



United Kingdom  
Debt Management  
Office

**Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt**

**Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service  
Investment Account**

**Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024**

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under section 45(3) of the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by Schedule 18 Paragraph 34 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 by the Department of Justice on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General

on

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# Performance Report

## Overview

The purpose of the overview is to provide sufficient information to understand the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account (NICTSIA), its purpose, the key risks to the achievement of its objectives and how it has performed during the year.

These accounts have been prepared by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt (CRND) under a direction issued by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland in accordance with section 45 of the Administration of Justice Act 1982 (the Act) as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

## Purpose and principal activities of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account

The NICTSIA receives funds from the deposit and investment accounts operated by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), which are available for suitors' funds paid into Court in Northern Ireland. It also contains funds due to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund.

By virtue of rules made under section 82(1) of the Judicature (Northern Ireland) Act 1978, on each day that the Accountant General of the Supreme Court of Judicature of Northern Ireland (the Accountant General) has excess cash in their account, they remit the excess amount to CRND for investment in the NICTSIA; whilst on each day that the balance in their account is insufficient to meet demands, they make a withdrawal from the NICTSIA to make good the shortfall.

Section 39(1) of the Act authorises the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland to make regulations setting out the range of investments in which CRND may invest money transferred to them by the Accountant General. Currently, investment is restricted to securities specified in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 9A of Part II of Schedule 1 to the Trustee Investments Act 1961 in line with regulations set out by HM Treasury prior to April 2010. The interest or dividends received on investments held by CRND are reinvested in authorised securities in the NICTSIA until required to meet payments.

Section 39(2) of the Act requires the payment into the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund of any surplus interest or dividends received in any accounting year by CRND and section 39(3) provides for any deficiency of interest or dividends to be made good out of the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund. The amount of any surplus or deficiency is obtained by deducting from the interest and dividends received by CRND the sum of:

1. the interest due to be paid or credited on funds in court;
2. the sum required by the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland in respect of administering funds in court;
3. the sum required by CRND in respect of expenses; and
4. any sum the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland requires to be set aside for depreciation in the value of securities.

By agreement with HM Treasury (and later by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland), NICTSIA need not pay over to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund more than £25,000 of its surplus interest in any financial year.

Section 39(5) of the Act provides a guarantee by the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund of the capital paid to CRND by the Accountant General in an instance when the Commissioners are unable to pay a sum due to the Accountant General.

## **Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt**

CRND's main function is the investment and management of major government funds. The investment powers differ from fund to fund.

The Secretary and Comptroller General and Assistant Comptroller, who are appointed by and act on behalf of the Commissioners, make the day-to-day decisions. There is no legislation that determines the specific responsibilities of the Secretary and Comptroller General and the Assistant Comptroller. However, in practice the role of the Secretary and Comptroller General is considered analogous to acting as the Accounting Officer for CRND. Therefore, the Secretary and Comptroller General takes responsibility for preparing and signing the accounts on behalf of the Commissioners.

The arrangements made between CRND and the NICTS in respect of the investment service provided by CRND are set out in a Memorandum of Understanding, which describes how CRND intend to achieve the agreed investment objectives.

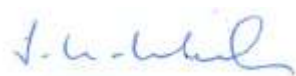
## **Performance summary**

CRND's strategy of investing in the Debt Management Account was maintained throughout 2023-2024. This strategy enabled the NICTSIA to earn a rate of interest very closely correlated with prevailing short-term sterling interest rates, whilst protecting its capital position and access to liquidity at all times.

## **Performance analysis**

During 2023-2024, total income from funds invested was £4,688k (2022-2023: £2,207k). This increase was primarily due to a rise in average interest rates on the NICTSIA's investments with the Debt Management Account, which correspond to the official Bank Rate. Overall, the NICTSIA generated a surplus of £232k (2022-2023: £419k surplus) after taking into account CRND's management expenses, interest payable on funds in court, any NICTS costs of administering funds in court and the surplus or deficit transferrable with the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund.

As at 31 March 2024, the total value of investments held by the NICTSIA was £92 million (31 March 2023: £107 million). This decrease was due to a net withdrawal of funds by the NICTS during the year.



**Jo Whelan**

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

2 July 2024

## Accountability Report

The accountability report comprises two sections: a **corporate governance report** and an **Assembly accountability and audit report**. The **corporate governance report** includes the following information: the responsibilities of the Secretary and Comptroller General; the composition, responsibilities and actions of the Advisory Board and the Audit and Risk Committee and how they have supported the Secretary and Comptroller General and enabled the objectives of the NICTSIA; the key risks faced by the NICTSIA and how it seeks to manage them. The **Assembly accountability and audit report** includes a formal opinion by the NICTSIA's external auditor to certify that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the NICTSIA's affairs for the year and that they have been prepared in accordance with all relevant rules.

These two sections contribute to the NICTSIA's accountability to the Northern Ireland Assembly and comply with best practice in relation to corporate governance norms and codes. In particular, the **corporate governance report** seeks to do so by describing the key mechanisms the NICTSIA employs to ensure it maintains high standards of conduct and performance. This includes the statement of Secretary and Comptroller General's responsibilities which describes her accountability to the Assembly for the NICTSIA's use of resources and compliance with rules set by the Department of Finance and HM Treasury to ensure best practice in financial management. The governance statement reflects the applicable principles of the Corporate Governance Code for Central Government Departments. The **Assembly accountability and audit report** confirms that expenditure and income of the NICTSIA have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and confirms that information in the Assembly accountability disclosures has been audited and approved by external auditors.

