



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Annual Report and Accounts

for the year ended 31 March 2017



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

**Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2017**

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this overview section is to outline the performance of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) during the 2016-17 financial year and to highlight the key issues and risks identified by management. It also includes high level detail on the purpose and activities of the Agency.

History and Statutory Background

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance (DoF), was established on 1 April 1996 under the Government's Next Steps Initiative. The Agency incorporates the General Register Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland.

The Business

The Agency's Mission is –

- to produce and disseminate high quality, trusted and meaningful statistics and research to inform decisions and improve understanding; and
- to provide a high quality and cost effective civil registration service to meet users' needs.

NISRA's statistics and research services are afforded to a wide range of government departments and agencies to assist the policy process and delivery of objectives and actions. Statistics are produced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics published by the UK Statistics Authority in January 2009.

NISRA continues to address the needs of a wide range of users, producing high quality statistics and research, ensuring the quality of those statistics and disseminating information to its users efficiently and effectively. NISRA

will continue to ensure statistical outputs are fit for purpose such that users have a high degree of confidence in them.

NISRA is the principal source of official information on Northern Ireland's population and socio-economic conditions. The statistics produced by the Agency not only inform the policy process within government, but also inform academic research and contribute to debate in the wider community.

The General Register Office (GRO), which is incorporated within NISRA, provides a civil registration service and produces summary statistics relating to life events.

Vision

NISRA's vision is -

Trusted statistics and research for a better society

In striving to deliver our vision we will build on our history and our reputation for quality and customer service and on advancements in information communication technologies.

Key Aims, Principal Functions and Targets

Aims

The corporate aims of NISRA are -

- (i) to provide a statistical and research service to support decision making by Northern Ireland ministers and departments;
- (ii) to inform elected representatives and the public through the dissemination of reliable official statistics; and
- (iii) to administer the marriage laws and provide a system for the civil registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland.

Principal Functions

The principal functions of the Agency are -

- to provide and co-ordinate professional statistics and research services, and to be the principal advisory body on statistics and social research for Northern Ireland departments, agencies and non-departmental bodies;
- to carry out the Census of Population and provide high quality demographic information to enable the number and the condition of the population to be monitored and changes over time to be identified;
- to collect, analyse and make available official statistics which describe Northern Ireland's society, economy and public services;
- to ensure that statistical and research standards are adhered to and that the best appropriate methodological practice is employed in official statistics, social research and policy evaluation;
- to provide Northern Ireland statistics required for the United Kingdom, European Union and international statistical series; and
- to administer the marriage laws and provide an efficient and effective system for the registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland.

Risks and Uncertainties

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

The Agency Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) supports the Accounting Officer and the Agency Board on issues of risk, control and governance. In addition, ARC provides assurances and advice to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of audit coverage both internal and external. ARC is chaired by one of the Non-Executive Board members and operates under the best practice guidance contained within the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) issued under DAO (DFP) 05/14 in March 2014.

The Committee met on three occasions during the course of 2016-17. The Corporate Risk Register was provided to all meetings and the Committee reviewed in detail the Agency risks in relation to:

- Census (2011 and 2021)
- Customers
- Official Statistics
- General Register Office
- Finance/Resources
- Information Assurance
- Agency Premises
- Human Resources (inc the Voluntary Exit Scheme)
- Sickness Absence
- Social Survey infrastructure
- Economic Statistics

Chief Executive Overview

Like all other public sector bodies NISRA has had a difficult year in terms of increasing demand for services against a backdrop of decreased staffing and moratoriums on recruitment and promotion. Despite this NISRA has been successful in delivering its published business plan targets as highlighted later in this annual report. The Agency has achieved both headline Ministerial targets, supporting the development of a new Programme for Government and continuing to modernise the GRO Registration function. The Agency has also delivered the vast majority (27 out of 35)¹ of its non-headline targets for 2016-17 against this backdrop of change. In some cases the target was narrowly missed (Quality1(ii)² & (v)³). In other cases the achievement of the target was influenced by factors outside the Agency's control (Governance1(iii)⁴ & (vi)⁵). One of the Agency's targets was to deliver the 2016-17 actions on the NISRA Communications Plan (Impact1(v)). After assessing the available resources, it was decided not to take forward some of the actions and to defer the completion of a number of actions to 2017-18. The Data Science training programme was completed in 2016-17 but it was decided to postpone the review of the

NISRA Competence framework until 2017-18 to allow the learning from the programme to feed into this exercise (Impact1(vi)). NISRA did not achieve its targets relating to the timely completion of Personal Performance Agreements and in-year Performance Reviews (Governance1(x) & (xi)).

This is an area that NISRA will be focusing on in 2017-18. Further detail on NISRA's performance against these targets is included in the NISRA Balanced Scorecard Section at pages 3 to 31.

Highlights of the Year

Within the context of a changing political landscape NISRA was central to the development of draft outcomes and associated indicators for the new style of outcome-based accountability Programme for Government (PFG). This approach is highly data dependent and NISRA statisticians all across the NICS worked together this year to develop high quality and relevant population level indicators for the current draft PFG. This work consolidates NISRA's position at the centre of government in terms of our provision of evidence for policy-making, monitoring and evaluation.

2016-17 was also the year of the 'big move' for NISRA when all of the DoF branches, formally based in McAuley House, Oxford House, Royston House and Netherleigh, relocated to new headquarter premises at Colby House on the Stranmillis Road. As part of the Government's Accommodation Strategy to reduce the size of its estate and number of leasehold premises, Properties Division scoped out NISRA's requirements and delivered the refurbished building on time, within a year. A key driver of the timetable was the need to relocate before the current

-
- 1 Overall Performance (non-Ministerial Targets): 27 achieved; 4 substantially achieved; 1 partially achieved; 3 not achieved.
 - 2 63% of NISRA staff survey respondents (against a target of 65%) stated that they have received the training necessary to develop their personal competencies.
 - 3 82% of statisticians (against a target of 85%) attended a lunchtime seminar.
 - 4 The draft NISRA Corporate Plan is dependent on the DoF Corporate Plan. The process for the DoF Corporate Plan has only just started.
 - 5 The increased underspend (4.2%) was due to an unexpected and large increase in birth certificate requests following the Brexit vote, resulting in increased revenue for GRO. Despite the reallocation of funds, this was not fully offset.

leases expired on Oxford House and McAuley House in March and June 2017 respectively. Aside from saving money, the relocation now allows NISRA DoF staff to operate from a single modern location making it much easier for teams to collaborate and share good practice.

2016-17 also saw NISRA begin the process of building up its workforce following the loss of a number of staff to the Voluntary Exit Scheme. Having coped with a pared back workforce for a couple of years, during which time essential work took priority, new involvement in the Programme for Government and the acknowledged importance of compiling a strong evidence base for strategic decision making, lent support to strong business cases for recruitment and promotion.

An Assistant Statistician recruitment competition was held in the second half of 2016-17 resulting in 25 successful candidates being allocated to longstanding vacancies. This leaves a shortfall of 13 where the posts are continuing to be filled by recruitment agency statistical officers. Consequently, a further competition has been raised and is currently progressing through departmental clearances. At the next level up a Deputy Principal Statistician promotion board is also progressing. NISRA currently has 8 Deputy Principal Statistician vacancies and it is envisaged that more will arise throughout the year as a result of new work and further promotions to Grade 7 Statistician following a Grade 7 trawl held during the year. A further promotion competition to Senior Principal Statistician is planned for 2017-18.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Targets

The Agency's targets are grouped under four strategic themes. These reflect the Agency's strategic priorities, and also NISRA's position within the wider government statistical community:

- **Impact** - delivering a modernised registration service and supporting and influencing decision making in government and the wider community through engagement and the dissemination of reliable official statistics;
- **Quality** - ensuring outputs are produced to the highest professional and methodological standards; and developing and managing appropriately skilled people who take pride in their work and their organisation;
- **Trust** - through the trustworthiness, impartiality and independence of its outputs, responsiveness to users' needs and adherence to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics; and
- **Governance (Management)** - through adherence to procedural and legislative requirements, including UK Statistics Authority guidance and departmental policies, and the application of appropriate financial controls.

The Department consults with the Agency on the development of key (or Ministerial) targets, which form part of the Department of Finance's Business Plan. These key targets are supplemented by a suite of Chief Executive targets, all of which are detailed in NISRA's Annual Business Plan.

Performance against Targets

The Agency had two key ministerial targets for the year 2016-17. Both targets were achieved. The results have been confirmed as accurate by DoF Internal Audit and are summarised in the Ministerial Targets section below.

Performance against the Chief Executive's targets is summarised in the NISRA Balanced Scorecard Section at pages 7 to 31.

Ministerial Targets

Targets	Result
<p>Programme for Governance:</p> <p>Assist Departments in developing robust indicators and measures for the next Programme for Government (PfG).</p>	<p>Achieved: Summer / Winter 2016 PfG consultation - NISRA TEO supported PfG policy colleagues at public events and managed, analysed and reported on both public consultations. The branch provided training on Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) to statistical colleagues, SROs and their teams, and a wide range of other organisations, and worked with CAL to develop a full suite of training for the NICS.</p> <p>The Executive Office led in the development of PfG Indicators and Measures assisted by relevant NISRA statisticians, including the development of a reporting process and development of new data. The NISRA-chaired Technical Assessment Panel (TAP) has worked its way through nearly 40 of the current 49 indicators. A first report on all baselines and thresholds for change issued to SROs in January 2017.</p> <p>The focus is now moving to performance measurement and, again, statisticians have been working alongside SROs to support the production of report cards relating to delivery plans.</p> <p>NISRA DoF published annual wellbeing statistics on 1st June 2016.</p>
<p>GRO Registration Modernisation:</p> <p>To further modernise the GRO registration function throughout 2016-17.</p>	<p>Achieved: Work commenced on reviewing the Births and Deaths Registration (NI) Order 1976 and the Civil Registration Regulations (NI) 2012 to identify powers required to enable online registration to proceed. Regulations are now in draft form.</p> <p>Draft SOC to Registrar General week commencing 27th March 2017.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	<p>(ii) To further modernise the GRO registration function throughout 2016-17</p> <p>DoF (Ministerial) Target</p>	<p>Regulations to permit the future delivery of on-line birth registration drafted in line with legislative timetable by 31st March 2017.</p> <p>Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the enhancement of the on-line genealogical system developed by 31st March 2017.</p>	<p>Achieved: Work commenced on reviewing the Births and Deaths Registration (NI) Order 1976 and the Civil Registration Regulations (NI) 2012, to identify powers required enabling online registration to proceed. Regulations are now in draft form.</p> <p>Draft SOC to Registrar General week commencing 27th March 2017.</p>
	<p>(iii) To enhance the profile of NISRA and the services NISRA delivers.</p>	<p>NISRA actively participates in the Policy Champions Network (PCN), Statistics Co-ordinating Group (SCG), Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC) and other relevant cross-departmental and / or external advisory groups.</p> <p>Departmental Open days held.</p> <p>Number of Departmental Board / Committee appearances where policy officials were supported by NISRA.</p>	<p>Achieved: NISRA's Chief Executive is a member of the Policy Champions Network (PCN). NISRA continues to work with the PCN to support evidence-based policy making.</p> <p>NISRA statisticians have been integral to the development of the draft PfG and the associated population indicators.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
		<p>NISRA / STEM ambassadors' activity report.</p> <p>Number of visits to NINIS website.</p> <p>Number of events (such as workshops, seminars, presentation stands) delivered / participated in by NINIS.</p> <p>Other events (such as workshops, seminars) delivered / co-delivered by NISRA.</p> <p>NISRA website hits.</p> <p>Overall tweets (NISRA, NINIS and ELMS).</p> <p>Facebook followers.</p> <p>Number of Twitter followers.</p> <p>Press coverage (detailed in Agency Brief).</p>	<p>NISRA staff have held open days, engaged in cross- and inter- departmental working groups and promoted the Agency at seminars and workshops. Specific examples include: DfE statisticians delivering a "Getting to Know DfE" seminar on the services and products; DAERA and DfI statisticians working with the Cross-Departmental Working Group on Climate Change: Analysts' sub-group; ELMSB involvement in cross departmental working groups preparing data to inform EU Exit; DS promoting the NILS on Wikipedia; CMB providing exhibition stands at health conferences, Balmoral Show, NILGA Conference, the NILS 10 Year Anniversary event and various teacher training events; DfC staff briefing departmental board on the development of the Income Modelling and Estimation Database and supporting various presentations to external users; and DE statisticians presenting findings of the review of Essential Skills in Literacy and Numeracy in post-Primary Schools at Colleges NI event.</p> <p>Three Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings were held during 2016-17. A Statistics Co-ordinating Group meeting was held in October 2016.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
			<p>The main STEM event was held in W5 in June 2016, a replica was held in October 2016, and other smaller events were held throughout the financial year. NINIS delivered/ participated in 23 events during 2016-17.</p> <p>During 2016-17 the NISRA and NINIS Twitter accounts merged. Social media activity and attendance at events was limited by the NI Assembly Election (purdah from 25 January – 31 March 2017). Despite this, activity increased (@NISRA Twitter followers, @NISRA number of tweets, Facebook Likes): The number of website visits to NINIS have increased, but the number to NISRA have dropped slightly.</p> <p>Press coverage is detailed in the Agency Brief on a regular basis.</p>
	<p>(iv) To have specification for new NISRA website in place and business case accepted by December 2016, with a view to having the new website operational in 2017-18</p> <p>(All subject to funding availability).</p>	<p>Business case and specification to be developed and accepted by December 2016.</p> <p>New NISRA website to be progressed to ensure it becomes operational in 2017-18.</p> <p>New NISRA website is SEO (search engine optimised).</p>	<p>Achieved: A new Drupal based NISRA website was launched on 22 March 2017. This completes the first phase of the website development project. The new website is SEO through appropriate tagging and the theme based approach ensures the site is easily navigated, thus meeting accessibility requirements.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(v) To take forward the Communications Strategy actions specific to 2016-17.	Progress against 2016-17 actions on the 2015-2018 Communications Action Plan.	Partially Achieved: The majority of actions from the plan have been progressed. These include the introduction of the new NISRA website, improved signposting, increased availability of Open data, publication of STARzine, dissemination of Staff Survey results / actions and the use of live streaming / video to improve access to NISRA lunchtime seminars. A number of actions have been rolled forward to 2017-18.
	(vii) To promote NISRA data and increase the usability of such data, through engaging with the Open Data Agenda as agreed by Agency Board in adherence to the new public sector strategy.	<p>Percentage of NISRA products with a 3 star rating.</p> <p>Number of NISRA products with a 4 star rating.</p> <p>NISRA represented on the Open Data Implementation Board.</p> <p>Number of NISRA datasets available through the Open Data portal.</p>	<p>Achieved: In 2016-17 the percentage of NISRA products with a three star rating increased from 24% to 34%.</p> <p>While no NISRA products currently have a 4 star rating, NISRA is actively participating in a pilot GSS wide 4 star data project. This is exploring the feasibility, practical challenges and utility of producing 4 star data across the GSS.</p> <p>NISRA is represented on the Open Data Implementation Board by a Grade 5 Statistician.</p> <p>Cross-departmental working and the publishing of open datasets has increased during the year. Over sixty NISRA datasets are currently available through the Open data portal.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(viii) To progress work to update Northern Ireland's spatial measures of multiple deprivation as commissioned by the NICS Statistics Co-ordinating Group (SCG).	<p>Output Geography Consultation launched in February 2016 with an analysis of the responses to the consultation published by Summer 2016.</p> <p>Methodology Consultation launched in Autumn 2016. Analysis of responses published by March 2017.</p> <p>Project milestones achieved.</p>	<p>Achieved: Results of the deprivation output geography consultation were published in June 2016.</p> <p>Work has been ongoing with each of the seven appointed domain expert groups to develop proposals for the NIMDM 2017. A consultation ran from November 2016 until January 2017 and included four information sessions were around the country.</p> <p>28 detailed responses were received as a result of the consultation. Draft versions of a Deprivation Blueprint document (setting out the final indicators for NIMDM 2017) and responses to detailed comments were sent to the Steering Group on 30th March, to be discussed at its next meeting on 5th April 2017. Overall the project remains on track.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(ix) To agree a Business Case for the 2021 Census with DoF supply by the end of March 2017 and take forward internal statistical development work towards this.	<p>Provision of an appropriate address frame to Central Survey Unit (CSU) by December 2016.</p> <p>An Update and Proposals paper on the publication of Population Estimates based on Administrative Data (for LGD in NI), to be available by December 2016.</p> <p>Business Case for 2021 Census provided to DoF.</p>	<p>Achieved: The NISRA Address Register is now being used by Central Survey Unit to draw samples. CSU has completed fieldwork to assess the quality of the Address Register.</p> <p>Administrative Data Population Estimates (ADPEs) have been developed and data will be provided to Demographic Statistics early in 2017-18.</p> <p>The draft 2021 Census business case was provided to the DoF Economist in December 2016, who has advised that it does not breach the capital delegation and therefore does not require Supply approval.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(x) To further modernise business and household surveys including implementing the development of channels for electronic / on-line data collection by March 2017.	<p>Completion of a series of on-line access tests: within CSU, within Census office, with wider NISRA, and off-site test by end March 2017.</p> <p>Deployment of a live pilot exercise during 2016-17.</p> <p>Development of case management systems.</p> <p>Development of new visual interface.</p> <p>HQ statistical staff trained on Blaise 5 software.</p> <p>Training programme for survey interviewers developed.</p> <p>Statistical integration element of IBSS implemented across a number of business surveys by March 2017.</p> <p>Number of business surveys with Integrated Business Survey System Electronic Data Collection implemented by March 2017.</p>	<p>Achieved: Testing of online functionality is ongoing with internal testing within CSU underway.</p> <p>Development of Blaise 5 systems is ongoing and a live pilot has been completed. HQ statistical staff have been trained on Blaise 5 software.</p> <p>Delays in the development of certain functionality in the software along with staff shortages will delay development of visual interface, case management system and interviewer training programme.</p> <p>Statistical Integration is in place for Quarterly Employment Survey and being tested for Index of Production and Index of Services</p> <p>Electronic Data Collection is available for all ELMS business surveys by the end of March 2017.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(xi) To take forward the development of the key elements of a system of Economic Accounts in Northern Ireland during 2016-17.	<p>NI element of the Purchases Inquiry fieldwork (for reference year 2015) completed and preparations made for the issue of the 2016 reference year survey by March 2017 (subject to confirmation of ONS timetable).</p> <p>NI Input-Output Tables for 2012 produced by May 2016; Input-Output tables for 2013 produced by September 2016.</p> <p>NI Supply and Use tables for 2014 prepared, for publication in mid 2017.</p>	<p>Achieved: Data have been collected for the 2016 Purchases Inquiry and the 2017 survey is underway.</p> <p>The 2012 Input-Output Tables were published in May 2016; the Input-Output Tables for 2013 have been delayed until Summer 2017.</p> <p>Development of the 2014 Supply and Use tables is ongoing.</p> <p>A Project Board for the IT element of Economics Account system is underway.</p>

