

# **The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland**

## **Annual Report and Accounts**

**For the year ended  
31 March 2020**

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This publication is also available on our website at [www.niccy.org](http://www.niccy.org).

# **NDPB NICCY Annual Report and Accounts For the year ended 31 March 2020**

**Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Commissioner for  
Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003  
by the Department for Communities**

**on**

**11 November 2020**

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## FOREWORD

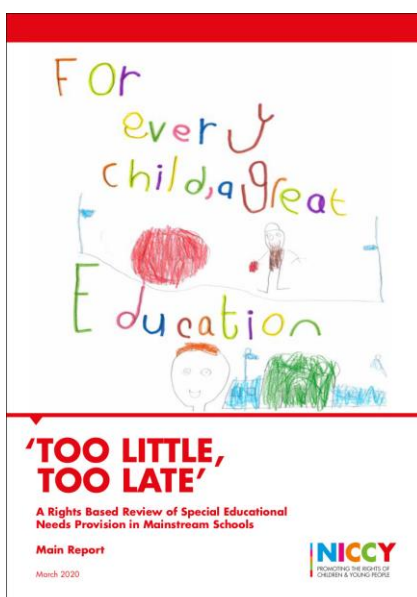
### From the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People



It is with great pride that I present this Annual Report to you. It outlines the enormous amount of work that the small but dedicated staff team at NICCY has been undertaking. What a year this has been.

I have been particularly pleased by the diligence we demonstrated in ensuring we explicitly

embedded and evidenced children's rights principles in our work, thereby providing further proof that children's rights are tangible and must not be viewed as solely aspirational. We have worked to ensure that NICCY's 'Still Waiting' review of mental health services, which was published in 2018, has not gathered dust on a shelf but is being actively implemented. Whilst there is still a lot of work to be done, the monitoring and oversight processes we have established and our annual progress reporting are helping to ensure that implementation is followed through and recommendations become reality.



We have further developed this methodology for 'Too Little, Too Late, a Rights Based Review of Special Educational Needs Provision in Mainstream Schools.' The Review was a direct response to parents and others sharing their frustration at the way that the right to education of children with special educational needs was being thwarted. During the year we were deeply concerned that the experiences of parents and our recommendations would fall on deaf ears, but I have been very pleased at how the relevant authorities, particularly the Education Authority, have accepted the report and recommendations. I view this as further evidence that NICCY's work continues to be seen as authoritative and compelling.

We will continue to work in this way as we begin our new Corporate Plan (2020-2023) and introduce further areas of work such as homelessness, waiting lists for healthcare and of course the impact of the Covid pandemic.



NICCY took more of a role on the international stage this year through our work with the European Network for Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC). As Chair-elect we led on the development on the network's annual position statement on the theme of Children's Rights in the Digital

Environment. This was agreed at the annual conference in Belfast where we were able to welcome over 100 delegates from across Europe, including representatives from the EU Commission and the Council of Europe. The full inclusion of young people made the event an enormous success.

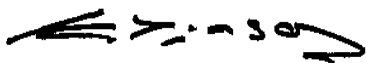
Hosting ENOC should have been the highlight for the NICCY team, however we moved on very quickly. The highlight of the year undoubtedly was the UNCRC 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event in W5 in Belfast – the sight of 2000 children and young people from across Northern Ireland having fun whilst learning more about their rights was both a noisy and a stunningly memorable sight. They arrived as children and left as child right's defenders.

The day ended with a summit where there were presentations from 7 young people and a panel of politicians from all the major political parties. The experience of listening to passionate and incredibly well informed 10 to 17 year olds talking about issues such as poverty, education and climate will remain one of the abiding memories of my time as Northern Ireland's Commissioner for Children and Young People.

It was also heartening that the politicians listened and responded well, with all committing to incorporating the UNCRC into domestic legislation.

After more than three years without an Executive or Assembly, devolution was restored in January with an ambitious programme outlined in the 'New Decade New Approach' deal. There are many areas in the deal to be welcomed as they significantly progress children's rights issues including those that NICCY views as priorities. These include mental health, an independent review of education, implementation of the Gillen Review of serious sexual offences, age discrimination legislation and an anti-poverty strategy amongst many others. The challenges of implementing the programme within the current mandate has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which both raises other issues but also highlights the consequences of not addressing the deep-rooted inequalities in our society. Northern Ireland is perfectly placed to fully implement the UNCRC and achieve the best outcomes for all our children and young people but there is a lot still to do to make this a reality.

My thanks go to everyone who has worked so hard to make this year another successful one for NICCY. The sponsor team at the Department for Communities have been supportive and accommodating. Colleague Commissioners in the UK and Ireland have been a great source of personal support. Working with the NICCY Youth Panel has been a joy and watching them take more of a lead in the organisation has been wonderful. Finally my thanks to the staff at NICCY for their patience, adaptability and commitment. They are Rights Defenders, each and every one.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Koulla Yiasouma".