### Corporate governance report

#### Directors' report

Operationally, the CRND is part of the DMO and its staff are employees of the DMO. The CRND therefore has no staff of its own. The structure of the CRND is described on page 5.

#### Directors' conflicts of interest

In 2023-2024, no material conflicts of interest were declared by DMO Advisory Board members.

#### Reporting of personal data related incidents

The NICTSIA had no protected personal data related incidents during 2023-2024.



#### Jo Whelan

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

2 July 2024



## **Statement of Secretary and Comptroller General's responsibilities**

Section 45(2) of the 1982 Act requires the Commissioners to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the accounts direction as determined by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the NICTSIA, its income and expenditure, statement of financial position and cash flows for the financial year.

The Commissioners have appointed the Secretary and Comptroller General to discharge their statutory responsibilities, a role that is analogous to acting as an Accounting Officer. Therefore, the Secretary and Comptroller General has responsibility for preparing the annual accounts and for transmitting these to the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland.

In preparing the accounts, the Secretary and Comptroller General is required to observe the applicable accounting standards and be consistent with the relevant requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM), and in particular to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Department of Finance, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going-concern basis; and
- confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable, and take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining they are fair, balanced and understandable.

As the role of the Secretary and Comptroller General is analogous to acting as an Accounting Officer, it is considered that the responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, as set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland published by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland, apply to the Secretary and Comptroller General. These include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Secretary and Comptroller General is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the NICTSIA's assets.

### **Disclosure to auditors**

Section 45(1) of the Act requires the Commissioners to send accounts prepared by them to the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland.

Under section 45(3) of the Act, the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland examines, certifies and reports on the accounts and lays copies of them with this report before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland charges no audit fee for undertaking this statutory audit.

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

## **Governance statement**

### **Scope of responsibility**

The Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt (CRND) is responsible for ensuring the operation of a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of CRND's targets, policies and objectives in managing client investment portfolios whilst safeguarding the public funds for which they are accountable, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to the Secretary and Comptroller General.

CRND is a separate business entity managed within the control framework of the DMO. While the Secretary and Comptroller General is responsible for CRND's system of internal control, the Accounting Officer of the DMO is responsible for the wider control framework within which CRND is managed. In discharging the control responsibilities, the Secretary and Comptroller General takes assurance on the continued sound maintenance of the wider control framework from the governance statement for the DMO, although it is understood that only reasonable and not absolute assurance can be given that risks have been controlled.

It is also the responsibility of the Secretary and Comptroller General to ensure that all CRND fund management activities are conducted with due regard to value for money and operated in line with client instructions. The Secretary and Comptroller General has put arrangements in place to ensure that there is a proper evaluation of the balance of cost and risk in our operations.

CRND is committed to the highest standards of corporate governance and is subject to the guidance set out in the Corporate Governance Code for central government departments (the Code) and the principles laid down in that Code:

- Parliamentary accountability;
- The role of the Board;
- Board composition;
- Board effectiveness; and
- Risk management.

CRND does not conduct any part of its business with or through arm's length bodies (ALBs) and therefore CRND has not applied principle six which covers departmental governance arrangements with ALBs.

On 28 September 2023, it was announced that Sir Robert Stheeman, the Chief Executive of the DMO, would be retiring on 30 June 2024 and a recruitment process for a successor commenced in late December 2023. On 16 April 2024, Jessica Pulay was announced as the new Chief Executive from 1 July 2024.

### **Advisory Board**

The Secretary and Comptroller General was supported during 2023-2024 by the DMO Managing Board and then the Advisory Board (the Board) which, in addition to the Secretary and Comptroller General, is comprised of:

- Dame Sue Owen

Non-Executive Chair (NEC) - Dame Sue was a civil servant for 30 years, including 14 years at HM Treasury. Amongst other things, she worked on fiscal policy and debt management policy at HM Treasury. Dame Sue has previously held senior roles at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office,

Department for International Development and Department for Work and Pensions. Most recently she served as the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport, from 2013 to 2019. She has other current roles, including non-executive director at Pantheon International plc and Serco plc.

- Sir Robert Stheeman

DMO Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

- Jim Juffs

Chief Operating Officer

- Jessica Pulay

Co-Head of Policy and Markets

- Ruth Curtice

Non-executive HM Treasury representative

- Paul Fisher

Non-executive director - During a 26-year career at the Bank of England, Paul Fisher served as a member of the Monetary Policy Committee from 2009 to 2014, the interim Financial Policy Committee from 2011 to 2013 and the PRA Board from 2015 to 2016. He has a number of current roles including Chair of the London Bullion Market Association.

- Paul Richards (until 30 April 2023)

Non-executive director - During a 29-year career at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Paul was MD of business in fixed income trading, Debt Capital Markets and Corporate Banking across Europe, the Americas and Asia Pacific. Following his retirement from banking, he spent 18 months as a senior consultant to the FCA. He is currently Chairman of Insignis, a FinTech company he launched in 2015.