Impact			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(xii) To ensure researchers have efficient access to micro-data.	<p>Safe-setting usage.</p> <p>Number of projects through approval process for NILS, NIMS, ADRC, Census.</p> <p>Hold 2 meetings of the Administrative Data Forum (ADF).</p> <p>Development and dissemination of ADRC-NI Data Prospectus, detailing the datasets that are available.</p>	<p>Achieved: The NISRA safe setting has been available for use over the period, with 773 bookings to use the facility. There are currently 34 active NILS/NIMS projects and 7 active ADRC-NI projects.</p> <p>The ONS Virtual Microdata Laboratory (VML) terminal is available for use and the connection tested to ensure the service is viable.</p> <p>There have been 3 NILS and 6 ADRC-NI projects approved over the period.</p> <p>A meeting for the ADF took place in April 2016. Regular contact with the ADF has been maintained over the reporting period.</p> <p>The ADRC-NI Data Prospectus has been updated and is on the ADRN website.</p>

Quality			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
Q1: To develop and manage appropriately skilled people who take pride in their work and their organisation.	(i) To have at least 80% of NISRA staff survey respondents state that they have received the training (including in house and on-the-job training) necessary to deliver their business objectives	NISRA Staff Attitudes Survey. Annual Report on Staff Development.	Achieved: 81% of NISRA Staff Survey respondents stated that they had received the training necessary to deliver their business objectives.
	(ii) To have at least 65% of NISRA staff survey respondents state that they have received the training (including in house and on-the-job training) necessary to develop their personal competencies.		Substantially achieved: 63% of NISRA Staff Survey respondents stated that they had received the training necessary to develop their personal competences. Staff development has been supported through lunchtime seminars, bespoke professional training courses / programmes, generic training (available from CAL), the NISRA conference, other conferences / events and dissemination of relevant guidance and courses.

Quality			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(iii) To continue to implement prioritised improvements identified by the NISRA Staff Attitudes Surveys.	<p>HR Action Plan produced and progress against targets updated quarterly.</p> <p>NISRA Training Report.</p> <p>NISRA Staff Attitudes Survey.</p>	<p>Achieved: HR Action plan updated following 2015-16 Staff Attitudes Survey and progress monitored.</p> <p>A Task and Finish Group was set up following the 2015-16 staff survey to examine the results in more detail and determine what actions could be taken to improve staff engagement and make NISRA a more desirable place to work. The group produced a report in March 2017 and presented to Agency Board in April 2017 with suggestions for improvements.</p> <p>The 2016-17 NISRA Staff Attitudes survey was carried out in January/ February 2017.</p>
	(iv) To improve NISRA's employee engagement score.	<p>NISRA Staff Attitudes Survey.</p> <p>HR Action Plan produced and progress against targets updated quarterly.</p>	<p>Achieved: The NISRA employee engagement score was 57 in 2016-17, a small increase from 2015-6 when it was 54.</p> <p>The (2015-16) Staff Survey Task & Finish group met throughout 2016-17 and produced a findings and suggestions report in March 2017.</p> <p>HR Action plan updated and progress monitored.</p>

Quality			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(v) To have at least 85% of statisticians attending lunchtime seminars.	NISRA Staff Attitudes Survey.	Substantially achieved: 82% of statisticians who responded to the staff survey stated that they had attended a lunchtime seminar.
	(vi) To have at least 25% of statisticians participating in a working group (including STEM and peer review).	NISRA Staff Attitudes Survey.	Achieved: 31% of statisticians who responded to the staff survey stated that they had participating in a working group. This included STEM and peer review.
Q2: To ensure outputs are produced to the highest professional and methodological standards.	(vii) To achieve National Statistics designation / redesignation for all products assessed by the UK Statistics Authority for compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, where an assessment outcome is declared within the year.	All assessed products obtain successful National Statistics designation / redesignation where an assessment outcome is declared within the year.	<p>Achieved: During 2016-17, the following statistics received designation / re-designation as National Statistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population Estimates and Projections for NI – August 2016 • NI Road Safety Strategy to 2020: Annual Statistical Report – September 2016 • NI House Conditions Survey – March 2017 <p>No outputs have failed to achieve NS designation / redesignation in 2017-18.</p>

Quality			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(viii) To progress National Statistics assessments by the UK Statistics Authority of NISRA statistics during 2016-17.	Number of National Statistics assessments of NISRA statistics progressed by March 2017.	<p>Achieved: Alongside those products which received National Statistics designation in 2016-17, a further three National Statistics assessments / re-assessments were progressed during 2016-17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Statistics • NI Crime and Justice Survey • NI House Price Index <p>Priorities for National Statistics assessments for 2017-18, and beyond, were also discussed with the Office for Statistics Regulation.</p>

Quality			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(ix) To refocus the balance of statistical activity with greater emphasis on explanation and dissemination of the information contained in statistics compared with the collection and management of official data.	<p>Number of bulletins peer reviewed</p> <p>Examples of infographics and data visualisations developed by NISRA branches.</p> <p>Contextual information available as part of (or alongside) statistical products to aid understanding.</p>	<p>Achieved: A total of 14 NISRA publications were reviewed by the third cohort of reviewers, with 4 of these completed during 2016-17.</p> <p>Infographics and data visualisations are widely utilised throughout NISRA, in internal reports, briefing papers and external publications. Interactive maps and interactive web content are also produced by several branches. A video with interesting facts and Top 10 names was released with the Baby Names release and was picked up by several online newspapers. Examples of areas where new infographics and data visualisations were published in 2016-17 include the Registrar General Annual Report, Population statistics, District Council Community Plans, DoJ statistics, Health statistics, NICS HR statistics, Tourism Statistics, NI Transport statistics, NI Road Safety statistics and DE statistics.</p> <p>NISRA statisticians have introduced and improved contextual information in many publications. For example, contextual information was included in Greenhouse Gas Emissions on Northern Ireland Dairy Farms and additional sections on the profile of victims were included in the Annual Crime Trends bulletin.</p>

Quality			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(x) To implement the quality guidance across NISRA.	<p>Experience of implementing quality guidance in 2015-16 reviewed.</p> <p>Quality training arranged to support implementation of Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD) guidance.</p> <p>Information disseminated through the quality pages of the website, STARzine and other corporate communications.</p> <p>Evidence of implementation of quality guidance in NISRA branches.</p>	<p>Achieved: Training on Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD) toolkit was provided by the UK Statistics Authority in June 2016. A lunchtime seminar covering two branches experience of implementing the QAAD was held in November 2016.</p> <p>A range of supporting documents for the QAAD toolkit was circulated to branches. Case examples provided by the ONS Quality centre included the quality document for the NI Driver and Vehicle Licence statistics. The National Statistics assessment team recommended the NI Population Estimates and Projections data quality document to producers. These documents were made available on the quality pages of the NISRA intranet, alongside the QAAD regulatory standard and QAAD toolkit. The September 2016 edition of STARzine included links to these documents (and the Population Estimates and Projections data quality document).</p> <p>A Quality risk assessment for all statistical outputs was carried out by every NISRA branch.</p> <p>NISRA statisticians continued to implement the quality guidance within their branches. This included updating Quality reports, applying the QAAD toolkit, publishing additional quality guidance and formalising and improving the documentation of Quality Assurance procedures.</p>

Trust			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
T1: To be trusted as an impartial and independent body.	(i) To achieve no less than 96% of key users rating NISRA's services as satisfactory.	Key user satisfaction level recorded in NISRA Customer Survey.	<p>Achieved: The 2016 customer survey was carried out in February 2017 and published in April 2017.</p> <p>Overall, 98% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by NISRA branches in 2016.</p>
	(ii) To engage proactively with users throughout 2016-17 to ensure that users needs are identified, considered and where possible met.	Producers to report annually to NISRA Statistical Support and Business Planning (SSBP) branch on user engagement completed and how the user needs identified have been taken forward.	<p>Achieved: Branches engaged widely with both internal and external users throughout 2016-17. Examples include engagement with policy colleagues (as part of the business planning process and in the development of PfG indicators); DfE Statisticians visiting Further Education Colleges and training organisations; Census establishing topic expert groups ahead of the 2021 Census; ongoing engagement with key stakeholders as part of the local council Community Planning process; PSNI Statisticians taking part in a "Stop and Search Information Day"; and DE statisticians consulting users on the Pupil Projections and the Compendium of Statistics.</p>

Trust			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
		<p>Number of SCG meetings held per annum. SCG agenda reflects cross-departmental issues.</p> <p>% of National Statistics released through the Gov.UK Release Calendar.</p> <p>Number of Official Statistics released through the Gov.UK Release Calendar.</p> <p>NISRA Customer Survey carried out.</p>	<p>A Statistics Co-ordinating Group meeting was held in October 2016. The agenda included various cross-Departmental issues including an update on the new Multiple Deprivation Measures and the 2021 Census.</p> <p>All National Statistics and some Official Statistics (48 publications) are currently released through the Gov.UK Release Calendar.</p> <p>A NISRA User Engagement Best Practice Guidance Document was produced and circulated to NISRA branches in September 2016.</p> <p>The 2016 customer survey was carried in February 2017. The report was published in April 2017.</p>
	(iv) To comply with Data Protection and ICO policy and legislation.	<p>Reported cases of unauthorised disclosure of personal/sensitive information.</p> <p>Completed Stewardship statements by Agency Board members.</p>	<p>Achieved: No Data Protection breaches have occurred during the cycle</p> <p>Stewardship statements completed by Agency Board members.</p>

