in (e.g. where the employer is insolvent or the case is 'struck out' because there was no reasonable prospect of it succeeding). This meant that only around 8% of cases in which the Agency had a reasonable prospect of conciliating in proceeded to a tribunal hearing.

Demand for our mediation, arbitration/independent appeals, and collective conciliation services also remains high.

Despite the loss of experienced staff through the operation of a Voluntary Exit Scheme in late 2017-18, and the inevitable strain this placed on our resources, our staff rose to the challenge in maintaining service levels and meeting all operational targets in 2018-19.

Unfortunately, our reduced resources meant that we were constrained in the number of new projects we were able to progress in terms of promoting the benefits of good employment relations (Strategic Theme 2), as we prioritised service delivery. However,

the Agency is committed to taking forward work to further the strategic objectives under this Theme in the year ahead.

The Agency's Board held a planning workshop in February 2019 to identify business priorities for 2019-20; the Board has commissioned a continuous improvement project focusing on service delivery.

The Agency supports the work of the Northern Ireland Employment Relations Roundtable, which is representative of all the main employer bodies and trade unions. A key challenge in the year ahead will be to work with the Roundtable and DfE to evidence and promote the economic and social return from good employment and industrial relations practice. We also hope to play a key role, with the Equality Commission, in promoting awareness of the Roundtable's Joint Declaration of Protection as well as highlighting good practice.

We are pleased that DfE has committed funding in 2019-20 to allow the Agency and Roundtable to host a major employment relations conference later in the year, and conduct research to inform the development of an employment relations model for Northern Ireland.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Agency is a publicly funded body established by the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, and continued by the Industrial Relations Order (Northern Ireland) 1992. We are independent of, but accountable to, the Department for the Economy.

Our independent Board, comprising members drawn from business, trade union, employment law and academic backgrounds, establishes the Agency's strategic direction. Board members are public appointments, appointed by the Minister for the Economy.

We currently employ the equivalent of just over 60 full-time staff who operate from two locations – our Head Office in Belfast and a Regional Office in Derry/Londonderry. Our budget allocation for staffing and running costs in 2019-20 is £3,616k. Additional funding is expected to be allocated in-year for additional employer pension contribution charges, which came into effect from April 2019. We have a capital budget of £145k.

Services

The Agency provides a range of **advisory services** to promote good employment practice and advise employers and employees on their rights and responsibilities. These services include:

- **Workplace Information Service** – this is a confidential information and advice line for employers and individuals, and their representatives.
- **Briefings, seminars, and workshops** – these are aimed at disseminating information and good practice on a range of employment issues and enhancing the employment relations skills of line managers.
- **Document reviews** – these provide commentary on an individual employer's employment documentation, including contracts of employment, to ensure legislative compliance and promote good practice.

The Agency also provides a range of confidential **dispute resolution** services designed to deal with problems that arise in the workplace. These include:

- **Conciliation** – this service seeks to find a mutually agreeable solution to a problem or disagreement where an individual has made, or could make, a claim to an employment tribunal.
- **Arbitration** – where a solution to a problem or disagreement to an individual dispute cannot be found, and the parties wish to avoid a tribunal, our arbitration service provides a quick, confidential, non-legalistic process to resolve the matter. Arbitration decisions, and remedies that flow from these, are legally enforceable in the same way as tribunal decisions.

- **Mediation** – this is an effective tool for restoring positive working relationships using a mediator to work with those in conflict or dispute to find a mutually agreed resolution to overcome their differences.
- **Collective Conciliation** – this service aims to help employers and trade unions resolve disputes.

Influencing employment relations policy

As well as being a service provider, the Agency has a key role in working with representative bodies of employers and employees to facilitate discussion and seek to influence strategic employment relations issues. These bodies include the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Chambers of Commerce, Institute of Directors (IoD), and the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC-ICTU). We also work with all the main sectors, including the public, private, education and research, and voluntary and community sectors.

A major initiative in this field is the Agency's facilitation of the NI Employment Relations Roundtable, which enables discussion and collaboration by key stakeholders on matters of public policy, skills and research.