- Martin Egan (from 2 May 2023)

Non-executive Director - Martin Egan has 37 years of experience in financial markets. Most of his career was spent at BNP Paribas in various roles including Managing Director Global Co-Head Primary and Secondary Credit, Vice Chairman of the Global Markets Client Board, and Chair of BNPP UK Ltd. He was also Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Network at BNPP UK. Earlier in his career he held roles at JP Morgan Ltd., UBS Investment Bank and Credit Suisse First Boston. Martin was also the Chair of the Board of the International Capital Market Association from May 2017 to May 2018, and a member of the Board for another 5 years before that.

Non-Executive Directors are appointed by the NEC, in consultation with the DMO Accounting Officer, following a formal process and have fixed terms defined in their contract of service. All Non-Executive Board members including the NEC will receive an induction on joining and have access to additional information and training where it is considered necessary for the effective discharge of their duties.

One of the roles of the Board is to advise the Secretary and Comptroller General on any key decisions affecting CRND.

An executive sub-committee of the Board generally meets weekly and supports the Secretary and Comptroller General on operational decisions.

The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Board were set out on its formation in June 2022. The Board's effectiveness will next be reviewed in 2024-2025, once the new Accounting Officer is established in the role.

## 2023-2024 Advisory Board activities

Board meetings were held throughout 2023-2024 and covered regular agenda items, including risk management, staffing and progress against the operational business plan.

Board, as well as Audit and Risk Committee, attendance is outlined in the table below:

	Possible	Actual		
Dame Sue Owen	6	6		
Sir Robert Stheeman	6	6		
Jo Whelan	6	6		
Jim Juffs	6	6		
Jessica Pulay	6	6		
Ruth Curtice	6	5	Possible	Actual
Paul Fisher	6	6	4	4
Paul Richards	1	1	1	1
Martin Egan	6	5	3	3
Rodney Norman	n/a	n/a	4	4

## Audit and Risk Committee

The Secretary and Comptroller General was supported during 2023-2024 by the Audit and Risk Committee on matters relating to risk, internal control and governance. The Audit and Risk Committee covers the activities of the DMO, Debt Management Account, PWLB lending facility and CRND. The members of the Audit and Risk Committee during 2023-2024 were:

- Paul Fisher (Chairman)
- Paul Richards (until 30 April 2023)
- Martin Egan (from 2 May 2023)
- Rodney Norman

Audit and Risk Committee member - Rodney Norman was Finance Director of NS&I until 2018. Prior to that he was the Treasury Accountant at HM Treasury. This was preceded by a career in the City where he qualified as a Chartered Accountant with PWC and was Finance Director of the Banking Division of Close Brothers. He is currently a non-executive member of the Audit and Risk Committee

of the Army and until recently was a senior advisor to the Bank of England. He has previously been a non-executive director of a variety of organisations including the Pension Protection Fund where he was also a member of its Risk and Audit Committee and chaired the Nominations Committee.

Audit and Risk Committee meetings are typically attended by the DMO Accounting Officer, the Secretary and Comptroller General, the Co-Heads of Policy & Markets, the Chief Operating Officer, the Head of Internal Audit, the Head of Finance, the Head of Risk and the National Audit Office.

One of the Audit and Risk Committee's objectives is to give advice to the Secretary and Comptroller General on:

- The overall processes for risk, control and governance and the governance statement;
- Management assurances and appropriate actions to follow from internal and external audit findings, risk analysis and reporting undertaken;
- The financial control framework and supporting compliance culture;
- Accounting policies and material judgements, the accounts and the annual report and management's letter of representation to the external auditors;
- Whistleblowing arrangements for confidentially raising and investigating concerns over possible improprieties in the conduct of the DMO's business;
- Processes to protect against money laundering, fraud and corruption; and
- The planned activity and results of both internal and external audits.

During the period under review the Audit Committee paid particular attention to the following areas:

- Cyber security risks;
- Review of content within the Sustainability Report;
- User access rights and permissions;
- Trading system performance;
- Controls over static data;
- Anti-Money Laundering controls;
- Relationship management with strategic partners and key suppliers;
- Identification and reporting of operational risk incidents;
- Anti-fraud policy;
- High level risks and issues/principal risks and uncertainties;
- Disclaimers within published documents;
- Compliance with applicable legal & regulatory requirements;

- Memorandum of Understanding;
- Personnel and building security risks;
- Staff leavers process;
- Recording and reconciliation of IT equipment.

The Audit and Risk Committee covers a regular programme of agenda items, together with other current topics, and met four times during the year.

The Secretary and Comptroller General has also been informed by the following operational committees throughout the period under review:

### ***Fund Management Review Committee***

The Fund Management Review Committee monitors CRND activity relating to the performance of the government funds under management, including any reporting on compliance activities undertaken in relation to the funds.

The Fund Management Review Committee met four times in 2023-2024.

### ***Business Delivery Committee***

The Business Delivery Committee (BDC) reviews the status of the delivery of DMO's business and work plan as a collective cross-functional body, resolving emerging issues in a timely way, and agreeing priorities to ensure the plan stays on track. The most significant initiatives monitored by the BDC during the year were the trading system upgrade, infrastructure upgrades, and the IT strategy.