Trust			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(v) To maintain public confidence in Official Statistics.	<p>Breaches of the Code of Practice investigated and action taken to prevent reoccurrence.</p> <p>Confirmed breaches notified to SAC and ARC.</p> <p>National Statistics designation / redesignation achieved for assessments (declared within the year).</p> <p>Relevant guidance supporting the Code of Practice disseminated to branches.</p> <p>Public Confidence in Official Statistics (PCOS) survey carried out and results published.</p> <p>At least 80% of respondents to the PCOS survey “trust or trust greatly” the statistics produced by NISRA.</p>	<p>Achieved: There were 10 breaches of the Code of Practice during 2016-17. Four of these related to an issue with the timing of the release (statistics not made available at exactly 9.30am) [Protocol 2; Practice 4] while the remaining six related to breaches of pre-release access [Protocol 2; Practice 8]. All breaches were fully investigated and actions taken to minimise the risk of a reoccurrence.</p> <p>Confirmed breaches were reported to the Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC) and to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC).</p> <p>All three National Statistics assessments (declared within 2016-17) achieved National Statistics designation / redesignation.</p> <p>New or revised guidance supporting the Code of Practice disseminated to branches included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA User Engagement Best Practice Guidance • Guidance for Senior Statisticians on Pre-Release Access and breach reporting • Communicating uncertainty and change: Guidance for official statistics producers

Trust			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Statistician’s Guidance: Management Information and Official Statistics Releasing statistics in spreadsheets: Good practice guidance <p>The Public Confidence in Official Statistics (PCOS) survey was carried out in October 2016. The results were published in February 2017, in a renamed report ‘Public Awareness of and Trust in Official Statistics 2016’</p> <p>84% of respondents to the PCOS survey stated that they “tend to trust” or “trust a great deal” the statistics produced by NISRA. This percentage increased to 94% for those respondents who had heard of NISRA.</p>

Governance / Management			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
G1: To ensure the Agency is well managed according to existing policies and procedures.	(i) To hold at least three Agency Board meetings, three Senior Management Forum (SMF) meetings, three Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meetings and at least 1 Statistics Coordinating Group (SCG) meeting by end March 2017.	Three Agency Board meetings held. Three Senior Management Forum meetings held. Three ARC meetings held. One SCG meeting held.	Achieved: Three Agency Board meetings were held in 2016-7. Senior Management Forum (SMF) meetings were held in June 2016 and January 2017. Due to problems with speaker availability the November 2016 and February 2017 meetings were combined into a single (extended) event in January 2017. Three ARC meetings were held and one Statistics Co-ordinating group meeting.
	(ii) To provide support to the Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC).	SAC meetings held. SAC agenda and minutes.	Achieved: Three Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings were held during 2016-17.
	(iii) To have draft 3/5 year NISRA Corporate Plan prepared by end March 2017. (Dependent on DoF)	Draft prepared.	Not Achieved: This process has only started for DoF, and thus has not been completed for DoF or NISRA. This will be carried over to the next financial year.
	(iv) To support the DoF Information Assurance Target ⁶ .	NISRA DoF Information Assurance Work Programme. (NISRA DoF) Information Risk Schedule	Achieved: Work on completing and maintaining the NISRA DFP Information Assurance Work Programme was ongoing throughout 2016-17. NISRA updated the on-line DoF Information Asset Register.

⁶ Maintain Level 3 compliance with the “HMG Information Assurance (IA) Maturity Model and Assessment Framework” during 2016-17.

Governance / Management			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(v) To secure a positive audit report on risk management, and manage risk appropriately.	<p>Level of assurance provided.</p> <p>Completed Stewardship statements by Agency Board members.</p>	<p>Achieved: All financial procedures adhered to. Risk Register monitored and updated regularly as required.</p> <p>Internal Audit reported that Ministerial Targets for 2015-16 had been accurately reported by the Agency.</p> <p>Internal Audit have issued one report during the year which provided a satisfactory assurance opinion. Internal Audit carried out a follow up audit on GRO (IA 49/15), and reported that all nine of the recommendations have been closed.</p> <p>Internal Audit has provided a satisfactory assurance opinion for the Agency for 2016-17.</p>
	(vi) To have no overspend and an underspend not greater than 2.5% within baseline allocation.	<p>Level of overspend and underspend.</p>	<p>Substantially Achieved: The Agency recorded an underspend for the year of 3.5%. This was due to an unexpected and large increase in birth certificate requests following the Brexit vote, resulting in increased revenue for GRO. Despite the reallocation of funds, this led to a higher underspend.</p> <p>DoF did not set any targets for underspend for business areas for 2016-17.</p>

Governance / Management			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(vii) To manage the move of all NISRA DoF staff from their current locations to Colby House.	<p>Respond to Properties Division requests promptly.</p> <p>Obtain quarterly updates on progress of project.</p> <p>Consider internal staff workstreams to deliver decant.</p> <p>Remove all non-essential documents to offsite storage location.</p> <p>Reduce on site file volumes to match capacity in new building.</p> <p>Issues identified taken forward.</p>	<p>Achieved: NISRA DoF staff successfully relocated from four sites to Colby House within required timeframe.</p> <p>Off-site storage facility set up and maintained via contract.</p> <p>Staff issues represented via Colby House Liaison Group.</p>

Governance / Management			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(viii) Senior management to support branches in the management of the impact of the Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) and Departmental restructuring as it affects NISRA.	<p>Completion of all steps necessary by NISRA HR (in line with current procedures) to fill existing or new vacancies which have been approved.</p> <p>Completion of all steps necessary by NISRA HR (in line with current procedures) to manage issues arising as a consequence of VES or departmental rescheduling.</p> <p>Corporate improvement reviews of Business Areas within NISRA finalised and recommendations implemented to ensure the correct resources are available to carry out the required work.</p> <p>Branches restructured as required to ensure that key functions can continue to be delivered.</p> <p>New question on Staff Attitudes Survey 2016.</p>	<p>Achieved: Senior management continued to support branches in dealing with the impact of change resulting from VES and departmental restructuring.</p> <p>Branch reviews were carried out as required to implement efficiencies. Business case approval procedures for posts were put in place and headcount monitored.</p> <p>Vacancies were advertised and elective transfers facilitated. Agency staff were acquired, as required, in order to facilitate branch shortfalls. A recruitment competition for Assistant Statisticians was held in the latter part of the financial year.</p> <p>80% of NISRA Staff Survey respondents had no opinion or agreed that Senior management supported branches in the management of VES and 90% had no opinion or agreed that Senior management supported branches in the management of Departmental restructuring.</p>

Governance / Management			
Objective	Targets	Measures	Outcomes
	(ix) To manage sickness absence in line with targets, processes and standards set by the Department of Finance (DoF).	Monthly / annual absence reports.	Achieved: Managers followed departmental procedures with regard to recording and monitoring of staff sickness absences. Early interventions were implemented in order to keep staff in work, and if necessary reasonable adjustments were implemented. To further supplement this, regular meetings were held between NISRA HR and DoF Business Partners.
	(x) 90% of staff to have completed on time Personal Performance Agreements (PPA) and Personal Development Plans (PDP) and have them assessed as 'Agreed' on HR Connect.	HR Connect Performance Management Reports.	Not Achieved: 51% of PPAs/ PDPs were created / agreed by the due date of 31 May 2016.
	(xi) 90% of In-year performance reviews for 2016-17 to be completed on time and recorded on HR Connect.	HR Connect Performance Management Reports.	Not Achieved: 31% of in-year reviews were completed / agreed in the available progress report, a week before the due date 31 October 2016.

OFFICIAL STATISTICS WORK PROGRAMME

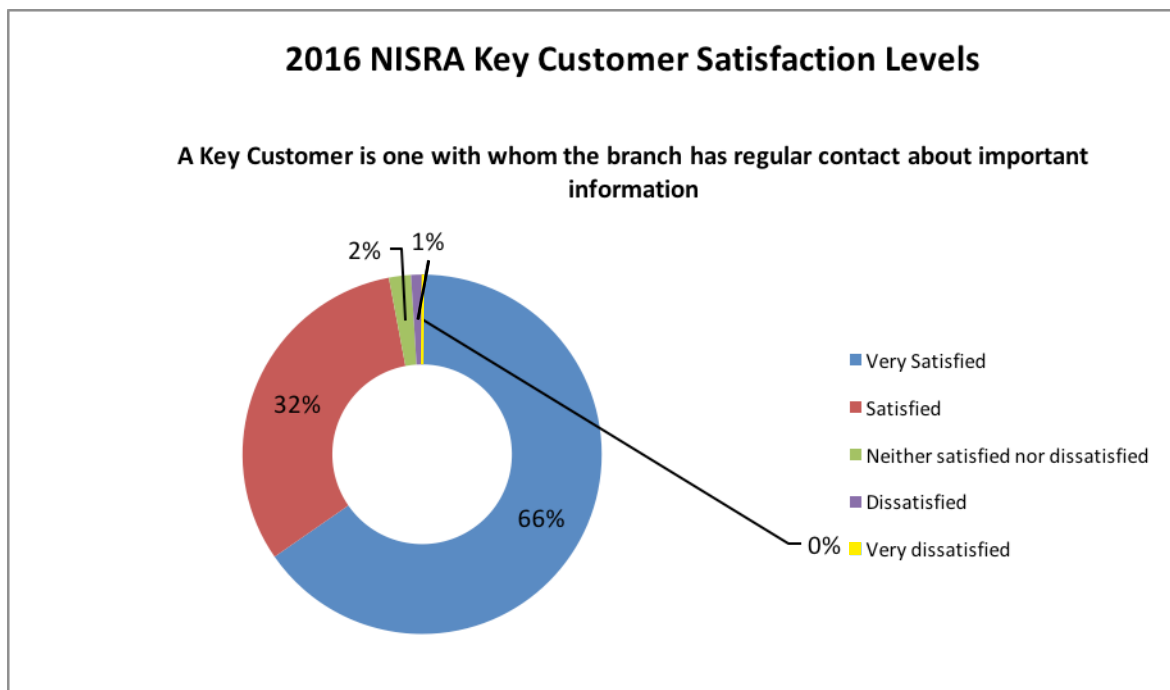
During 2016-17 NISRA carried out a programme of work relating to Official Statistics. This can be found in NISRA's Business Plan 2016-17⁷. NISRA's Official Statistics work programme outlines NISRA's main National and Official Statistics outputs, alongside development work related to these outputs. It also covers NISRA's research function including several research publications and a number of ad-hoc research projects. Several high level projects related to NISRA's Civil Registration function are also detailed.

CUSTOMERS

NISRA is committed to improving its service to customers, including other Northern Ireland departments. This is managed and monitored through a series of Service Level Agreements and Concordats.

Customer Satisfaction

NISRA Customer Satisfaction Survey questionnaires were administered to key customers to ascertain whether Agency staff had delivered the service required of them to a satisfactory standard. The results of the survey showed that 98% of customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided (66% reported they were 'very satisfied').



⁷ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/business-planning>

GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE OPERATIONS

The new Northern Ireland Registration Office System (NIROS) introduced in early 2016 has improved both the turnaround times and accuracy for the production of certificates for postal, telephone and in particular on-line customers.

Between April 2016 and March 2017 the General Register Office (GRO) processed 141,968 certificate applications, which was an overall increase of 128.5% on the previous year. The target for issuing priority certificates was achieved; however the target for issue of standard certificates within 5 working days was unfortunately not met. This was due to the increased demand, in particular the unexpected increase of birth certificate applications for Irish Passports after the Brexit vote.

If the NIROS system had not been in place GRO would not have met either of the targets or been able to provide the quality service it did at an extremely busy time.

Additionally, GRO processed over 2,908 registration related cases, including re-registrations, adoptions, name changes and corrections. The target of 97% within 15 working days was exceeded.

In September 2016 four terminals were installed in the PRONI search room which extended GRO search room facilities to another Belfast location. This facility offers the PRONI visitors access to all official birth, death and marriage records not just the historical records which can be viewed remotely.

Over 10,895 new accounts were registered on the GRO Family History website. There

were 1,324,248 searches carried out – the most popular being the free index search which accounted for 1,161,804 searches. There were 1,106,835 credits purchased by on-line users with 517,372 credits used for the enhanced and full index searches.

OFFICIAL STATISTICS ISSUES

The UK Statistics Authority, which was established on 1 April 2008, is an independent body operating at arm's length from government with a statutory objective to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. In order to preserve and enhance the integrity and levels of public confidence in official statistics, arrangements were made for the provisions of the Statistics and Registration Service Act to extend to Northern Ireland to allow the UK Statistics Authority to operate here.

NISRA is committed to complying with the principles of the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Official Statistics⁸, published in 2009. Compliance with the Code is a statutory requirement on bodies that produce statistics that have been designated as National Statistics. For other Official Statistics the Code is adhered to as a matter of good practice. During 2016-17 the Agency continued to roll out guidance and advice to help support the implementation of the Code of Practice in Northern Ireland and reduce the likelihood of breaches occurring.

Throughout 2016-17 the UK Statistics Authority continued to monitor compliance with the Code of Practice as part of its Assessment Programme. A number of NISRA's National Statistics and some of its

⁸ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/code-of-practice>

Official Statistics products were assessed for compliance with the Code of Practice, and all of those where an outcome was declared within the year were successfully accredited/reaccredited as National Statistics. A summary of the 2016-17 NISRA assessment programme is given below.

	Department/ Body	Assessment	Status
1.	DoF	Re-assessment of Population Estimates and Projections for NI	Complete
2.	DfI	NI Road Safety Strategy to 2020: Annual Statistical Report	Complete
3.	NIHE	NI House Conditions Survey	Complete
4.	DoF	NI Tourism Statistics	Almost complete
5.	DoJ	Re-assessment of NI Crime and Justice Survey	On-going
6.	DoF	NI House Price Index	On-going

Assessment reports can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority's website](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publications-list/?keyword=&type=assessment-report&theme=&producer=&date=)⁹.

Breaches of the Official Statistics Code of Practice

During 2016-17 there were 10 reported breaches of the Code of Practice as outlined below. Four of these related to an issue with the timing of the release (statistics not made available at exactly 9.30am) [Protocol 2; Practice 4] while the remaining six related to breaches of pre-release access [Protocol 2; Practice 8].