OUR APPROACH TO THE BUSINESS PLAN

Drawing on the emerging Programme for Government (PfG) and, in turn, Economy 2030: The Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland, we have identified three strategic themes in our Corporate Plan for 2017-21 to guide our work. This Corporate Plan sets the framework for annual business plans. These strategic themes are:

- 1. Improving organisational performance and responding to the needs of individuals through expert employment relations advice and support** – this theme focuses on the delivery by our expert and knowledgeable staff of advisory and dispute resolution services to improve the performance of organisations and help create better workplaces for individuals.
- 2. Working with stakeholders and delivery partners to evidence and promote the economic and social return from good employment relations and shape public policy** – this theme focuses on working with others to undertake research and generate data on the value of positive and harmonious employment relations and to influence Government policy.
- 3. Optimising the contribution of staff and resources to deliver our statutory functions through effective leadership and governance practices** – through effective leadership and excellent governance arrangements we will make the best use of the resources available to the Agency to deliver our statutory role.

An outcomes-based approach

The Agency has aligned its business planning process to the draft Programme for Government (PfG) and recent NIAO guidance (Performance Management for Outcomes and Making Partnerships Work). The Agency worked with colleagues from DfE and NISRA to develop and apply an outcomes-based approach to our work.

This resulted in three ‘scorecards’ being developed with performance measures covering our core employment relations services and our internal management processes. These are presented at **Appendix 1**. The scorecards are intended to demonstrate how much work the Agency did during 2019-20, how well we did it, and – crucially – how better off employers, employees and our partners are as a result.

The key performance measures carry forward to each objective within the Business Plan. Where appropriate, achievement of these measures will be reported on throughout the year (although the nature of some measures mean that this can only be done at the end of the year for inclusion in the Annual Report and Accounts).

LINKS TO THE PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

As a public body, the Agency is committed to making a positive contribution to the delivery of the Programme for Government in its totality; however, for business planning purposes, our work is referenced against the following PfG outcomes:

- ***We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy (PfG Outcome 1)*** – our advisory services promote greater employee engagement and job satisfaction resulting in higher productivity; our dispute resolution services provide the stability to grow a strong economy. A more cohesive labour market is more likely to attract organisations to invest in Northern Ireland, which is and is seen to be a good place to do business.
- ***We have a more equal society (PfG Outcome 3)*** – our advisory and dispute resolution services are delivered on a fair and equitable basis, promote greater co-operation, and develop harmonious, productive workplaces. Where disputes arise we help the parties to reach an agreed settlement to resolve these.
- ***We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their full potential (PfG Outcome 5)*** – our collaborative work with delivery partners contributes to the wellbeing of organisations and individual employees. The Agency continues to explore more innovative ways of reaching out to new and existing customers; our work with the public sector contributes to the delivery of more effective and efficient public services; and our work with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) enhances productivity and employee engagement.
- ***We have more people working in better jobs (PfG Outcome 6)*** – our work in developing the employment relations skills of line managers is critical. There is a strong link between effective line management and the health and wellbeing of employees and improved organisational performance. This results in greater levels of staff retention and a reduction in turnover within the labour market. Our work with DfE and the NI Employment Relations Roundtable to explore how the UK Government's 'Good Work Plan' could apply to Northern Ireland is particularly relevant.
- ***We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest (PfG Outcome 10)*** – our work contributes to higher levels of productivity and harmonious industrial relations that encourage greater levels of investment in our economy, both in terms of indigenous companies and potential foreign direct investment (FDI).

OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR 2019-20

Strategic Theme 1: Improving organisational performance and responding to the needs of individuals through expert employment relations advice and support.

Strategic objectives

1.1 To provide effective guidance on employment relations issues to individuals and organisations.

Objectives for 2019-20

a) Respond effectively to callers to the Workplace Information Service.

Performance measures:

- Number of enquires received/handled.
- Average waiting time.
- Lost call rate.
- Number and % of contacts reporting increased knowledge and understanding of good practice or the law regarding employment relations issues.

b) Deliver a range of good practice seminars and briefings to give employers, employees, and their representatives greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters.

Performance measures:

- Number of events delivered.
- Number of participating organisations.
- % planned events delivered.
- Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events.
- Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters as a result of attendance at events.

c) Deliver the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice to encourage employers to adopt good practice in managing employment relations.

Performance measures:

- Number of line managers undertaking the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice.
- % of line managers achieving the LRA Certificate in Management Practice.
- Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events.
- Number and % of line managers applying learning/skills in the workplace as a result of completing the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice.

- d) Conduct a review of the Agency's existing document review service **by December 2019**.

Performance Measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Efficiencies/process improvements identified

- e) Deliver an effective document review service to promote legislative compliance by employers and encourage good practice in employment relations matters.