The Business Delivery Committee met regularly (typically weekly) throughout 2023-2024.

### ***Risk Committees***

The Secretary and Comptroller General is informed by two risk committees covering operational risk and material change programmes. More detail on the roles, responsibilities and activities of these committees can be found in the sections below.

## **Risk management and internal control**

The Secretary and Comptroller General is responsible for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of CRND's targets, policies and objectives in managing client investment portfolios whilst safeguarding the public funds for which she is accountable, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to her in the Managing Public Money document.

CRND is managed within the wider DMO system of internal control which is based upon what the DMO Accounting Officer, with the support of the Board, considers to be appropriate, taking account of the DMO's activities, the materiality of risks inherent in those activities and the relative costs and benefits of implementing specific controls to mitigate those risks. The DMO's position differs to that of a commercial organisation in that it must always be in a position to transact the underlying business required to meet its remit. As a result, the risks associated with this activity cannot be avoided and the system of internal control can only provide reasonable assurance against failure to achieve aims and objectives.

## **The Risk and Control Framework**

The Board has designed and put in place a formal risk management framework covering all the activities conducted and overseen by the DMO. This framework helps ensure that the DMO Accounting Officer is appropriately informed and advised of any identified risks and also allows the management of risks to be monitored. The risk management framework covers both regular operations and new business initiatives, and evolves as the range and nature of the DMO's activities change. The framework is supported by a clear 'three lines of defence' model:

### ***First line of defence:***

Day-to-day management of risk is the responsibility of management staff within business areas. The DMO considers effective risk management to be central to its operations and fosters a risk aware culture in which all members of staff, including Board members, are encouraged to understand and own the risks that are inherent in those operations. In particular, the DMO seeks to promote an environment in which staff feel comfortable to identify new risks and changes in previously identified risks, as well as weaknesses so that these may be assessed and appropriate mitigating actions put in place.

Mitigating actions typically include segregation of duties, staff training, clear lines of management delegation and reporting and robust business continuity arrangements.

### ***Second line of defence:***

Oversight of risk is provided by the Board and risk committees, whose role is to provide regular and systematic scrutiny of risk issues which lie within their remit and to support the DMO Accounting Officer in exercising his overall responsibility for risk management.

The DMO considers that the principal risks it faces arise in three broad areas: credit risk, market risk and operational risk. It has established committees to meet regularly to review the changing risk pattern for each of these areas and to set up appropriate responses. The work of these committees is described in more detail below.

#### *Credit and Market Risk Committee*

The Credit and Market Risk Committee (CMRC) meets on a regular basis, with more frequent meetings held when required, for example during times of market stress. The CMRC monitors and reviews the management of market, credit, and liquidity risk. The CMRC met seven times during 2023-2024.

#### *Operational Risk Committee*

The Operational Risk Committee (ORC) meets regularly to monitor operational risks and to review significant risk issues. The ORC is responsible for reviewing risk incidents identified through the DMO's risk incident reporting process, and for considering whether planned mitigating actions are appropriate. The ORC also reviews and tracks the progress of actions identified by Internal Audit. The ORC's scope includes issues relating to information risk, IT security, business continuity, anti-fraud and key supplier risks.

The ORC has advised the DMO Accounting Officer and the Board, during the year, on significant operational risk concerns, significant risk issues and trends as well as actions to mitigate such risks. The ORC has focused this year on business continuity, information security, cyber security and the IT strategy. The ORC also reviewed changes to the National Risk Register and the significance to the DMO. The ORC met eight times during 2023-2024.

### *Controls Group*

The Controls Group meets periodically to review issues affecting the DMO's system of internal control and to analyse material changes to the control environment. The Controls Group recommends actions to management to implement changes where appropriate. The Controls Group consists of representatives from Finance, Risk, Compliance and Internal Audit.

The Controls Group has advised the DMO Accounting Officer, the Board and senior management on any significant risk concerns stemming from the introduction of new business activities as well as risks relating to other change management activities. The Controls Group has also advised the DMO Accounting Officer on suitable mitigating actions where appropriate.

During the year the Controls Group reviewed key project change proposals. Other topics reviewed included static data controls and upgrading key internal systems.

### *Risk Management Unit*

The risk committees are supported by the DMO's Risk Management Unit (RMU) which ensures key risk issues arising from these committees are communicated to the DMO Accounting Officer and senior management on a regular basis, with additional ad-hoc reporting if an emerging issue requires it. The RMU also supports the formal risk reporting processes with defined outputs, including regular detailed risk reports which are reviewed by the Board and senior management.

As well as supporting the risk committee structure, the RMU provides control advice on risks. As part of the second line of defence the RMU is separate from, and independent of, the DMO's trading operations. The RMU conducts risk analysis and provides market, credit and operational risk capability for the DMO.

The identification, monitoring and mitigation of operational risk is facilitated by the RMU via quarterly consultations with heads of business units and functional teams. Significant risk issues are assessed for materiality and probability of occurrence. New risks, and risks to which exposure is increasing, are highlighted and actions are taken to ensure effective management of all risks. The DMO has Senior Risk Owners (SROs) who undertake a cross-functional moderation process to promote better prioritisation of operational risks across the organisation. The RMU maintains a central exception log to record all risk incidents raised, in order to identify control weaknesses and assign actions to improve controls.