⁹ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publications-list/?keyword=&type=assessment-report&theme=&producer=&date=>

1. DoJ - Crown Court Bulletin January to March 2016 and Magistrates Court Bulletin January to March 2016	A member of the Department of Justice (DoJ) with the same name as a person on the pre-release access list received a pre-release copy of the publications in error. This occurred as the outlook email lists were being updated by IT Assist and the correct person on the pre-release list had been removed from the email list in error. [Protocol 2; Practice 8]
2. DoF (DS) - Population projections for areas within Northern Ireland (2014-based)	An email containing a zip file of 20 tables was sent accidentally to an official in Fermanagh and Omagh District council on 13 May 2016. The email was intended for an internal recipient within the dissemination section of the production team. However, the email system auto-filled the email recipient to a recent contact within the sender's mailbox. The IT department deleted the email from the official's email account prior to the recipient returning from leave so the contents of the email were not viewed. [Protocol 2; Practice 8]
3. PPS - NI Statistical Bulletin Quarter 1 2016-17 (April to June 2016)	The publication was not uploaded onto the website until 9.55am. This was due to both staff (in the PPS Communication team) who had the appropriate authority and access to upload the publication not being available on the day and a delay in the backup person (from the IT section) becoming available. The short term unavailability of IT staff was due to the relocation of staff to a new office which occurred in the same week. [Protocol 2; Practice 4]
4. NI Libraries - Participation in Core & Regular Library Activities in Northern Ireland 2015-16	The publication was not uploaded onto the website by the Marketing Department until 9.50am. This was due to human error in failing to implement the agreed document upload procedures on time and address any potential website permissions issues in advance. [Protocol 2; Practice 4]
5. AFBI - Pesticide usage survey report: Edible protected crops 2015 and outdoor vegetable crops 2015	Owing to a technical difficulty, the reports were not issued until 9.50am. An automated deadline attribute, which is set in the website's content management system, did not activate as expected. When the error was discovered, the upload was completed manually. [Protocol 2; Practice 4]

6. DoF (ELMS) - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2016	The DfE Press Office issue a daily media update email which outlines the press releases that day. At the bottom of this detailed email it contained a sentence on the Minister's reaction to the release of the ASHE statistics "Economy Minister welcomes increase in weekly earnings for full time employees". This email is normally sent after 9.30am. However due to the small number of DfE relevant press articles in the media that day and the busy nature of their work the email was issued 10 minutes earlier than usual at 9.20am. [Protocol 2; Practice 8]
7. DoH (PHIRB) - Health Survey (NI) first results 2015-16	A number of DoH policy officials were granted pre-release access to the report. During the pre-release access period briefing/lines to take were shared with an official within the team that had not been granted pre-release access. [Protocol 2; Practice 8]
8. DfI - Cycling and Walking to/ from Work in Northern Ireland 2015/2016	A pre-release access recipient acknowledged receipt of the publication, Ministerial submission and statistical press release (attaching the original email) and in doing so copied in additional recipients who had not been granted pre-release access. All officials who received the email in error deleted it from their mailbox without opening it. [Protocol 2; Practice 8]
9. DoF (Tourism) - Northern Ireland Tourism Statistics October 2015-September 2016	A DfE official (on the PRA list) issued an email to officials which indicated the numerical direction of the new tourism statistics. This e-mail was sent to some officials on the list but also to four other senior officials not on the pre-release list. The four officials opened and read the e-mail but did not take any action or forward to anyone else. When they were made aware of the breach they deleted the email. [Protocol 2; Practice 8]
10. DoF (HRCS) - Analysis of NI Civil Service Recruitment Competitions	The link to the publication didn't appear on the website until 9.57am. The delay was due to a technical issue with the new NISRA website in that the link was published at 9:30 am but indexing to that link on the website did not update until 27 minutes later (due to cache/refresh issues) [Protocol 2; Practice 4]

Full details of the breaches will be published on the [UK Statistics Authority's website](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/breach-reports/index.html)¹⁰.

All ten breaches were investigated and actions taken, as far as possible, to minimise the possibility of a re-occurrence. There is no evidence that any of the breaches had a significant impact. NISRA Statistical Support and Business Planning (SSBP) branch continues to roll out advice and guidance on the Code and its implementation.

¹⁰ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/breach-reports/index.html>

COMMUNICATION

The Agency has in place a Communication Strategy and associated Action Plan for the 3-year period 2015-16 to 2017-18.

NISRA aspires to be an organisation that will deliver professionally presented, meaningful, easily understood statistics delivered in ways users find easy to access, use, understand and re-use. The Communication Strategy aims to improve public debate through full integration with social and multi-media with well written narrative promulgated through channels that maximize audience reach. The Agency will work towards improving its websites with meaningful and interactive content and progressing the Open Data agenda with the release of datasets that under-pin the statistics.

During 2016-17, a new NISRA website was launched. The new website provides easier access to a range of statistics and supporting documentation, it has an improved search function and responsive design for mobile browsers.

NISRA disseminates local statistics through the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) website. The NINIS website hosts over 2,600 datasets across a range of themes with 88% of new datasets added in 2016-17 being in 3* Open Data format. During 2016-17 the NINIS homepage was also refreshed and allows users to quickly navigate to the Statistics theme pages.

NISRA continue to disseminate statistics through social media channels including NISRA Twitter, ELMS Twitter, NISRA Facebook and NISRA YouTube channel. These accounts contain standardized banners with the new NISRA logos. During 2016-17 the NISRA

twitter account also obtained the Twitter blue verified badge which lets people know that the account is authentic. During 2016-17 the social media channels their increased followers, likes and views:

	At 31 March 2017
NISRA Twitter followers	3,841
ELMS Twitter followers	3,051
NISRA Facebook Likes	836
NISRA YouTube Views	832

During 2016-17 the Agency has also been active in improving internal communications among all its staff including those outposted to departmental branches. Staff were also kept informed of professional issues through the 'STARzine' internal magazine. This was issued 3 times over the year. The Agency has also started to explore new technologies to establish an internal discussion forum, with the piloting of the Sharepoint platform. Other platforms will also be examined.

Agency Publications

The Agency has continued to disseminate official statistics and research findings through the publication of reports and statistical press releases in both hard copy and electronic formats. Details of the Agency's research and statistical publications are on the [NISRA website](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics)¹¹.

11 <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics>

INFORMATION

NISRA is an information based business. The service it delivers to customers, whether internal or external, depends on how well it can create and use information to aid decision making and analysis, and thereby meet its business objectives. This information needs to be recorded and stored in a shared area that allows easy access, and published in an appropriate manner.

NISRA is committed to increasing the amount of data released in open and re-usable formats in the production of its statistical outputs. NISRA continues to publish high value datasets on the OpenDataNI portal.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

During 2016-17 NISRA's Business Area Information Manager (BAIM) together with the NISRA Information Asset Owners (IAOs) provided advice and guidance on data and record management in line with the Data Protection (DP) Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 legislative requirement, which ensured Information Assurance compliance remained a priority across NISRA. To facilitate compliance DoF NISRA produced Data Protection Action Plans / Work Programmes, completed Data Protection Checklists in September 2016 and March 2017 and reviewed branch procedures for staff handling personal information. All staff completed the mandatory 'Managing Information Effectively' on-line training, which incorporates Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations, with branch specific Data Protection training provided as required. Data Sharing Agreements are in place with details held on a departmental register. Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) have

been completed when required and further guidance has been issued to IAOs relating to PIAs. NISRA have also provided input to the on line DoF Information Asset Register. Data Protection Compliance Checklists have been completed for Third Party Suppliers, to ensure they are handling personal information appropriately.

NISRA's DoF branches have contributed to the core Department maintaining Level 3 compliance of the Information Assurance Maturity Model. NISRA's Information Asset Owners (IAOs) provide annual input to the Senior Information Risk Owner on the security and use of their information asset and provide Information Assurance Stewardship Statements twice yearly, which are recorded in the NISRA Governance Statement.

DoF NISRA has provided input in to the new DoF Retention and Disposal Schedule, which identifies the disposal arrangements for all records created by DoF NISRA and the Department of Finance. The Schedule complies with the requirements of the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 and the Disposal of Documents Order (S.R. & O. 1925 No.167).

HUMAN RESOURCES

NISRA continues to meet its business needs through effective workforce planning, people selection and performance management. The Agency maintains a skilled and motivated workforce created through a culture of nurtured career development and well managed personal development plans. During 2016-17 NISRA Corporate Services (Human Resources):

- carried out an Assistant Statistician recruitment competition;

- initiated a Deputy Principal Statistician promotion competition;
- carried out a Principal Statistician trawl;
- initiated a Senior Principal Statistician promotion competition;
- managed vacancies;
- managed staff transfers;
- managed staff performance issues;
- monitored performance reporting;
- attended Local Whitley Meetings;
- participated in DoF wide HR projects;
- contributed to DoF workforce monitoring and reporting;
- commissioned a staff survey;
- led a task/finish group to address issues identified by the staff survey;
- maintained up-to-date HR information dissemination via NISRAnet; and
- produced and disseminated the Agency Brief (monthly).

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

NISRA continues to meet the development needs of its staff through the delivery of their training requirements recorded in Personal Development Plans (PDPs), incorporating both generic courses, as supplied by the Centre for Applied Learning, and specific NISRA development courses.

NISRA Training

During 2016-17 the NISRA Staff Development Group prioritised NISRA statistical training according to the results of the NISRA staff statistical training survey.

A full list of the courses delivered is given below.

NISRA Courses provided in 2016-17

Course	Delivered by
Statistical Foundation Course	NISRA Staff
Quality Assurance of Administrative Data	UK Statistics Authority
Outcomes Based Accountability	NISRA Staff
Focus Groups	The Centre
Record Linkage	NISRA Staff
Statistical Disclosure Control	NISRA Staff
Adobe Illustrator	Mullan Training Belfast
Communicating Uncertainty & Change	ONS
Edit & Imputation	ONS
Administrative Data	ONS
Time Series	ONS
Weighting & Estimation	ONS
Inspirational Leadership	Inspire Training
Personal Impact & Presence	CMT

ONS: Office for National Statistics

NISRA also ran a training programme to up-skill 10 statisticians in data science/analytics. This ran between November 2016 and March 2017 and covered a range of new data science approaches and software.

Generic courses attended

NISRA staff attended a variety of departmental generic training courses during 2016-17 which included:

Personal Resilience
 Evaluating Policy
 TRIM Power User
 Leading through Engagement
 Leading to Deliver Results
 Presentation Skills
 Assembly Questions
 Adapting to Change
 Tender Evaluation
 Evaluating Policy
 Principles of Project Management

Lunchtime Seminars

During 2016-17 the following lunchtime seminars were held:

Presentation	Speaker	Business Area
Fact Checkers	Alexios Mantzarlis	Poynter
Challenges of New Geographies	Jos Ijpelaar	NISRA Staff
Data Science in NISRA	Carmel Colohan	NISRA Staff
New NI Registration System	Noel McDonnell	NISRA Staff
Statistics: a data science for the 21st Century	Professor Peter Diggle	RSS President
The Power of Data	Heather Savory	ONS
NISRA Showcase		
A NISRA Experience of QAAD	Richard Elliott, Manny Fitzpatrick	NISRA Staff
Using Understanding Society for research & policy	Raj Patel & Michaela Benzeval	Understanding Society
Politifact	Bill Adair	Politifact

QAAD: Quality Assurance of Admin Data Regulatory Standard (produced by the UK Statistics Authority)

RSS: Royal Statistical Society

ONS: Office for National Statistics

EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEER SCHEME

The Agency aims to encourage and support the voluntary work of staff that will bring benefit to the community. To this end NISRA continued to support the Employer Supported Volunteer (ESV) Scheme throughout 2016-17. ESV is organised by the Voluntary Service Bureau and aims to help organisations to contribute to their community by involving employees as volunteers to complete 'Challenges' for local voluntary and community organisations.

In 2016-17 NISRA staff participated in the following events:

DESCRIPTION OF TASK / EVENT	RECEIVING CHARITY	BRANCH TAKING TASK / EVENT FORWARD	COMPLETION DATE	AMOUNT RECEIVED
Hug in a mug	Cancer fund for Children	Corporate Services	25/04/2016	£322.00
Collection box at reception	Cancer Focus NI	Corporate services	Ongoing	Charity shop collection
Wearing denim	Jeans for Genes	Corporate Services	23/09/2016	£142.51
Children's gift collection	Action for Children NI (through BITC Cares@ Christmas)	Corporate services	09/12/2016	£578.95
Ink cartridge recycling	Cancer Focus NI	Corporate services	Ongoing	Ongoing
Collection at NISRA Conference	Habitat for Humanity NI	Corporate services	29/03/2017	£45.00
			Total	£1,088.46

During 2016-17 NISRA continued as a STEMnet¹² organisation in conjunction with W5.

¹² STEMNET is a UK wide initiative which creates opportunities to inspire young people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Agency is committed to adhering to all existing legislation with respect to health and safety at work to ensure that staff and customers enjoy the benefits of a safe environment.

A policy statement entitled “Health and Safety Policy Statement, Organisation and Other Arrangements” was circulated to all staff in 2010 and is also available on the intranet. This outlines the Department of Finance’s commitment to Health and Safety and makes clear its obligations to staff. It also informs staff of their responsibilities under the Health and Safety legislation.

Health and Safety Advice is provided by the Departmental Health and Safety Advisor who provides support on all aspects of health and safety at work for staff in the Department, including NISRA staff

During 2016-17 one accident was recorded and reported to DoF HR. DoF have not received any indication that a potential financial liability may arise because of this incident.

Two planned practice fire evacuations of McAuley House took place during which evacuation of all staff was completed satisfactorily.

General Risk Assessments for McAuley House were conducted on a regular basis.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

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

	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
	£000	£000	£000
Income from sale of goods and services	(6,688)	(6,211)	(7,483)
Other operating income	(8,972)	(8,770)	(9,102)
Total operating income	(15,660)	(14,981)	(16,585)
Staff costs	19,210	20,356	19,893
Purchase of goods and services	2,483	2,715	2,678
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,306	1,089	739
Provision expense	–	–	14
Other operating expenditure	4,496	3,889	4,072
Total operating expenditure	27,495	28,049	27,396
Net expenditure for the year	11,835	13,068	10,811

The net resource expenditure for the year, excluding non cash expenditure, was £9.35m against the closing budget position of £9.69m. This underspend was due to a number of factors including an unforeseen increase in income generated from birth certificate sales within the General Register Office. This increase has been attributed to the result of the UK referendum on EU membership. Financial provisions held in relation to the Agency's relocation to Colby House were not required.

The Agency employed an average of 424 staff during the year ended 31 March 2017 and total staff costs were £19,210m (2015-16: £20,356m). The decrease is mainly as a result of a reduction of 35 in average staff numbers from year ended 31 March 2016, following the voluntary exit scheme.

Other operating expenditure has increased to £4,496m (£3,889m) mainly as costs begin to be incurred on preparation for Census 2021 and increased support costs for upgraded IT systems with the General Register Office.

The Agency has been allocated an indicative opening budget of £10.5m. This includes additional funding of £1.0m towards costs of Census 2021.