Performance measures:

- Number of cases registered.
- % completed within target timescale.
- Customer satisfaction with the quality of the service.
- Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in applying their policies/procedures as a result of document reviews.

- f) Deliver an effective good practice facilitation service.

Performance measures:

- Number of projects registered.
- Number of collective agreements/policies facilitated.
- % projects completed.
- Customer satisfaction with the quality of the service.
- Number of more effective policies in place.
- Number and % of customers reporting a more positive employment relations environment and reduced likelihood of disputes occurring.

- g) Work with key delivery partners on a range of events and signature projects.

Performance measures:

- Number of partners worked with.
- Number of joint events held.
- % planned events held.
- Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input.
- Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters as a result of attendance at events.
- Number and % of customers reporting a more positive employment relations environment and reduced likelihood of disputes occurring

1.2 To help prevent and resolve individual and collective workplace employment disputes.

Objectives for 2019-20

- a) Deliver an effective individual conciliation service that reduces the number of claims heard by an employment tribunal.

Performance measures:

- Number of employee-led cases received.
- % of employee-led cases completed.
- Number of employer-led cases received.
- % of employer-led cases completed.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of cases not proceeding to Tribunal.
- Number and % of Tribunal days saved-if this is possible.

- b) Deliver an effective collective conciliation service to facilitate the settlement of collective disputes.

Performance measures:

- Number of collective conciliation cases received.
- % collective conciliation cases undertaken.
- % resulting in a settlement to resolve the dispute.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of customers reporting higher levels of engagement/trust following collective conciliation.

- c) Deliver an effective mediation service to facilitate the resolution of interpersonal workplace disputes.

Performance measures:

- Number of requests received.
- % resulting in agreement to resolve the dispute.
- % of requests undertaken.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of customers reporting better working relationships following mediation.

- d) Deliver an Arbitration and Independent Appeals Service that meets agreed performance standards.

Performance measures:

- Number of arbitration and independent appeals cases received.
- % of arbitration and independent appeals cases completed.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.

- Number and % of customers reporting a difference in behaviours/attitudes following an arbitration or independent appeal hearing.

e) Implement Early Conciliation **from January 2020**.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Number of EC cases received.
- % of EC cases completed.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of cases not proceeding to Tribunal.
- Number and % of Tribunal days saved-if this is possible.

f) Undertake a review of the effectiveness of the Statutory Arbitration Scheme, in line with a timetable agreed with the Department for the Economy.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.

g) Work with key delivery partners in line with agreed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).

Performance measures:

- Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input.

Strategic Theme 2: Working with stakeholders and delivery partners to evidence and promote the economic and social return from good employment relations and shape public policy.

Strategic objectives

2.1 To facilitate the work of the NI Employment Relations Roundtable to stimulate discussion and collaboration by key stakeholders on matters of public policy, skills and research.

Objectives for 2019-20

- a) In partnership with the Equality Commission, develop, **by March 2020**, best practice guidance to support the promotion of the Joint Declaration for Protection (Dignity at Work/a Harmonious and Inclusive Working Environment).

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Partner satisfaction with the Agency's input.
- Number of promotional events held

- b) Organise and host, **by March 2020**, a major employment/industrial relations conference.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Customer satisfaction with the quality of the event.
- Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters following attendance at the event.

- c) Conduct, **by March 2020**, a feasibility study on the accreditation of the Agency's Certificate in Effective Line Management.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Secure third party support for the Agency's accreditation process.

- d) Develop, **by March 2020**, guidance on key elements of the Mathew Taylor report:

- Good Work Benchmarks; and,
- Positive flexible working practices.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Endorsement from Roundtable.

- e) Provide opportunities for Government to have early engagement with key stakeholders on a range of policy proposals.

Performance measures:

- Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input.

2.2 To develop and promote an Employment Relations Model for Northern Ireland.

Objectives for 2019-20

- a. Commission, **by September 2019**, research into international employment relations models.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.

- b. Identify, **by March 2020**, the key components of an Employment Relations Model for Northern Ireland for discussion with the NI Employment Relations Roundtable.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.

2.3 To review the mechanisms for evidencing the economic and social return from good employment and industrial relations practice.

Objectives for 2019-20

- a) Publish, **by September 2019**, a report with recommendations on the extent and nature of workplace conflict management practice in NI.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.