### ***Third line of defence:***

The DMO's Internal Audit function is the third line of defence and provides the Accounting Officer with independent and objective assurance on the overall effectiveness of the DMO's system of internal control. It does this through a risk based work programme which is presented to and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee at the start of each year. All audits review the processes in place and where necessary raise findings relating to control weaknesses and management actions are agreed to mitigate any risks and enhance the control structure. Progress against agreed management actions is monitored on a regular basis to ensure issues highlighted by internal audit, as well as any issues raised by the external auditors, and other identified actions to improve the control environment, are managed and progressed within agreed deadlines. The function is independent of the DMO's trading activities and operations and has a direct reporting line to the Accounting Officer as well as the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. The work of Internal Audit includes assessing the effectiveness of both control design and control performance. With its independence and overall remit, Internal Audit provides a third line of defence against the risks that might prevent the DMO delivering its objectives.



## **Risk policies and procedures**

The DMO's risk policies reflect the high standards and robust requirements which determine the way risks are managed and controlled. The DMO Accounting Officer, with the support of the Board, ensures that policies are regularly reviewed to reflect any changes in the DMO's operations and/or best practice. In 2023-2024, this included policies relating to remote access, health & safety, business continuity, anti-bribery, personal dealing, information security, authentication and patch management.

Staff are asked to confirm that they have read and accepted the DMO's rules on personal dealing and the DMO's policy on the use of information systems and technology, and that they are aware of, and will continue to keep up to date with, the DMO's policies on whistleblowing, anti-fraud, anti-money laundering and information security. The DMO ensures that this exercise is undertaken on an annual basis allowing staff to maintain a good level of awareness of the DMO's policies in these areas. All members of staff have job descriptions which include reference to the specific key risks they are expected to manage.

Managers in each business function are responsible for ensuring that the operations within their area are compliant with plans, policies, procedures and legislation.

During 2023-2024 no concerns were raised by staff under the DMO's whistleblowing policy relating to CRND.

## **Key Developments**

### ***International conflicts***

Further to ongoing international conflicts, the DMO again continued to closely monitor actual and potential effects on activities, markets, counterparties and suppliers.

The DMO continued to work with partners across government to ensure all necessary steps were taken to maintain cyber security defences and also assurances were received from some strategic partners regarding their own arrangements, with details of the assurances put in place to mitigate against any disruption or impact. Internal assessments considered potential accounting or disclosure impacts and any effects through legal and regularity changes.

## **Risk Profile**

The Secretary and Comptroller General and the DMO Board believe that the principal risks and uncertainties facing CRND are outlined in the table below together with the key actions taken to manage and mitigate them:

### **Principal risks and uncertainties**

### **Mitigation and management**

#### **IT systems and infrastructure**

CRND relies on a number of IT and communications systems to conduct its operations effectively and efficiently.

During the year the DMO has progressed additional initiatives to further strengthen the resilience and security of its IT network and infrastructure. Strategic roadmap priorities were reviewed and the DMO carried out an internal health-check. The DMO has in place structured business continuity arrangements to ensure it is able to continue market operations in the event of an internal or external incident that threatens business operations.

Arrangements to support critical operations were in place throughout the year with a core team in the office, support teams working from the disaster recovery site and staff working from home. Assessment of business continuity needs is also a specific requirement for new projects and major business initiatives.

### **IT and data security**

The DMO could be the subject of an external attack on its IT systems and infrastructure. Through its activities the DMO gathers, disseminates and maintains sensitive information including market sensitive information and personal data about staff and market participants. The DMO seeks to ensure the highest standards of data protection and information management.

The DMO, including CRND, continues to work to maintain the required level of protective security covering physical, personnel and information security and is particularly aware of the growing threat posed by cyber security risk. IT and data security risks continued to be a specific area of focus in 2023-2024 and the DMO's IT team have been enhancing the detective, protective and recovery security controls.

Risks to data and information held by the DMO are owned and managed by designated Information Asset Owners. The DMO has a Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) who is responsible for the information risk policy and the assessment of information risks. The SIRO is a member of the Board and provides advice to Board members on the management of information risks.

The DMO has put in place several layers of defensive controls against external and internal attacks. This year the DMO undertook internal and independent testing to ensure defences remained robust against the changing landscape of cyber-attacks.

### **Reliance on third parties**

A number of the operational systems and services on which CRND relies are provided or supported by third party suppliers.

To mitigate the risk of failure of a key third party supplier the DMO undertakes regular corporate risk assessments of each key supplier to assess a range of factors including its financial strength and operational capacity, including the reliance on sub-contractors. The DMO has dedicated contract owners who meet regularly with key suppliers and monitor performance against the agreed Service Level Agreements, where appropriate.

The procurement manager and the vendor management group have been working to embed

consistent standards of supplier management across account managers by improving visibility of key contracts and sharing best practice. The DMO has introduced enhanced monitoring for critical suppliers (i.e. strategic partners) that focuses on risk and strategic aspects. Scrutinised areas include inherent risks, scenario analysis, assessment of supply chain risks including fourth parties, monitoring and assessing residual risks, and mitigation planning. External consultancy work assisted with the approach.