LONG TERM EXPENDITURE TREND

	2016-17 Outturn £000	2015-16 Outturn £000	2014-15 Outturn £000
Total Resource DEL	25,014	25,504	24,852
Of which:			
Staff costs	19,210	20,356	19,893
Other	4,498	4,059	4,220
Depreciation and impairment charges	1,306	1,089	739
Total Resource AME	-	-	14
Of which:			
Provision expense	-	-	14

In 2016-17 the decrease is mainly because there were no VES compensation payments and also due to a decrease in staff costs following the VES scheme.

In 2017-18 the Agency has been allocated an additional £1.0m to take forward preparatory and testing work for Census 2021. Census funding will continue to increase until completion of the Census with bids made for £2m additional funding for 2018-19 and £3m additional funding for 2019-20.

AUDITORS

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

The audit of the financial statements for 2016-17 resulted in a notional audit fee of £10,000 (2015-16: £10,000) and is included in the operating expenditure in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

During 2016-17 the Agency did not purchase any non-audit services from its auditor.

EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

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

PAYMENT TO SUPPLIERS

The Agency's policy is to pay bills from all suppliers within 10 working days of receipt of the goods or performance of the services following receipt of a properly rendered invoice or in accordance with contractual conditions, whichever is the earlier.

During the financial year, the Agency achieved an average of 76% (2015-16: 93%) of invoices paid to suppliers within 10 working days. The Agency achieved an average of 93% (2015-16: 98%) of invoices paid within 30 calendar days.

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

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

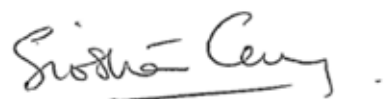
NISRA will continue to follow DoF guidance as set out in the Department's Sustainable Development Action Plan, which outlines the strategic objectives and targets including:

- installation of renewable technologies;
- conservation of fuel and power;
- streamlining of the office accommodation portfolio and the meeting of higher thermal standards;
- improved recycling of waste; and
- taking account of sustainable development principles when procuring works, supplies and services.

NISRA (Colby House) continues to implement a Waste Management Action Plan which, in keeping with the DoF Action Plan, focuses on paper as the dominant waste stream. A number of measures have been implemented including: discouraging routine printing of e-mails; promoting full usage of TRIM; encouraging double sided photocopying / printing; and using recycled paper. Receptacles have also been made available to facilitate recycling of paper, tin cans, plastic containers, paper towels, envelopes, magazines and empty printer cartridges.

During 2016-17, 83 x 50 litre bags of plastic cartons, 16 x 50 litre bags of tin cans, 67 x 50 litre bags of magazines, 23 x 50 litre bags of envelopes, 178 x 50 litre bags of paper towels, 127 x 50 litre bags of pre-shredded paper and 155 x 50 litre bags of both confidential and general office paper were recycled. These figures represent significant reductions in waste from previous years.

This Performance Report is approved and signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siobhan Carey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Siobhan Carey

Accounting Officer, Registrar General and
Chief Executive
23 June 2017

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

OVERVIEW

The Accountability Report comprises the following:

Corporate Governance Report

The purpose of the corporate governance report is to explain the composition and organisation of NISRA's governance structures and how they support the achievement of NISRA's objectives. It includes the Corporate Governance Report, the Remuneration and Staff Report and Assembly Accountability Disclosures.

Remuneration and Staff Report

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

Assembly Accountability and Audit Report

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

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Introduction

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) presents its Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2017.

Management

Ministerial responsibility for the Agency for the 2016-17 financial year rested with the Department of Finance (DoF). During this reporting period [from September 2016] Ms Siobhan Carey assumed the role of Registrar General and Chief Executive [and thereby Accounting Officer] and was responsible to the Minister for the management of the Agency's performance, operations and finances.

Agency Board

The Chief Executive was assisted in the management of the Agency by the NISRA Agency Board (AB) comprised of two Grade 5 Statisticians and seven Senior Principal Statisticians. The Board advises the Chief Executive on strategy and major issues of Agency policy and is responsible for ensuring the effective operation and performance of NISRA.

The Agency Board members during the year were as follows:

Ms S Carey	Registrar General and Chief Executive (September 2016 onwards)
Dr T Power	Director of Analysis
Dr D Marshall	Director of Sources

Mr R Beatty	Head of Census (retired June 2016, post vacant thereafter)
Mr D Rogers	Head of Regional Reporting & EU Programmes (retired July 2016, post suppressed thereafter)
Dr S Donnelly	Head of Analytical Services Unit DfE
Dr K Sweeney	Head of Central Survey Unit
Dr J Gillan	Head of Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch
Dr E Mooney	Head of Information and Analysis Directorate DoH
Mr B Green	Head of Demographic Statistics
Mrs M Crawford	Head of Analytical Services DfC
Mr A Fitzpatrick	Head of Information and Registration Unit BSO

A Senior Managers' Forum (SMF) comprised of Agency Board and Grade 7 statistical/administrative Heads of Branches supports and advises the Chief Executive in the formulation, implementation and review of Agency policies. The SMF is in turn supported by a series of working groups that deal with cross-Agency issues remitted to them by the Board.

Register of Interests

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

Pension Liabilities

The treatment of pension costs and liabilities is disclosed in the Remuneration and Staff Report and in the Accounting Policies note in the financial statements (Note 1.9).

Personal Data

The Agency remains fully committed to complying with the Data Protection Act 1998. DoF NISRA acts in accordance with a number of DoF policies to ensure the safe handling of personal information - the DoF Data Protection Policy, the DoF Information Security Policy, the DoF E-mail Management Policy and the DoF Data Sharing Agreements.

No reportable data breaches were identified between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017.

Reporting of Complaints

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

The Agency is responsible for keeping a register of complaints received and ensuring that these are investigated in line with DoF Complaints Procedures and appropriate responses are issued to the complainant. The Agency will also evaluate 'lessons learned' from individual cases and see if resulting improvements can be embedded into operating procedures.

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

In 2016-17 NISRA dealt with 31 complaints.

STATEMENT OF AGENCY'S AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under Section 11(2) of the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, the Department of Finance have directed the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency to prepare a statement of Accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The Accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the Agency's state of affairs, its income and expenditure, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

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

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department of Finance, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgments and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The Department of Finance has appointed the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency as the Accounting Officer for the Agency. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which an Accounting Officer is answerable, for the keeping of proper records and for safeguarding NISRA's assets, are set out in Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland (MPMNI) published by the Department of Finance.

So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Agency's auditors are unaware.

The Accounting Officer has taken all the steps necessary to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Agency's auditors are aware of that information.

The Accounting Office can confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable and that she takes personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

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

The Agency is governed under a model with the following responsibilities. The Accounting Officer is responsible to the Minister of DoF for the Agency's performance and operates in accordance with the NISRA Framework Document and its Business Plan:

- The Accounting Officer has responsibilities for the overall day-to-day leadership and management of the Agency, making regular reports to the Minister on performance and progress, and
- The Agency Management Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the Agency by reviewing its strategic direction, monitoring performance at corporate level and ensuring that adequate governance controls are in place. The Management Board comprises the Chief Executive and the twelve Senior Principal Statisticians of the Agency. The Management Board members are detailed in the Directors' Report on page 48. The Management Board met three times during the year and was attended as follows:

	17 May 2016	14 Sept 2016	17 Jan 2017
Ms S Carey	Appointed Sept 2016	✓	✓
Mr R Beatty	✓	Retired June 2016	✓
Mrs M Crawford	✓	✓	✓
Dr S Donnelly	✓	✓	
Mr A Fitzpatrick	✓	✓	✓
Dr J Gillan	✓	✓	✓
Mr B Green			✓
Dr D Marshall	✓	✓	✓
Dr E Mooney	✓		
Dr T Power	✓	✓	✓
Mr D Rogers	✓	Retired June 2016	
Dr K Sweeney	✓	✓	✓

The Governance Statement, which has been agreed by the Agency Board, sets out how these responsibilities have been discharged throughout the year to 31 March 2017.

Context

The context is how NISRA governance arrangements are required to operate, as set out in the current Programme for Government 2011-15. These strategic priorities set the focus for all Northern Ireland Departments.

NISRA is part of DoF. The overall aim of DoF is 'to help the Executive secure the most appropriate and effective use of resources and services for the benefit of the community'.

The work we do makes a significant and positive difference to the everyday lives of all the citizens of Northern Ireland. We provide and support public services, by:

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

Financial Management

The Agency Board plays a significant part in the effective monitoring and management of the Agency's financial performance. NISRA regularly reviews actual income and expenditure against budget to form the basis of collective Agency Board decisions regarding the allocation and use of resource to ensure that the NISRA financial management target of avoiding overspend.

Detailed monthly financial management reports are prepared for the agency budget holders and monthly summary financial reports

are prepared for the departmental board. In addition a financial report is prepared for the regular meetings of the Agency Board.

This enables management to monitor the financial position of the Agency and to assess the extent to which any corrective action may be required to address the Agency's financial position.

Risk and Control Framework

Risk management within NISRA continues to be an integral part of our business planning process. This includes identification of risk, assignment of ownership, presentation of the risk, mitigation, management, evaluation and review.

The Corporate Risk Register is an integral part of NISRA Risk Management policy and approach. The Risk Register records the status of each high level risk and the actions being taken to address the risk.

The Corporate Risk Register is regularly reported to and monitored by the Agency Board and NISRA Audit and Risk Committee. The Audit and Risk Committee is chaired by one of its three independent members and functions in accordance with best practice contained in the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) issued under DAO(DFP) 5/14 in March 2014.

The Agency Board ensures the risk management and internal control are regularly reviewed and reported on in the following manner:

- All business areas use pre-determined weightings and a standardised approach to risk assessment;
- Key risks identified at Agency level are documented on Risk Registers and are

reviewed on a formal basis by the Agency Board at least three times during the course of a year;

- NISRA Audit and Risk Committee formally reviews risks and controls on a regular basis;
- The Audit and Risk Committee assess the continued appropriateness of the respective risks and the means through which they are managed. The need to add, delete, delegate or promote risks is also determined in order to reflect the current business environment;
- Heads of Branches complete stewardship statements at the end of each financial year. Mid-year reports are the vehicle for ensuring the continued maintenance of Risk Registers during the year;
- As Chief Executive, I provide the Committee with a mid-year and end-year Stewardship Statement;
- The Agency adheres to the department's 'Whistle Blowing' policy; and
- The Management Board receives periodic reports concerning internal control. The appropriate steps have been taken to manage risks in significant areas of responsibility and to monitor progress reports on key projects.

The main risks associated with NISRA are not achieving the Ministerial Targets noted on page 6 of this report and the targets outlined in the NISRA Balanced Scorecard on pages 7 to 31.

All Ministerial Targets for 2016-17 have been achieved and have been validated by DoF Internal Audit. The Agency performance against Balanced Scorecard targets are published on pages 7 to 31 of this report.

Agency Performance

The NISRA Business Plan 2016-17 sets out the targets and objectives for the year against which performance is reported and monitored. Progress is reported to the Agency Board as part of the Corporate Performance Report which gives details of actual results against the targets and a narrative on the actions taken to deliver the expected outcomes.

As part of the Corporate Performance Reports, the Management Board, thoroughly reviews and seeks improvement to information on key Agency statistics. These include NISRA performance in respect of Ministerial Targets, Chief Executive Targets, Risk Management, Human Resources and sickness absence levels, financial management and information management.

Accounting Officer

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

The Accounting Officer has responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of Agency policies, aims and objectives set by the Minister of DoF, whilst safeguarding the public funds and Agency's assets for which she is responsible in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to him by MPMNI.

At the beginning of the financial year, the Accounting Officer delegates responsibility

to each of the Heads of Branches for management of budgets within their respective business areas. She receives assurances twice yearly from each Director on risk management, governance, financial management and delegations within their respective areas of responsibility in the format of stewardship statements. Key issues emanating from these statements are reflected in this Governance Statement.

The Accounting Officer chairs the NISRA Agency Board which met on 3 occasions in 2016–17. The Agency Board operates in compliance with ‘Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013’ and directs the strategic management of NISRA by reviewing its strategic options and setting its corporate direction. The Agency Board considered the information received to be satisfactory for purpose.

The Agency maintains a Register of significant interests held by Board members which may conflict with their management responsibilities. Board members are requested on an annual basis to confirm that they have no such interests, or make a declaration of interests that may be considered to create a potential conflict of interest with their management responsibilities. No such interests have been declared by members for the Agency Board for the year ended 31 March 2017.

In response to a request from the Departmental Permanent Secretary, the Agency has obtained declarations of interest from all DoF based Agency staff at DP to Grade 7. No interests have been declared which the Agency consider to represent a potential conflict of interest.

The Agency Board also considered and reviewed NISRA risks as detailed in the NISRA Corporate Risk Register.

NISRA Audit and Risk Committee supports the Accounting Officer and the Agency Board on issues of risk, control and governance. In addition the Audit and Risk Committee provides assurance and advice to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of both internal and external audit coverage. The Audit and Risk Committee met on three occasions in 2016-17.

No Ministerial Directions were received by NISRA during 2016-17.

The role of Accounting Officer has been shared by Dr Marshall and Dr Power from 1 April 2016 to 31 August 2016, with the appointment of Siobhan Carey from 1 September 2016.

Level of Assurance

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

The Department’s Internal Audit has carried out an extensive programme of work during 2016-17. These reports provide an objective and widespread assessment of the systems of internal control in operation across the Agency, together with prioritised recommendations to strengthen controls and implement further improvements.

Internal Audit completed two of four scheduled audits during the year. Two of the scheduled audits are currently ongoing. The follow up to the Corporate Services Finance audit was postponed to a later date and may now be considered within a wider audit of the Departmental Finance Division following centralisation of the Departmental finance function.

Further details on the Internal Audit output for the year are included in the following section, ‘Significant Internal Control Problems’

In his Annual Assurance Report, the Head of Internal Audit provided NISRA with a satisfactory level of assurance.

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

NISRA has achieved ‘Level 2 compliance’ within the HMG Information Assurance Maturity Model and Assessment Framework and Security Policy Framework.

As described on page 33 ‘Official Statistics Issues’, NISRA is committed to complying with the principles of the UK Statistics Authority’s Code of Practice and its statistical output is monitored and assessed by the UK Statistics Authority. During the year a number of NISRA’s National Statistics and some of its Official Statistics products were assessed for compliance with the Code of Practice, and all of those where an outcome was declared were successfully accredited/reaccredited as National Statistics. No outputs have failed to achieve National Statistics designation.