- b) Establish, **by December 2019**, data collection mechanisms to evaluate the Agency's impact in line with the performance measures at Appendix 1.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.

Strategic Theme 3: Optimising the contribution of staff and resources to deliver our statutory functions through effective leadership and governance practices.

This strategic theme is about enhancing capacity and capability to enable the Agency to more effectively contribute to the PfG outcomes listed above.

Strategic objectives

3.1 To ensure the effective development of Agency staff and systems to deliver our statutory functions.

Objectives for 2019-20

- a) Establish, **from June 2019**, a joint Management/TUS group to identify mechanisms for increasing employee engagement in line with the Agency's People Strategy.

Performance measures:

- Number of performance reviews conducted on time.
- % of performance reviews conducted on time.
- Number of days spent on learning and development.
- Number of return to work interviews conducted within three working days.
- % of days lost through sick absence.
- % of return to work interviews conducted within three working days.
- Level of employee engagement.
- Number and % increase in employee engagement.
- Number and % increase in attendance at work.

- b) Develop, **from June 2019**, a continuous improvement project to review operational guidelines to ensure lean service delivery.

Performance measures:

- Customer satisfaction with the quality of services.
- Number and % increase in public awareness of the Agency and its services.

- c) Launch, **from June 2019**, the Agency's new accessible website.

Performance measures:

- Number of pages of new/refreshed web content.
- % increase in website usage.
- Number and % increase in public awareness of the Agency and its services.

- d) Develop and implement, **from May 2019**, an active social media presence for the Agency.

Performance measures:

- Number of social media posts
- Level of engagement with social media
- Reach of social media posts
- % increase in social media followers
- Number and % increase in public awareness of the Agency and its services.

- e) Increase the use of videos, podcasts and online guides to promote and explain the Agency's services to customers.

Performance measures:

- Number and % increase in public awareness of the Agency and its services.

- f) Increase awareness of the Agency and its services, particularly among key target groups (younger people, social classes C2DE; and those outside Belfast).

Performance measures:

- Number of external events and exhibitions
- Number of news releases/press statements
- Proportion of coverage
- Number and % increase in public awareness of the Agency and its services.

3.2 To deliver excellent governance in the management of the Agency's resources in line with the requirements placed on public bodies.

Objectives for 2019-20

- a) Ensure the effective quality management of the Agency's resources.

Performance measures:

- Number of internal/external/ISO 27001 audit recommendations implemented.
- Number of Customer Service Excellence Award non-conformities v conformities.
- % of internal/external/ISO 27001 audit recommendations implemented
- ISO 27001 retained.
- Customer Service Excellence Award achieved/retained
- liP Status maintained/improved.
- Internal customer satisfaction with Corporate Services.

- b) Achieve a budget outturn of 99%.

Performance measures:

- Number of invoices paid.
- % of invoices paid within 10 working days (target: 90%) and 30 calendar days (target: 100%).
- % of budget spent.
- Annual report and accounts certified without qualification.

- c) Publish, **by June 2019**, a Disability Action Plan in line with the requirements of Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006) and subsequently mainstream the actions in all that the Agency does.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of the plan.
- Achievement of the plan's targets.

- d) Relocate, **from June 2019**, the Agency's Regional Office to new premises.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Value for money realised.

- e) Appraise, **by June 2019**, the longer term options for the effective delivery of the Agency's IS Managed Services.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Value for money realised.

- f) Become recognised, **by March 2020**, as a provider of official statistics.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of the published data.

g) Ensure Board effectiveness.

Performance measures:

- Compliance with recommended practice.⁵
- Board member satisfaction with their development.
- New Board member satisfaction with their induction.

⁵ Board Effectiveness – A Good Practice Guide, NIAO, November 2016 (available at: <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/sites/niao/files/media-files/Board%20Effectiveness-%20A%20Good%20Practice%20Guide.pdf>) and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Effectiveness Checklist, NAO, September 2017 (available at: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Self_Assessment_Checklist.pdf).

RISKS

The Agency has comprehensive procedures in place for identifying and managing the risks that might prevent the achievement of the objectives contained in this Business Plan. Our Corporate Risk Register identifies the controls that are in place, and any further action that is being taken, to eliminate or manage down the likelihood of identified risks occurring and/or the impact of those risks should they materialise.

Risk management is incorporated into all of our business planning and decision making processes.