The DMO sought assurance that its key suppliers and strategic partners follow National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) guidance on cyber security. This year, further work was undertaken to explore alternative arrangements where over-reliance on particular key suppliers has been identified.

Work has commenced to align the DMO procurement policies and procedures with the new procurement legislation. The Procurement Bill received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. It will now be referred to as the Procurement Act 2023 (the Act) and will come into force in October 2024.

## **Transaction processing**

CRND relies on its operational processes to successfully execute a significant number of high value transactions on a daily basis. Reliance on the accurate execution of processes exposes CRND to operational risk arising from process breakdowns and human error.

A key component of CRND's control framework is the segregation of duties to ensure independent checking and reconciliation, and to avoid concentration of key activities or related controls in individuals or small groups of staff. In particular, segregation of duties takes place between front and back office activities.

All teams, including CRND, have documented procedures for their main activities and there are clearly defined authorisation levels for committing the DMO externally.

The RMU conduct regular control and compliance testing of CRND activities, providing the executive sub-committee of the Board with assurance on the effectiveness of operational controls and compliance with relevant Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority rules in the dealing and settlement areas.

The DMO also maintains a strong audit and control environment which includes a well embedded incident reporting procedure which extends to cover CRND. This promotes the early identification and

resolution of risk incidents and provides visibility to the DMO Accounting Officer and Board.

The continued focus has been on enhanced compliance monitoring over transaction processing, to provide assurance over controls standards during remote working. During the year, operational support training was provided to relevant staff to increase resilience in support roles. There were also enhanced controls implemented for oversight of counterparty interactions.

This year, the DMO worked on upgrading a key trading system.

### **People risk**

The DMO, including CRND, relies on maintaining a sufficiently skilled workforce at all levels of the organisation in order to operate effectively and efficiently, ensuring delivery of its strategic objectives.

The DMO is exposed to an increased risk of operational failure if it is unable to compete for, and retain, sufficiently skilled staff over time. Competition for skilled staff is generally against employers from the private financial services sector who have historically offered higher remuneration packages that are not subject to public sector remuneration policies.

DMO recruitment activity helps ensure that individuals with the appropriate level of skill and experience are appointed at all levels within the organisation. This helps mitigate the level of human error which could result in process failures.

The DMO follows the Civil Service Commission's recruitment principles and selection process to ensure vacancies are filled on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

The DMO has a formal performance appraisal process and all staff are given clear and achievable objectives. Progress is reviewed against these regularly.

The DMO's Training and Development policy is designed to help ensure that staff have the right skills to meet its objectives. Induction training is provided to all new employees.

Staff are encouraged to engage in activities which promote development and the DMO provides regular training opportunities and support for professional studies to enhance the skills base of its employees. The DMO also provides cross-training for different roles to help improve staffing flexibility and reduce turnover pressure. Teams are encouraged to ensure cross-skilling of staff to support resilience.

Salaries are benchmarked annually to equivalent private sector pay levels in order to keep management aware of any significant disparities that are developing. Challenges with recruitment and retention were again identified this year and were

reviewed by the Advisory Board. The DMO has a policy to recognise those staff who have performed well in their roles through the payment of one-off non-consolidated performance related awards. Any awards are assessed annually by the DMO Performance Review Team. They are determined by individual performance and criteria associated with the DMO's performance management process, which are also aligned to the policy for public sector pay.

A Staff Council has met regularly throughout the year and enabled an open exchange of ideas and views between management and staff representatives. Staff Council was consulted to discuss the future hybrid working arrangements. This has been an effective conduit for wider communication and consultation with all staff.

On an annual basis all DMO staff are given the opportunity to take part in the Civil Service People survey. Any issues raised via this route, with suggested mitigating action if required, are considered by the Accounting Officer and the Board.

The organisation has placed greater emphasis on undertaking key person risk analysis for succession planning. This year, HR organised management development training across the organisation to support the management group.

The DMO is a disability confident employer.

## **Review of effectiveness**

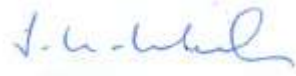
I have reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control and confirm that an ongoing process designed to identify, evaluate and prioritise risks to the achievement of CRND's aims and objectives has been in place throughout 2023-2024. This review included an assessment of any material risk and control issues identified and reported during the relevant period.

My review has been informed by the advice of the risk committees, the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the DMO, who have been delegated responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework. Comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other relevant reports have also informed this review.

In my role as Secretary and Comptroller General I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review, of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee.

In 2023-2024, no ministerial directions were given and no material conflicts of interest have been noted by the Board or Audit Committee members in the Register of Interests.

In my opinion, CRND's system of internal control was effective throughout the financial year and remains so on the date I sign this statement.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Whelan', is positioned above the printed name.

**Jo Whelan**

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

2 July 2024

## **Assembly accountability and audit report**

### **Regularity of expenditure**

The income and expenditure of the NICTSIA were applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly.

The above statement has been audited.

### **Fees and charges**

The NICTSIA received no fees or charges during the year.

The above statement has been audited.

### **Remote contingent liabilities**

The NICTSIA did not have any remote contingent liabilities as at 31 March 2024.