Fraud Prevention and Assurance

NISRA takes a zero tolerance approach to fraud and will report instances of fraud to the PSNI. The Agency complies with the DoF Anti-Fraud Policy that sets out staff responsibilities with regard to the prevention of fraud.

Whistle blowing arrangements are in place and can be used to raise concerns about alleged impropriety, wrong-doing, corruption, fraud or malpractice.

The Agency has not recorded any instances of suspected or actual fraud during the year.

Significant Internal Control Problems

DoF Internal Audit completed the following audits during 2016-17:

- Validation exercise of the Ministerial Targets for 2015-16 – All targets achieved;
- Agency Complaint Handling and Customer Feedback (IA 34/16) – Satisfactory Assurance Opinion; and
- GRO (IA 49/15) – Follow-up review – All recommendations closed.

The report on Agency Complaint Handling and Customer Feedback (IA 34/16) made three Priority 2 and ten Priority 3 recommendations. The Agency is taking action to address these recommendations.

There were no reportable breaches of Data Protection Act 1998 identified between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 (page 49). Management consider that there are no significant internal control issues within the Agency.

Review of Effectiveness

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

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

Conclusion

Taking into account all of the arrangements set out in this Governance Statement, NISRA has an effective governance structure in place and has satisfactory systems of internal control which have operated effectively throughout 2016-17.

REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT

Remuneration Policy

The Minister of Finance approves the pay remit for Senior Civil Service (SCS) staff. The SCS remuneration arrangements are based on a system of pay scales for each SCS grade containing a number of pay points from minima to maxima, allowing progression towards the maxima based on performance. In 2012, upon creation, there were 11 points on each scale. The minimum point has been removed in each year from 2014 to 2016 (the scales now have 8 pay points) to allow progression through the pay scales within a reasonable period of time.

Service Contracts

Civil service appointments are made in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, which requires appointment to be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition but also includes the circumstances when appointments may otherwise be made.

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

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

Salary and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior management of the agency.

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements (Audited)

Officials	2016-17				2015-16			
	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits** to nearest £1,000)	Total (£000)	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits** to nearest £1,000)	Total (£000)
Siobhan Carey From 1 September 2016	50-55 (FYE 90-95)	Nil	21	75-80	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Robert Beatty 1 April 2016 to 24 June 2016	10-15 (FYE 60-65)	Nil	6	20-25	60-65	Nil	23	85-90
Michelle Crawford	60-65	Nil	23	85-90	60-65	Nil	22	85-90
Stephen Donnelly	60-65	Nil	24	85-90	60-65	Nil	23	85-90
Alexander Fitzpatrick	65-70	Nil	26	90-95	60-65	Nil	23	85-90
James Gillan	65-70	Nil	25	90-95	60-65	Nil	23	85-90
Brian Green	60-65	Nil	24	85-90	60-65	Nil	23	85-90
David Marshall	70-75	Nil	28	95- 100	65-70	Nil	25	90-95
Eugene Mooney	60-65	Nil	24	85-90	60-65	Nil	23	85-90
Tracy Power	70-75	Nil	27	95- 100	70-75	Nil	26	95- 100
David Rogers 1 April 2016 to 31 July 2016	20-25 (FYE 60-65)	Nil	8	30-35	60-65	Nil	23	85-90
Kevin Sweeney	50-55 (FYE 60-65)	Nil	19	70-75	50-55 (FYE 60-65)	Nil	18	70-75
Band of Highest paid Director's Total Remuneration	90-95				80-85			
Median Total Remuneration	31,446				31,135			
Ratio	2.9				2.6			

(FYE – Full Year Equivalent)

* The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation and any increase or decrease due to a transfer of pension rights.

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any ex gratia payments.

Benefits in kind

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

Bonuses

The Agency did not make any bonus payments to Board members during the year.

Fair pay disclosure

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

The median total is based on the full time equivalent remuneration of staff directly employed by NISRA at the reporting end date on an annualised basis.

The banded total remuneration* of the highest paid director in NISRA in the financial year was £90-95k (2015-16: £80-85k). This was 2.9 times (2015-16: 2.6) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £31,446 (2015-16: £31,135).

In 2016-17 and 2015-16 no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director.

Remuneration in 2016-17 ranged from £17,796 to £90-95,000.

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

Pension Entitlements (Audited)

Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31 March 2017 (or date of leaving if earlier) and related lump sum £000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at age 60 £000	CETV at 31/03/17 £000	CETV at 31/03/16 £000	Real increase in CETV £000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account (Nearest £100)
Siobhan Carey (Chief Executive)	0-5	0-2.5	18	-	14	-
Robert Beatty (Head of Census)	25-30	(2.5)-0	565	528	16	-
Michelle Crawford (Head of Analytical Services DSD)	15-20 plus lump sum of 40-45	(12.5)-(10) plus lump sum of (40)-(37.5)	-	213	26	-
Stephen Donnelly (Head of Analytical Services Unit DEL)	25-30 plus lump sum of 75-80	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0-2.5	585	550	9	-
Alexander Fitzpatrick (Head of Information and Registration Unit BSO)	20-25 plus lump sum of 55-60	2.5-5 plus lump sum of 2.5-5	370	320	33	-
James Gillan (Head of Economic Labour Market Statistics Branch)	30-35 plus lump sum of 45-50	0-2.5 plus lump sum of (2.5)-0	693	659	3	-
Brian Green (Head of 2011 Census Statistical Development, Outputs & Dissemination)	20-25 plus lump sum of 60-65	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0-2.5	438	409	9	-
David Marshall (Director of Sources)	20-25 plus lump sum of 50-55	2.5-5 plus lump sum of 2.5-5	350	299	35	-
Eugene Mooney (Head of Information and Analysis Directorate DHSSPS)	20-25 plus lump sum of 60-65	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0-2.5	442	412	11	-
Tracy Power (Director of Analysis)	20-25 plus lump sum of 70-75	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 5-7.5	473	419	33	-
David Rogers (Head of Equality Unit Research Branch TE0)	25-30 plus lump sum of 85-90	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0-2.5	647	641	2	-
Kevin Sweeney (Head of Central Survey Unit)	0-5 plus lump sum of 5-10	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0-2.5	60	48	9	-

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension arrangements

Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension schemes which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP). Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may be in one of three statutory based ‘final salary’ defined benefit arrangements (classic, premium and classic plus). These arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by the Assembly each year. From April 2011 pensions payable under classic, premium and classic plus are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Prior to 2011, pensions were reviewed in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index (RPI). New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining a good quality ‘money purchase’ stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account). New entrants joining on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a partnership pension account. Nuvos is a ‘Career Average Revalued Earnings’ (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The current rate is 2.3%. CARE pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with increases in the cost of living.

A new pension scheme, alpha, was introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The majority of existing members of the NICS pension arrangements have also moved to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their

normal pension age will not move to alpha and those who were within 13.5 years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age. Alpha is also a ‘Career Average Revalued Earnings’ (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate will be 2.32%. CARE pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases in the cost of living.

Increases to public service pensions are the responsibility of HM Treasury. Pensions are reviewed each year in line with the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2015 was 1% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2017.

Employee contribution rates for all members from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 are as follows:

Scheme Year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

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

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

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

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium, and classic plus and 65 for members of nuvos. The normal pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/civil-service-pensions-ni>.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

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

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period. However, the real increase calculation uses common actuarial factors at the start and end of the period so that it disregards the effect of any changes in factors and focuses only on the increase that is funded by the employer.

Compensation for loss of office

The Agency did not make any payments for loss of office during 2016-17.

STAFF REPORT

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

The number of staff serving as senior civil servants (or equivalent) as at 31 March 2017 is as follows:

Pay Band*	Number of SCS Staff (or equivalent)
£65,000 - £70,000	2
£90,000 - £95,000	1

* Based on full year equivalent.

Staff Costs

Staff costs comprise:

	£000	£000	2016-17 £000	2015-16 £000
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
Wages and salaries	14,197	905	15,102	14,893
Social security costs	1,277	-	1,277	988
Other pension costs	2,831	-	2,831	4,475
Sub Total	18,305	905	19,210	20,356
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(8,972)	-	(8,972)	(8,770)
Total net costs	9,333	905	10,238	11,586

Included in 2015-16 wages and salaries are costs associated with the Northern Ireland Civil Service Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES). These are referred to in the 'Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages' section below.

£50k (2015-16: £120k) of salary costs have been charged to capital.

Pension arrangements

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

For 2016-17 employers' contributions of £2,858,101 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2015-16: £2,998k) at one of three rates in the range 20.8% to 26.3% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A new scheme funding valuation based on data as at 31 March 2012 was completed by the Actuary during 2014-15. This valuation was used to determine employer contribution rates for the introduction of alpha from April 2015. For 2017-18, the rates will range from 20.8% to 26.3%. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2016-17 to be paid when the member retires, and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £4,755 (2015-16: £3,375) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2015-16: 3% to 14.7%) of pensionable pay. Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable pay. In addition, employer contributions of £177, 0.5% (2015-16: £257, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees.

Ill-health retirement

No persons (2015-16: none) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £nil (2015-16: £nil).

The Agency meets the additional costs of benefits beyond the normal NICS pension schemes benefits in respect of employees who retire early by paying the required amounts annually to the NICS pension schemes over the period between the early departure and the normal retirement date. The Agency provides for this in full when the early retirement programme becomes binding by establishing a provision for the estimated payments discounted by the Treasury discount rate of 3.5 per cent in real terms.

Average number of persons employed

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

Number			2016-17	2015-16
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
Directly employed including Senior Management	353	3	356	391
Other	-	68	68	68
Staff engaged on capital projects*	-	-	-	-
Total	353	71	424	459

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

Staff composition

The gender analysis of the Agency staff as at 31 March 2017 was as follows.

Comparative data for the previous year is shown in brackets.

	Number of female staff		Number of male staff		Total	
Senior Civil Service	2	(1)	1	(1)	3	(2)
Agency Board	1	(1)	6	(8)	7	(9)
Other NISRA employees	211	(234)	173	(191)	384	(425)

Sickness in Post

The number of permanent staff in post at the end of March 2017 was 394 of which 206 were located in DoF [108 of which were statisticians], 147 were statisticians outposted to other government departments and 41 were statisticians seconded to other organisations. In addition, NISRA employs a field-force of approximately 250 fee-paid survey interviewers. A detailed breakdown by grade is included at Table 1.

Table 1: NISRA Staff at 31 March 2017

Staff Grades	Recognised Grade	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent
PERMANENT STAFF:			
Senior Civil Service			
Grade 3 Statistician	G3	1	1
Grade 5 Statistician	G5	2	2
Total		3	3
General Service			
Grade 7	G7	2	2.0
Deputy Principal	DP	8	7.6
Staff Officer	SO	3	3.7
Executive Officer 1	E01	7	6.8
Executive Officer 2	E02	23	21.1
Administrative Officer	AO	33	30.2
Support Grade Band 2	AO	2	2.0
Administrative Assistant	AA	15	12.6
Total		93	86.0
Non General Service			
Senior Principal Statistician	G6	7	6.8
Principal Statistician	G7	29	27.4
DP Statistician	DP	133	126.7
Assistant Statistician	SO	124	116.5
Personal Secretary	E02	1	0.8
ICT4	E01	3	3.0
ICT6	DP	1	0.8
Total		298	282
.....of which statisticians		296	280.4
TOTAL OF PERMANENT STAFF		394	371.0
TEMPORARY STAFF:			
Casual AO	AO	1	1.0
Recruitment Agency Staff (non NICS)			
Statistical Officer	SO	36	36.0
Personal Secretary	E02	1	1.0
Support Staff	SGB2	2	2.0
Administration Officer	AO	8	8.0
TOTAL OF TEMPORARY STAFF:		48	48.0
TOTAL STAFF		442	419.0
Permanent staff on loan [included in total above]		188	179.6

STAFF POLICIES

Sickness absence

The provisional figure for the average number of days lost per staff member (on a staff year equivalent basis¹³) during 2016-17 was 8.2 days (2015-16: 8.3 days). The Agency is actively working to decrease its sickness absence and has a nominated 'Well Champion' who organises seminars and other events to highlight health and wellness issues.

Persons with disabilities

NISRA adheres to the Disability Action Plan, developed by the former Department of Finance and Personnel, in recognition of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (and subsequent amendments) which states that in carrying out its functions DoF (and consequently NISRA, as an Agency of DoF) will have due regard to the need to :

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').

The Department of Finance produces a disability action plan to illustrate how it proposes to fulfil these duties.

Equal Opportunities

NISRA staff are employees of the Department of Finance which is an Equal Opportunity employer and is fully committed to the elimination of all forms of harassment and bullying, discrimination and victimisation. The Department recognises the legal obligations under which it operates and promotes working relationships that are based on mutual trust, respect and understanding. This enables the maximum potential to be realized with regard to the wide variety of skills, abilities and attributes available within the Department.

In addition, the Department continues to offer a range of work-life balance and family friendly policies including flexible working hours, career breaks, special leave and alternative working arrangements such as job sharing, part-time and term-time working.

Equality Agenda

The Department of Finance remains committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and human rights. We continue to ensure that all our policies comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and that the Department continues to fulfill the duties required of it by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

¹³ One staff year equivalent (sye) equates to one member of staff having been available for the entire period being analysed.

Employee involvement

NISRA recognises the benefit of keeping its staff informed of changes in the Agency and professional developments which ultimately affect the Agency's performance. NISRA issues its Agency Brief on a monthly basis to all staff. This contains information on human resources, recruitment, promotion competitions, training, publications and other events of interest to staff. Briefs issued during 2016-17 also contained updates on progress made against relocation plans to move all DoF NISRA branches from McAuley House, Oxford House, Royston House and Netherleigh to Colby House on the Stranmillis Road.

The Agency Brief is also posted online on NISRAnet, the Agency intranet site, where staff can access up-to-date information on NISRA events, meetings, corporate documentation, publications, human resources and professional matters. Conference presentations are also available to view on NISRAnet.

Expenditure on consultancy

The Agency did not incur any spend on consultancy during 2016-17 (2015-16: nil).

Off-payroll engagements

The Agency did not have any off-payroll engagements during 2016-17.

Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages

There were no early retirements or compulsory redundancies in 2016-17 (2015-16: 40).

Comparative data for the previous year is shown in brackets.