The key corporate risks that cut across the delivery of all of the Agency's objectives for 2019-20 are:

1. **Relevance** – the Agency fails to adequately influence, or respond to, changes in the NI employment relations environment.
2. **Reputation** – the Agency's reputation for the provision of high quality, independent and impartial employment relations services is undermined.
3. **Funding**– the Agency fails to deliver its key corporate and business objectives due to budgetary constraints.
4. **Infrastructure** – the Agency's infrastructure or systems fail to adequately support effective governance and efficient operations.
5. **Staffing/Board** – the Agency encounters significant skill deficits and/or decrease in capacity among its staff and Board members.
6. **Compliance** – the Agency fails to comply with all relevant legislation and governance requirements, or fails to fulfil its statutory functions.

PERFORMANCE SCORECARDS

Advisory Services

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?	HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?
<p><u>Good Practice Seminars/Briefings/Workshops</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events delivered • Number of participating organisations • Number of line managers undertaking the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice <p><u>Document Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number registered <p><u>Good Employment Practice Projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects registered • Number of collective agreements/policies facilitated <p><u>Partnership working</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partners worked with • Number of joint events held <p><u>Workplace Information Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of enquires received/handled 	<p><u>Good Practice Seminars/Briefings/Workshops</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % planned events delivered • % of line managers achieving the LRA Certificate in Management Practice • Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events <p><u>Document Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % completed within target timescale • Customer satisfaction with the quality of the service <p><u>Good Employment Practice Projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % projects completed • Customer satisfaction with the quality of the service <p><u>Partnership working</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % planned events held • Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input • Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events <p><u>Workplace Information Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average waiting time • Lost call rate
<p style="text-align: center;">IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters as a result of attendance at events • Number and % of line managers applying learning/skills in the workplace as a result of completing the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice • Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in applying their policies/procedures as a result of document reviews • Number of more effective policies in place • Number and % of customers reporting a more positive employment relations environment and reduced likelihood of disputes occurring • Number and % of Workplace Information Service contacts reporting increased knowledge and understanding of good practice or the law regarding employment relations issues 	

Dispute Resolution Services

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?	HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?
<p><u>Individual Conciliation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of employee-led cases received• Number of employer-led cases received <p><u>Collective Conciliation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of collective conciliation cases received <p><u>Mediation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of requests received <p><u>Arbitration and Independent Appeals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of arbitration and independent appeals cases received	<p><u>Individual Conciliation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of employee-led cases completed• % of employer-led cases completed• Customer satisfaction with the service provided <p><u>Collective Conciliation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• % collective conciliations cases undertaken• % resulting in a settlement to resolve the dispute• Customer satisfaction with the service provided <p><u>Mediation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• % resulting in agreement to resolve the dispute• % of requests undertaken• Customer satisfaction with the service provided <p><u>Arbitration and Independent Appeals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of arbitration and independent appeals cases completed• Customer satisfaction with the service provided
<p style="text-align: center;">IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number and % of cases not proceeding to Tribunal• Number and % of Tribunal days saved• Number and % of customers reporting better working relationships following mediation• Number and % of customers reporting higher levels of engagement/trust following collective conciliation• Number and % of customers reporting a difference in behaviours/attitudes following an arbitration or independent appeal hearing	

Corporate Services

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?	HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?
<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of performance reviews conducted on time • Number of days spent on learning and development • Number of return to work interviews conducted within three working days <p><u>Finance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of invoices paid <p><u>Quality Improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of internal/external/ISO 27001 audit recommendations implemented • Number of Customer Service Excellence Award non-conformities v conformities <p><u>Communications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of external events and exhibitions • Number of social media posts • Number of news releases/press statements • Number of pages of new/refreshed web content 	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of performance reviews conducted on time • % of days lost through sick absence • % of return to work interviews conducted within three working days • Level of employee engagement <p><u>Finance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of invoices paid within 10 working days and 30 calendar days • % of budget spent • Annual report and accounts certified without qualification <p><u>Quality Improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of internal/external/ISO 27001 audit recommendations implemented • ISO 27001 retained • Customer Service Excellence Award achieved/retained • liP Status maintained/improved <p><u>Communications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of engagement with social media • Reach of social media posts • % increase in social media followers • Proportion of coverage • % increase in website usage <p><u>Overall</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal customer satisfaction with Corporate Services
<p style="text-align: center;">IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % increase in employee engagement • Number and % increase in attendance at work • Number and % increase in public awareness of the Agency and its services 	