The above statement has been audited



### **Jo Whelan**

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

2 July 2024

## **The certificate and report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly**

### **Opinion on financial statements**

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Client Funds; and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

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

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account's surplus for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 and Department of Finance directions issued thereunder.

### **Opinion on regularity**

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

### **Basis for opinions**

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

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

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

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.



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

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

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Commissioners and the Secretary and Comptroller General with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

### **Other Information**

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

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Opinion on other matters**

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

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Finance directions made under the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

### **Matters on which I report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report.

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

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

### **Responsibilities of the Commissioners and the Secretary and Comptroller General for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Secretary and Comptroller General's responsibilities, the Commissioners and the Secretary and Comptroller General are responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- ensuring the annual report is prepared in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework; and
- assessing the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Commissioners and Secretary and Comptroller General anticipates that the services provided by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account will not continue to be provided in the future.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by the Northern

Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 and Managing Public Money;

- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition and posting of unusual journals
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate; and
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
  - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
  - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
  - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
  - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

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

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

**Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorinnia Carville". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

**Dorinnia Carville**

Comptroller and Auditor General

Northern Ireland Audit Office  
106 University Street  
BELFAST  
BT7 1EU

4 July 2024

# Accounts of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account

## Statement of comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £000	2023 £000
Interest income		4,688	2,207
<b>Total income</b>		<b>4,688</b>	<b>2,207</b>
CRND management expenses		(52)	(52)
NICTS costs of administering funds in court		(85)	(85)
Interest payable on funds in court		(4,294)	(1,626)
Surplus payable to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund	2	(25)	(25)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>232</b>	<b>419</b>

The notes on pages 31 to 34 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of financial position

As at 31 March 2024

Notes	2024 £000	2023 £000
<b>Assets</b>		
Demand deposits with the Debt Management Account	91,846	106,830
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>91,846</b>	<b>106,830</b>
<b>Liabilities and client funds</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
NICTS costs of administering funds in court	85	85
Surplus payable to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund	50	25
	<b>135</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Client funds</b>		
NICTS funds	90,757	106,191
Reserves*	954	529
	<b>91,711</b>	<b>106,720</b>
<b>Total liabilities and client funds</b>	<b>91,846</b>	<b>106,830</b>

\* These reserves are payable to the NICTS and arise due to annual surpluses as calculated in the statement of comprehensive income, combined with any reserve carried forward from the previous year.

The notes on pages 31 to 34 form part of these accounts.



**Jo Whelan**

Secretary and Comptroller General to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

2 July 2024

**Statement of cash flows**

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Interest received on deposits with the Debt Management Account	4,637	1,906
Decrease/(Increase) in demand deposits with the Debt Management Account	15,035	(4,411)
CRND management expenses	(52)	(52)
NICTS costs of administering funds in court	(85)	-
Deficit received from the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund	-	30
<b>Net cash from/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>19,535</b>	<b>(2,527)</b>
<b>Financing activities</b>		
Funds received from NICTS	12,370	47,337
Funds paid to NICTS	(31,905)	(44,810)
<b>Net cash (used in)/from financing activities</b>	<b>(19,535)</b>	<b>2,527</b>
<b>Increase in cash</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash at the beginning of the year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

The notes on pages 31 to 34 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of changes in client funds

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	NICTS funds £000	Reserves £000	Total NICTS funds £000
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>102,085</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>102,148</b>
Surplus for the year	-	419	419
Interest payable on funds in court	1,626	-	1,626
Transfer from client money employed account	(47)	47	-
Funds received from NICTS	47,337	-	47,337
Funds paid to NICTS	(44,810)	-	(44,810)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>106,191</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>106,720</b>
Surplus for the year	-	232	232
Interest payable on funds in court	4,294	-	4,294
Transfer from client money employed account	(193)	193	-
Funds received from NICTS	12,370	-	12,370
Funds paid to NICTS	(31,905)	-	(31,905)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>90,757</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>91,711</b>

The notes on pages 31 to 34 form part of these accounts.



## Notes to the accounts

For the year ended 31 March 2024

### 1 Accounting policies

#### (i) Basis of preparation

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with a direction made by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland under section 45(2) of the Administration of Justice Act 1982 in accordance with applicable International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and relevant requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual; and under the historical cost convention and on a going concern basis. In particular, the following standards have been applied:

- IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures
- IFRS 9 Financial Instruments
- IFRS 13 Fair Value Measurement
- IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements (revised 2007)
- IAS 7 Statement of Cash Flows
- IAS 8 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors
- IAS 10 Events After the Reporting Period
- IAS 24 Related Party Disclosures
- IAS 32 Financial Instruments: Presentation
- IAS 36 Impairment of Assets
- IAS 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

Certain IFRS have been issued or revised, but are not yet effective. Those issues or revisions expected to be relevant in subsequent reporting periods are:

- IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements:
  - This has been revised as part of the IASB's 'Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-Current (Amendments to IAS 1)'. Application is required for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. The NICTSIA expects to apply these revisions to IAS 1 in 2024-2025. The application of these revisions, which the IASB has delayed by two years, and which affect only the presentation of liabilities in the statement of financial position and relate to a clarification of the classification of current and non-current liabilities, are not expected to materially alter the presentation of the financial statements of the NICTSIA.
  - This has been revised as part of the IASB's 'Non-current Liabilities with Covenants (Amendments to IAS 1)'. Application is required for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. The NICTSIA expects to apply these revisions to IAS 1 in 2024-2025. The application of these revisions, which clarify how conditions with which an entity must comply

within twelve months after the reporting period affect the classification of a liability, are not expected to materially alter the presentation of the financial statements of the NICTSIA.