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages by cost band
<£10,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£10,000 - £25,000	- (-)	- (12)	- (12)
£25,000 - £50,000	- (-)	- (23)	- (23)
£50,000 - £100,000	- (-)	- (5)	- (5)
£100,000 - £150,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£150,000 - £200,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
Total number of exit packages	- (-)	- (40)	- (40)
Total resource cost/£	£ - (£ -)	£ - (£1,349,933)	£ - (£1,349,933)

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

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

Included in the 2015-16 figures in the table above are 40 full-time equivalent staff leaving on the Voluntary Exit Scheme at a cost of £1,349,933.

OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT

OTHER ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY DISCLOSURES

Regularity of Expenditure

i. Losses and special payments

Losses statement

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

Special payments

The Agency made one special payment during the year which amounted to £3,844 (2015-16: nil). This payment is related to a special payment for £34,483 made in 2013-14. This payment was not previously disclosed.

ii. Fees and Charges

General Register Office

In setting fees for certificates, the General Register Office (GRO) aims to recover 100% of costs directly attributable to the estimated volumes of produced certificates. In 2016-17 GRO estimated that it would recover £2,872k (2015-16: £2,886k) from the supply of certificates. The actual cost recovery for the year was £3,312k (2015-16: £2,917kk).

Central Survey Unit

In 2016-17 the Central Survey Unit (CSU) estimated that it would recover £1,900k (2015-16: £1,690k) from carrying out surveys on behalf of government departments and non departmental public bodies. The actual

cost recovery for the year was £1,887k (2015-16: £1,690k). The information provided in the table below is for fees and charges purposes, not for IFRS 8.

	Income £000	Full Cost £000	2016-17 Surplus/ (deficit) £000	2015-16 Surplus/ (deficit) £000
Registration Services	3,312	(2,874)	438	58
Statistics and Research work carried out by CSU	1,887	(2,049)	(162)	25
Recovery of staff costs for staff outside DoF	8,972	(8,954)	18	294
	14,171	(13,877)	294	377

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

iii. Remote Contingent Liabilities

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

This Accountability Report is approved and signed



Siobhan Carey
Accounting Officer, Registrar General and Chief Executive
23 June 2017

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

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for the year ended 31 March 2017 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The financial statements comprise the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the information in the Remuneration and Staff Report and Assembly Accountability Disclosures that is described in that report as having been audited.

Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial

statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition I read all the financial and non-financial information in the Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies I consider the implications for my certificate.

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

Opinion on regularity

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

Opinion on financial statements

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's affairs as at 31 March 2017 and of its net operating cost for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements 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 other matters

In my opinion:

- the parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report and the Assembly Accountability disclosures on the regularity of expenditure and Fees and Charges to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Finance directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and the Assembly Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements

Matters on which I report by exception

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

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

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



KJ Donnelly

Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU
28 June 2017

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE

for the year ended 31 March 2017

	Note	2016-17 £000	2015-16 £000
Income from sale of goods and services	4	(6,688)	(6,211)
Other operating income	4	(8,972)	(8,770)
Total operating income		(15,660)	(14,981)
Staff costs	3	19,210	20,356
Purchase of goods and services	3	2,483	2,715
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	1,306	1,089
Provision expense	3	-	-
Other operating expenditure	3	4,496	3,889
Total operating expenditure		27,495	28,049
Net operating expenditure		11,835	13,068

Other comprehensive net expenditure

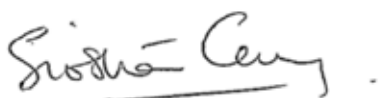
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	7	(16)	(1)
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of intangible assets	7	(105)	(61)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		11,714	13,006

The notes on pages 78 to 96 form part of these Accounts.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 March 2017

	Note	2017 £000	2016 £000
Non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment	5	655	532
Intangible assets	6	4,560	5,334
Total non-current assets		5,215	5,866
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	9	5,534	4,049
Cash and cash equivalents	8	212	214
Total current assets		5,746	4,263
Total Assets		10,961	10,129
Current liabilities:			
Trade and other payables	10	(2,157)	(1,497)
Provisions	11	-	-
Total current liabilities		(2,157)	(1,497)
Non-current assets plus net current assets		8,804	8,632
Assets less liabilities		8,804	8,632
Taxpayers' equity:			
General fund		8,419	8,285
Revaluation reserve		385	347
Total taxpayers' equity		8,804	8,632



Siobhan Carey

Accounting Officer, Registrar General and Chief Executive
23 June 2017

The notes on pages 78 to 96 form part of these Accounts.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

for the year ended 31 March 2017

	Note	2016-17 £000	2015-16 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating cost		(11,835)	(13,068)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
Notional charges	3	2,482	2,544
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	1,306	1,089
(Increase)/ Decrease in trade receivables and other current assets	9	(1,485)	761
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables and other current liabilities	10	660	(390)
<i>less movement in payables relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</i>	10	71	232
Use of provisions	11	-	(14)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(8,801)	(8,846)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(235)	(358)
Purchase of intangibles assets	6	(370)	(2,516)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(605)	(2,874)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net Assembly Funding		9,404	11,677
Net financing		9,404	11,677
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		(2)	(43)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	8	214	257
Cash and cash equivalent at the end of the period	8	212	214

The notes on pages 78 to 96 form part of these Accounts.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAXPAYERS' EQUITY

for the year ended 31 March 2017

	General Fund £000	Revaluation Reserve £000	Taxpayers' Equity £000
Balance at 1 April 2015	6,969	450	7,419
Net Assembly Funding	11,677	-	11,677
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year	(13,068)	62	(13,006)
Auditors' remuneration	10	-	10
Non-cash charges	2,534	-	2,534
Transfer between reserves	165	(165)	-
Items paid by Department	(2)	-	(2)
Balance at 31 March 2016	8,285	347	8,632
Net Assembly Funding	9,404	-	9,404
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year	(11,835)	121	(11,714)
Auditors' remuneration	10	-	10
Non-cash charges	2,472	-	2,472
Transfer between reserves	83	(83)	-
Balance at 31 March 2016	8,419	385	8,804

The notes on pages 78 to 96 form part of these Accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2016-17 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance. The accounting policies contained in FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy that has been judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Agency for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Agency for 2016-17 are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the Accounts.

1.1 Accounting Convention

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

1.2 Property, plant and equipment

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

Where appropriate, surpluses and deficits on revaluation are taken to the revaluation

reserve and permanent reductions in the value of non current assets are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

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

1.3 Intangible assets

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

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

1.4 Depreciation and Amortisation

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

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

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

1.5 Operating Income

The Agency's income represents receipts from three main activities.

- The recovery of salary cost for Agency staff on loan outside DoF;
- Charges for statistics and research work carried out for customers; and
- Fees associated with the Registration Services.

All income is accruals based and accounted for against the financial year to which it relates.

1.6 Financial Instruments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When a financial asset is deemed unrecoverable the amount of the asset is reduced directly and the impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

extent that a provision was not previously recognised.

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

1.7 Value Added Tax

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

1.8 Programme Expenditure

All of NISRA expenditure is classified as Programme expenditure.

1.9 Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the NICS Pension Schemes. The defined benefit scheme is unfunded and is non-contributory except in respect of dependants' benefits. The Agency recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the NICS Pension Schemes of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the NICS Pension Schemes. In respect of the defined contribution scheme, the Agency recognises the contributions payable for the year.

1.10 Contingent Liabilities

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

requirements of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

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

1.11 Employee Benefits

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

1.12 Provisions

The Agency provides for legal or constructive obligations, which are of uncertain timing or amount at the reporting date on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation. These relate to the settlement of equal pay claims, other potential legal actions and provision for future liabilities in respect of contracts. Where the effect of the time value of money is significant the estimated risk-adjusted cash flows are discounted using the real rate set by HM Treasury (currently 3.5 per cent).

1.13 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards and FReM – issued and effective in 2016-17 for the first time

NISRA has considered these standards and considers that they are not relevant or material to its operations.

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

In addition, certain new standards, interpretations and amendments to existing standards have been published that are mandatory for NISRA's accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2017 or later periods, but which NISRA has not adopted early. Other than as outlined below, NISRA considers that these standards are not relevant or material to its operations.

Standard	IFRS 15 - <i>Revenue from Contracts with Customers</i> (issued in April 2016) (clarifications)
Effective date	1 January 2018 (not yet EU adopted; expected in the second quarter of 2017) – with a view to include in 2018-19 FReM (subject to EU adoption and the Exposure Draft process)
Description of revision	<p>IASB issued clarifications to IFRS 15 in April 2016 to address implementation questions that were discussed by the Joint Transition Resource Group for Revenue Recognition with the FASB. The amendments were also intended to reduce diversity in practice when entities adopt the new revenue standard and decrease the cost and complexity of applying it.</p> <p>The clarifications relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) When an entity's activities significantly affect the intellectual property to which the customer has rights, which is a factor in determining whether the entity recognises revenue over time or at a point in time;b) How entities would apply the exception for sales- and usage-based royalties related to licences of intellectual property and recognise revenue when the related licences are not separate performance obligations;c) When a promised good or service is distinct within the context of the contract by amending related illustrative examples to IFRS 15;d) Reframing the principal versus agent indicators, clarifying how to apply the control principle to services provided by another party, amending related illustrative examples, and adding two examples to clarify how to apply the principal versus agent application guidance;e) Adding two practical expedients to the transition requirements of IFRS 15 for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Completed contracts under the full retrospective transition approach; andII. Contract modifications at transition.
Comments	The introduction of IFRS 15 is subject to analysis and review by HM Treasury and the other Relevant Authorities. HM Treasury issued an Exposure Draft on IFRS 15 over the Summer of 2016. These clarifications will be reviewed as a part of the implementation project.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

Standard	IFRS 16 - <i>Leases (IAS 17 replacement)</i> (new)
Effective date	1 January 2019 (not yet EU adopted; expected in the fourth quarter of 2017) – with a view to include in 2019-20 FReM (subject to EU adoption and the Exposure Draft process)
Description of revision	<p>IFRS 16 has been developed by the IASB with the aim of improving the financial reporting of leasing activities in light of criticisms that the previous accounting model for leases failed to meet the needs of users of financial statements.</p> <p>IFRS 16 largely removes the distinction between operating and finance leases for lessees by introducing a single lessee accounting model that requires a lessee to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying asset is of low value. This is a significant change in lessee accounting.</p> <p>IFRS 16 is effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019. Earlier application is permitted for entities that apply IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers at or before the date of initial application of IFRS 16.</p> <p>As well as superseding IAS 17 Leases, IFRS 16 also supersedes the following interpretations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) IFRIC 4 Determining whether an Arrangement contains a Lease;(b) SIC-15 Operating Leases-Incentives; and(c) SIC-27 Evaluating the Substance of Transactions Involving the Legal Form of a Lease.
Comments	The introduction of IFRS 16 is subject to analysis and review by HM Treasury and the other Relevant Authorities. HM Treasury will issue an Exposure Draft on IFRS 16 in early 2018.

1.15 Financial Reporting – Future Developments

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

2. Statement of Operating Costs by Operating Segments

2016-17

	Notes	General Register Office £000	Central Survey Unit £000	Other £000	Total £000
Gross Expenditure	3	4,631	3,732	19,132	27,495
Income	4	(3,312)	(1,887)	(10,461)	(15,660)
Net Expenditure		1,319	1,845	8,671	11,835
Total assets		3,700	411	6,850	10,961
Total liabilities		(704)	(87)	(1,366)	(2,157)
Net assets		2,996	324	5,484	8,804

2015-16

	Notes	General Register Office £000	Central Survey Unit £000	Other £000	Total £000
Gross Expenditure	3	4,637	3,410	20,002	28,049
Income	4	(2,917)	(1,690)	(10,374)	(14,981)
Net Expenditure		1,720	1,720	9,628	13,068
Total assets		2,522	386	7,221	10,129
Total liabilities		(562)	(54)	(881)	(1,497)
Net assets		1,960	332	6,340	8,632

Segments have been selected based on their distinct areas.

General Register Office GRO

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

Central Survey Unit CSU

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

Other

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

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

3. Programme Costs

	2016-17 £000	2015-16 £000
Staff costs		
Wages and salaries	15,102	14,893
Social security costs	1,277	988
Other pension costs	2,831	4,475
Total staff costs	19,210	20,356
Purchase of goods and services		
Registrar charges	2,166	2,414
Survey costs	281	276
Finance costs	34	25
Exchange losses/(gains)	2	-
Total purchase of goods and services	2,483	2,715
Other operating expenditure		
Accounting and information technology	1,122	873
Accommodation, maintenance and utilities	786	350
Personnel and training	(39)	13
Travel, subsistence and hospitality	58	47
Printing, stationery and advertising	69	62
Legal costs	15	-
Other costs	3	-
	2,014	1,345
<i>Non-cash items:</i>		
Auditor's remuneration and expenses	10	10
Notional charge - Dfl	55	27
Intra-departmental notional charges:	690	818
Accommodation	583	661
IT Assist	549	362
Finance	486	519
HR	109	147
DoF Corporate Services	2,482	2,544
Total other operating expenditure	4,496	3,889
Depreciation and impairment charges		
Depreciation	109	145
Amortisation	1,198	943
Impairment of non-current assets	(1)	1
	1,306	1,089
Provision expense		
Provided in year	15	-
Written back in year	(15)	-
	-	-
Total	27,495	28,049

Notional costs relate to services received for which no actual payment is made. They are included in the Accounts so as to reflect the full economic cost of provision.

4. Income

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

	2016-17	2015-16
	£000	£000
Sales of goods and services		
Statistics and Research services	3,376	3,293
Registration services	3,312	2,918
	6,688	6,211
Other operation income		
Recovery of secondee costs	8,972	8,770
Other income	-	-
Total	15,660	14,981

The above Statistics and Research services income includes £58,700 (2015/16: £60,500) from the Public Health Authority (PHA).

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

5. Property, plant and equipment

2016-17

	Information Technology £000	Plant & Machinery £000	Furniture & Fittings £000	Assets under Construction £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2016	839	44	41	212	1,136
Additions	71	6	2	136	215
Disposals	(4)	–	–	–	(4)
Impairments	2	–	–	–	2
Transfers	–	–	–	–	–
Reclassifications	–	2	(2)	–	–
Revaluations	25	–	–	–	25
At 31 March 2017	933	52	41	348	1,374
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2016	552	42	10	–	604
Charged in year	99	2	8	–	109
Disposals	(4)	–	–	–	(4)
Impairments	1	–	–	–	1
Transfers	–	–	–	–	–
Reclassifications	–	–	–	–	–
Revaluations	9	–	–	–	9
At 31 March 2017	657	44	18	–	719
Carrying amount at 31 March 2017	276	8	23	348	655
Carrying amount at 31 March 2016	287	2	31	212	532
Asset financing:					
Owned	276	8	23	348	655
Carrying amount at 31 March 2017	276	8	23	348	655

5. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

2015-16

	Information Technology	Property, Plant & Machinery	Furniture & Fittings	Assets under Construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2015	1,167	106	2	-	1,275
Adjustments to opening cost*	-	-	(11)	-	(11)
Additions	47	-	5	92	144
Disposals	(254)	(18)	-	-	(272)
Impairments	(1)	-	-	-	(1)
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	(120)	(44)	44	120	-
Revaluations	-	-	1	-	1
At 31 March 2016	839	44	41	212	1,136
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2015	672	58	1	-	731
Charged in year	134	2	9	-	145
Disposals	(254)	(18)	-	-	(272)
Impairments	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2016	552	42	10	-	604
Carrying amount at 31 March 2016	287	2	31	212	532
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	495	48	1	-	544
Asset financing:					
Owned	287	2	31	212	532
Carrying amount at 31 March 2016	287	2	31	212	532

* Note: Relates to the over-accrual for an addition capitalised in 2014-15. The over-accrual has been removed from the fixed asset register in 2015-16.

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

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

6. Intangible assets

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

2016-17

	Licences £000	Internally Developed Software and Website £000	Externally Developed Software £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2016	216	5,039	4,472	9,727
Additions	41	63	215	319
Disposals	(5)	(1,911)	-	(1,916)
Impairments	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	4	76	111	191
At 31 March 2017	256	3,267	4,798	8,321
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2016	75	3,114	1,204	4,393
Charged in year	84	296	818	1,198
Disposals	(5)	(1,911)	-	(1,916)
Impairments	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	3	34	49	86
At 31 March 2017	157	1,533	2,071	3,761
Carrying amount at 31 March 2017	99	1,734	2,727	4,560
Carrying amount at 31 March 2016	141	1,925	3,268	5,334
Asset financing:				
Owned	99	1,734	2,727	4,560
Carrying amount at 31 March 2017	99	1,734	2,727	4,560

6. Intangible assets (continued)

2015-16

	Licences £000	Internally Developed Software and Website £000	Externally Developed Software £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2015	181	4,865	2,068	7,114
Additions	33	120	2,356	2,509
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Impairments	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	(2)	(2)
Reclassifications	(1)	1	-	-
Revaluations	(1)	1	-	-
At 31 March 2016	3	53	50	106
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2015	22	2,714	669	3,405
Charged in year	53	369	521	943
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Impairments	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	(1)	1	-	-
Revaluations	1	30	14	45
At 31 March 2016	75	3,114	1,204	4,393
Carrying amount at 31 March 2016	141	1,925	3,268	5,334
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	159	2,151	1,399	3,709
Asset financing:				
Owned	141	1,925	3,268	5,334
Carrying amount at 31 March 2016	141	1,925	3,268	5,334

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

7. Impairments

	2016-17 £000	2015-16 £000
Charged direct to the SoCNE		
Property, plant and equipment	(1)	1
Intangible assets	-	-
	(1)	1
Taken through the revaluation reserve		
Property, plant and equipment	(16)	(1)
Intangible assets	(105)	(61)
	(121)	(62)
Total impairment charge for the year	(122)	(61)

8. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2016-17 £000	2015-16 £000
Balance at 1 April	214	257
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(2)	(43)
Balance at 31 March	212	214
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	212	214

9. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2016-17 £000	2015-16 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	2,155	646
Other receivables	4	-
Prepayments and accrued income	3,189	3,403
VAT recoverable	186	-
	5,534	4,049

There are no amounts falling due after more than one year

10. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2016-17 £000	2015-16 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade payables	53	-
Accruals	2,104	1,497
	2,157	1,497

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

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

11. Provisions for liabilities and charges

			2016-17	2015-16
	Early departure costs £000	Other £000	Total £000	Total £000
Balance at 1 April	-	-	-	14
Provided in year	-	15	15	-
Provision not required written back	-	(15)	(15)	-
Provision utilised in year	-	-	-	(14)
Balance at 31 March	-	-	-	-

Analysis of expected timing of cash flows

			2016-17	2015-16
	Early departure costs £000	Other £000	Total £000	Total £000
Not later than one year	-	-	-	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-	-	-
Later than five years	-	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March	-	-	-	-

12. Capital commitments

Contracted capital commitments at 31 March 2017 not otherwise included in these accounts

	2016-17	2015-16
	£000	£000
Intangible assets:		
Further development of IBSS	-	50
Development of Economic Accounts	-	73
Total	-	123

13. Commitment under leases

Operating leases

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

	2016-17	2015-16
	£000	£000
Obligations under operating leases for the following periods comprise		
Other:		
Not later than one year	2	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	4	-
Later than five years	-	-
Total	6	-

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

14. Other Financial Commitments

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

	2016-17	2015-16
	£000	£000
Not later than one year	1,108	555
Later than one year and not later than five years	8,218	1,160
Later than five years	168	-
Total	9,494	1,715

15. Financial Instruments

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

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

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

Categories of financial instruments

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

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash and demand deposits with banks. As at 31 March 2017, the carrying value of cash at bank approximates its fair value due to its short term nature.

16. Contingent Liabilities

NISRA has no contingent liabilities at 31 March 2017.

17. Related party transactions

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

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

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

Electoral Office for NI

Health and Social Care Board

Health and Safety Executive for NI

HSC Business Services Organisation

Ilex-Urban Regeneration Company

Invest NI

Libraries NI

NI Courts and Tribunals Service

NI Policing Board

Office for National Statistics

Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Public Health Agency

Youth Justice Agency Northern Ireland.

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

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

18. Events Occurring After the Reporting Period

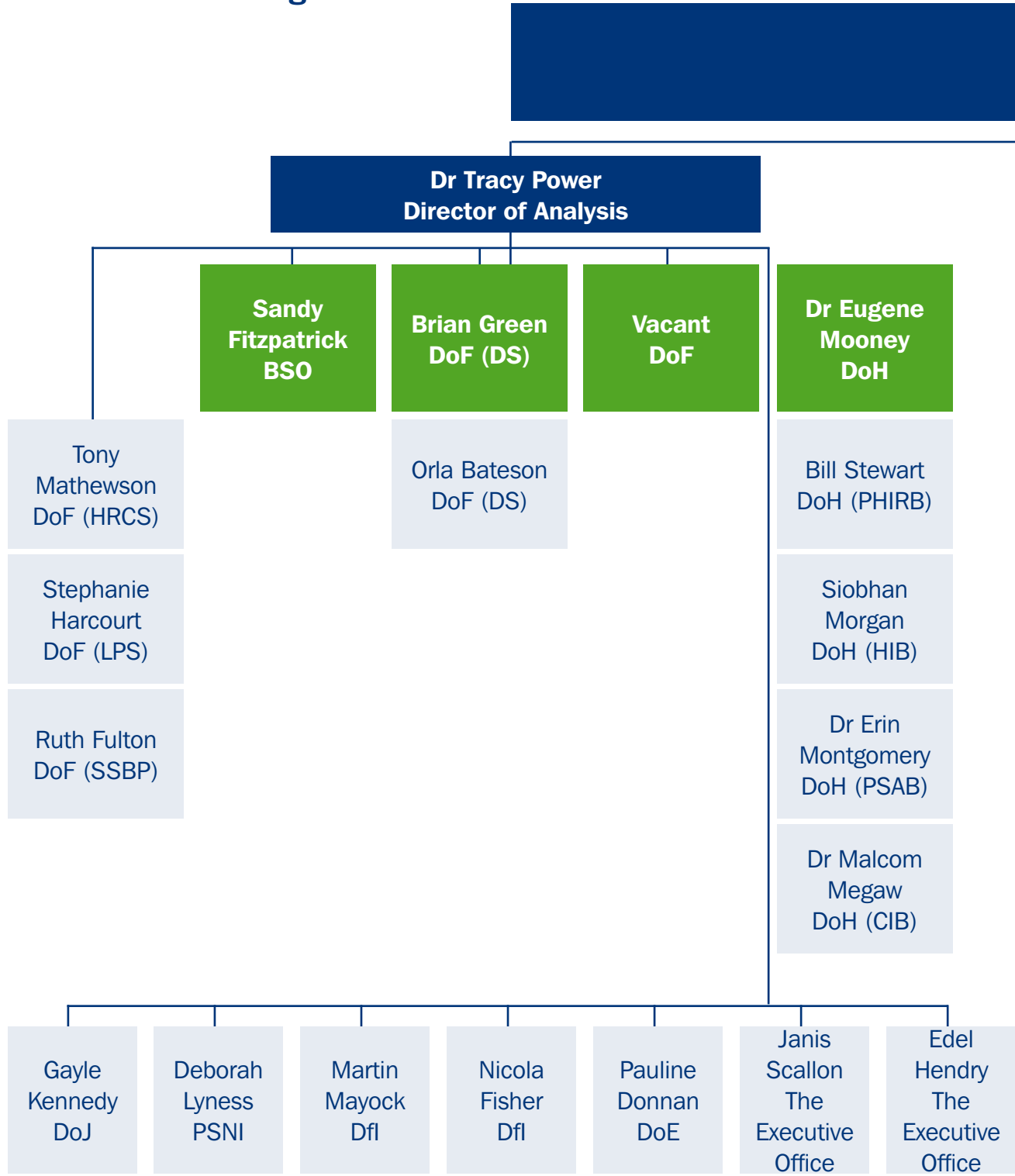
There were no events occurring after the reporting date that required disclosure.

Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised the issue of these financial statements on 28 June 2017.

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Annex 1 – NISRA Organisation Chart at March 2017



Agency Board



NISRA Senior Managers Forum



Siobhan Carey
Registrar General for NI
Acting Chief Executive

Dr David Marshall
Director of Sources

Vacant
DoF
(Census)

Dr Kevin
Sweeney
DoF (CSU)

Dr James
Gillan
DoF
(ELMSB)

Dr Stephen
Donnelly
DfE

Michelle
Crawford
DfC

Vacant
 DoF (Census
 Operations)

Andrew
 McCormick
 DoF (CSU)

Gerard
 Colgan
 DoF
 (ELMSB)

Jamie
 Stainer
 DfE

Paul
 McKillen
 DfC

Maire Brolly
 DoF (Census
 Operations)

Jim
 McColgan
 (Tourism)

Linda Keys
 DoF
 (ELMSB)

Brian
 French
 DfE

Michelle
 Furphy
 DfC

Cathryn
 Blair
 DoF
 (ELMSB)

Dr Alan
 McClelland
 DfE

Chris
 Ganley
 DoF
 (ELMSB)

Regina
 McGeown
 DoF (CMB)

Jacque
 Hyvart
 DoF (CS)

Kathie
 Walker
 DoF (GRO)

GLOSSARY

Acronym	Details
ADF	Administrative Data Forum
AME	Annually Managed Expenditure
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
BSO	Business Services Organisation
CARE	Career Average Revalued Earnings
CETV	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value
CIB	Community Information Branch
CMB	Communication and Marketing Branch
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CS	Corporate Services
CSU	Central Survey Unit
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DAO	Dear Accounting Officer Letter
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning (pre-May 2016 Dept)
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit (in accounts)
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel (pre-May 2016 Dept)
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (pre-May 2016 Dept)
DS	Demographic Statistics
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice
DP	Deputy Principal
DSD	Department for Social Development
EES	Employee Engagement Score
ELMS (B)	Economic Labour Market Statistics (Branch)
ESV	Employer Supported Volunteering
U	European Union
GRO	General Register Office
HIB	Hospital Information Branch
HR	Human Resources

Acronym	Details
HRCS	Human Resource Consultancy Services
HSC	Health and Social Care
IA	Information Assurance
IAO	Information Asset Owner
IAS	International Accounting Standard
IBSS	Integrated Business Survey System
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
LPS	Land and Property Services
MPMNI	Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland
NI	Northern Ireland
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NINIS	Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service
NIROS	Northern Ireland Registration Office System
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NISRA DoF	NISRA branches located within DoF
NISRA NON-DoF	NISRA staff located in non-DoF branches
OFMdFM	Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (pre May 2016 Dept)
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OBA	Outcome Based Accountability
PCN	Policy Champions Network
PCOS	Public Confidence in Official Statistics
PCSPS(NI)	Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland)
PDPs	Personal Development Plans
PfG	Programme for Government
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PHIRB	Public Health Information and Research Branch
PPA	Personal Performance Agreements
PPS	Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland
PSAB	Project Support Analysis Branch
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
QAAD	Quality Assurance of Administrative Data

Acronym	Details
SAC	Statistics Advisory Committee
SCG	Statistics Co-ordinating Group
SCS	Senior Civil Service
SEO	Search Engine Optimised
SMF	Senior Managers' Forum
SOC	Strategic Outline Case
SSBP	NISRA Statistical Support and Business Planning
SRO	Senior Responsible Owner
STEM (NET)	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (Network)
TAP	Technical Assessment Panel
TEO	The Executive Office
VAT	Value Added Tax
VES	Voluntary Exit Scheme
NISRA NON-DFP	NISRA staff located in non-DFP branches
NRS	National Records of Scotland
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFMDFM	Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister
OHS	Occupational Health Service
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPONI	Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence
PBNI	Probation Board for NI
PCOS	Public Confidence in Official Statistics
PCSP	Policing and Community Safety Partnership
PCSPS(NI)	Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland)
PDPs	Personal Development Plans
PfG	Programme for Government
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
PPS	Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland
PRA	Pre-release access
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PSRD	Public Sector Reform Division (DFP)

Acronym	Details
QAAD	Quality Assurance of Administrative Data
QES	Quarterly Employment Survey
QIF	Quality Improvement Fund
QUB	Queen's University Belfast
ROI	Republic of Ireland
RPI	Retail Price Index
RREPB	Regional Reporting and EU Programmes Branch
SAC	Statistics Advisory Committee
SCG	Statistics Coordinating Group
SCS	Senior Civil Service
SEUPB	Special European Programmes Body
SMF	Senior Managers' Forum
SPSS	A software package used for statistical analysis
SSA	Social Security Agency
STEM (NET)	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (Network)
SYE	Staff Year Equivalent
UU	Ulster University
VAT	Value Added Tax
VES	Voluntary Exit Scheme

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