- IAS 7 Statement of Cash Flows and IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures, which have been revised as part of the IASB's 'Supplier Finance Arrangements (Amendments to IAS 7 and IFRS 7)'. Application is required for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. The NICTSIA expects to apply these revisions to IAS 7 and IFRS 7 in 2024-2025. The application of these revisions, which add disclosure requirements that ask entities to provide qualitative and quantitative information about supplier finance arrangements, are not expected to materially alter the presentation of the financial statements of the NICTSIA.

A separate income statement, as required by the accounts direction, has not been presented as the content would be identical to the statement of comprehensive income. A statement of comprehensive income is required by IAS 1.

**(ii) Assets**

Deposits with the Debt Management Account are financial assets held by the NICTSIA in order to collect contractual cash flows of principal and interest on specified dates. Therefore, these deposits are treated as financial assets measured at amortised cost.

**(iii) Income recognition**

Interest income is recognised using the effective interest rate method. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts or payments through the expected life of the financial instrument or, where appropriate, a shorter period, to the net carrying amount of the instrument.

## 2 Surplus payable to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund

Surplus interest, calculated according to section 39(2) of the Administration of Justice Act 1982, is payable to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund. A deficit is receivable from the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund. Payments of any surplus or deficit are made following agreement with the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland, usually in the following year:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Interest received	4,637	1,906
Interest payable on funds in court	(4,294)	(1,626)
NICTS costs of administering funds in court	(85)	(85)
CRND management expenses	(52)	(52)
	<b>206</b>	<b>143</b>
Surplus retained	(181)	(118)
<b>Surplus payable to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>

On 12 June 2024, the NICTSIA paid £25k to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund in respect of the surplus payable from 2022-2023. This reduced the liability to the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund from £50k to £25k.

## 3 Risk

### (i) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a counterparty, or security issuer, will fail to discharge a contractual obligation resulting in financial loss to the NICTSIA.

The investments of the NICTSIA comprised deposits with the Debt Management Account. These deposits were considered to have no exposure to credit risk because they are obligations of HM Government.

There were no renegotiated assets or assets considered impaired at 31 March 2024 (31 March 2023: no renegotiated or impaired assets).

### (ii) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk for the NICTSIA was considered to comprise interest rate risk.

The interest returns on deposits were closely linked to the official Bank Rate.

CRND monitored interest rate movements to help inform the NICTS of potential issues and events. The NICTSIA was not subject to active management and thus no formal market risk parameters were in place.

**(iii) Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that the NICTSIA will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with client withdrawal requests.

Assets held by the NICTSIA were highly liquid to enable all client obligations to be met as they fell due.

**4 Related party transactions**

CRND is a separate entity within the DMO. CRND client mandates are kept distinct from other DMO business.

During the year, the NICTSIA had a significant number of material transactions with the Debt Management Account, which is operated by the DMO. CRND's client mandates required the bulk of the funds to be invested in gilts or deposited with the Debt Management Account. The amount held by the Debt Management Account is shown in the statement of financial position, and the interest received and movement in amounts deposited are shown in the statement of cash flows.

During the year, the NICTSIA had a significant number of material transactions with the NICTS due to monies advanced and withdrawn in respect of investments. During the year, the NICTS paid £19.5 million (net of advances) to the NICTSIA (2022-2023: £2.5 million net advance).

**5 Events after the reporting date**

In accordance with the requirements of IAS 10, events after the reporting period are considered up to the date on which the Secretary and Comptroller General authorises the accounts for issue. This is interpreted as the date of the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly (page 26).

## Accounts Direction

### **Accounts Direction given by the Department of Finance in accordance with Section 45 (2) of the Administration of Justice Act 1982, as amended by schedule 18 paragraph 34 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010**

1. This direction applies to the **Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Investment Account**.
2. The Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt shall prepare accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Account at the reporting date and of its income and cash flows for the year then ended.
3. The Accounts shall be prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, and shall be consistent with relevant requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) issued by HM Treasury which is in force for 2023-24.
4. The Accounts shall present an Income Statement, a Statement of Comprehensive Income, a Statement of Financial Position, a Statement of Cash Flows, and a Statement of Changes in Client Funds. The Statement of Financial Position shall present assets and liabilities in order of liquidity.
5. The notes to the Accounts shall include disclosure of assets and liabilities, and of income and expenditure, relating to other central government funds including the National Loans Fund.
6. The report shall include:
  - a. a brief history of the Account and its statutory background;
  - b. an outline of the scope of the Account, its relationship to the Department of Finance and other central funds, and its management arrangements;
  - c. a management commentary, including information on financial performance and financial position, which reflects the relationship between the Account and other central funds; and
  - d. a Governance Statement.

**Stuart Stevenson**

Treasury Officer of Accounts