**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**



# 1. PERFORMANCE REPORT

## OVERVIEW

This overview section explains the role and remit of NICCY, providing detail on the organisation's principal objectives for 2019-2020, identifies the key risks the organisation faced in the achievement of those objectives and provides an analysis of performance during the year. Having no Northern Ireland Assembly in place until January and the advent of Covid-19 and the resulting 'lockdown restrictions' in March, has obviously had a significant impact.

## STATEMENT ON PERFORMANCE BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Welcome to our Annual Report for 2019-20, the third year of our triennial Corporate Plan 2017-20. This has been a busy and eventful year – not only for us as an organisation, but for all. At time of writing, we are continuing to witness the effects of the Covid-19 virus which has resulted in many deaths worldwide and closer to home, as well as seeing increasing levels of contraction of the virus. The 'resumption' of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive followed by the issue of 'New Decade, New Approach' was very welcome, unfortunately this came at the time when Covid-19 was beginning to impact Northern Ireland and 'lockdown' restrictions were necessarily introduced alongside a reconfiguration of the Executive's focus and resources.

Our organisation, like others, responded as well as possible, putting in place the necessary measures to ensure the wellbeing of our staff, their families and wider society while ensuring business continuity in line with our remit. This required a move to working from home which fortunately, due to previous 'agile working' preparations, we could transition to fairly quickly and smoothly. Due to the restrictions, it was not possible to hold/host meetings, events, training seminars or sessions with our Youth Panel. This meant our scheduled events such as the launch of our SEN Review Reports and our legal CPD events had to be postponed, as did our NICCY Youth Panel residential. Undeterred we moved to online media and launched / promoted our SEN Reports, held meetings and continued our engagement with Ministers, MLAs, relevant authorities, NGOs, academics and other stakeholders - including children and young people - across the range of our work.



The unique circumstances of this time have required, even more than usual, NICCY's monitoring and advisory role in relation to Government's response to the global health crisis locally. While we appreciate nothing like this has been experienced by any of us, it has nonetheless required our focus on ensuring the measures introduced have not unnecessarily adversely impacted on the rights of our children and young people. We acted promptly in contacting relevant authorities in education, health, juvenile justice and secure settings on their arrangements in response to the virus. We also set up discrete sections on our website to update on our activities / responses including one for children and young people - to disseminate information and facilitate their participation.

The year under report, prior to the advent of Covid-19, was extremely busy. In September we hosted the 23rd Annual Conference of the European Network for Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) in Belfast as our Commissioner was incoming ENOC Chair; the conference theme was 'Children's Rights in the Digital World'. We also led on development of the ENOC position statement.



We celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the UNCRC on 20th November – by hosting a day full of 'child rights defenders' activities for children and young people from across Northern Ireland at W5, followed by a Children and Young People led political Summit with politicians invited from all Northern Ireland parties. A joint UK

Commissioners' Mid Term Report was issued to the UNCRC Committee at this time.

Our SEN Review Reports were launched and very positively received; we progressed work on Child Sexual Exploitation and a 'Barnahus Model' for NI; and issued our first Monitoring Report on the implementation of recommendations from our mental health 'Still

Waiting' report. Work on our formal investigation continued apace while demand on our legal complaints investigation service has continued to increase. Our legal work overall, that is advice, opinions, interventions, protected disclosures, tribunal representations, has also continued to grow. We provided advice to relevant authorities across our key priority areas of work in educational inequalities, mental health, safeguarding, youth justice, child poverty, the legacy of the conflict, NI Youth Assembly, unaccompanied asylum seeking children and Brexit. Details on these and our corporate performance and development of our new Corporate Plan 2020-2023 are included in the later sections of this report. See also on our website [www.niccy.org](http://www.niccy.org).

I wish to thank our Sponsor Department, Department for Communities for increasing our baseline grant which will mean we can meet the demand for our legal services and our programmes of work overall.

Acknowledgement and thanks also go to our ARAC and all our staff whose commitment and professionalism continue to ensure we achieve our mission 'to safeguard and promote the rights of our children and young people'.



**Mairéad McCafferty BA PGCE PQH LLM**  
**Chief Executive**

## PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES OF NICCY

NICCY was established through the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. This outlines NICCY's functions, duties and powers and the principal purpose (mission) of the Office (under Article 6(1)) which is to 'safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people'. This includes those up to the age of 18 and those up to 21 years if they have a disability, or have experience of being in the care of the State.

NICCY was established as an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) on 1 October 2003 and has been sponsored by Department for Communities since May 2016 (previously OFMDFM now the Executive Office) following public sector reforms and the reduction of the number of NICS Departments to nine.

### **NICCY's Mission (i.e. principal purpose) is:**

*'To safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of Children and Young People'*

### **NICCY's Vision is:**

*'A society where all Children and Young People flourish, are valued and their views respected.'*

### **Our Values**

All of our work during the past business year, was underpinned by our core values which we recently reviewed and updated. We apply these in our day-to-day work and seek outcomes based on their application and realisation. They are as follows:

1. **Children's and Young People's Rights** are at the centre of all we do;
2. We value and protect our **independence**;
3. We **respect** and value people, promote inclusion and diversity, and challenge discrimination and inequality;
4. We are open and honest and act with **integrity**; and
5. We are **optimistic**, striving to effect positive and lasting change.

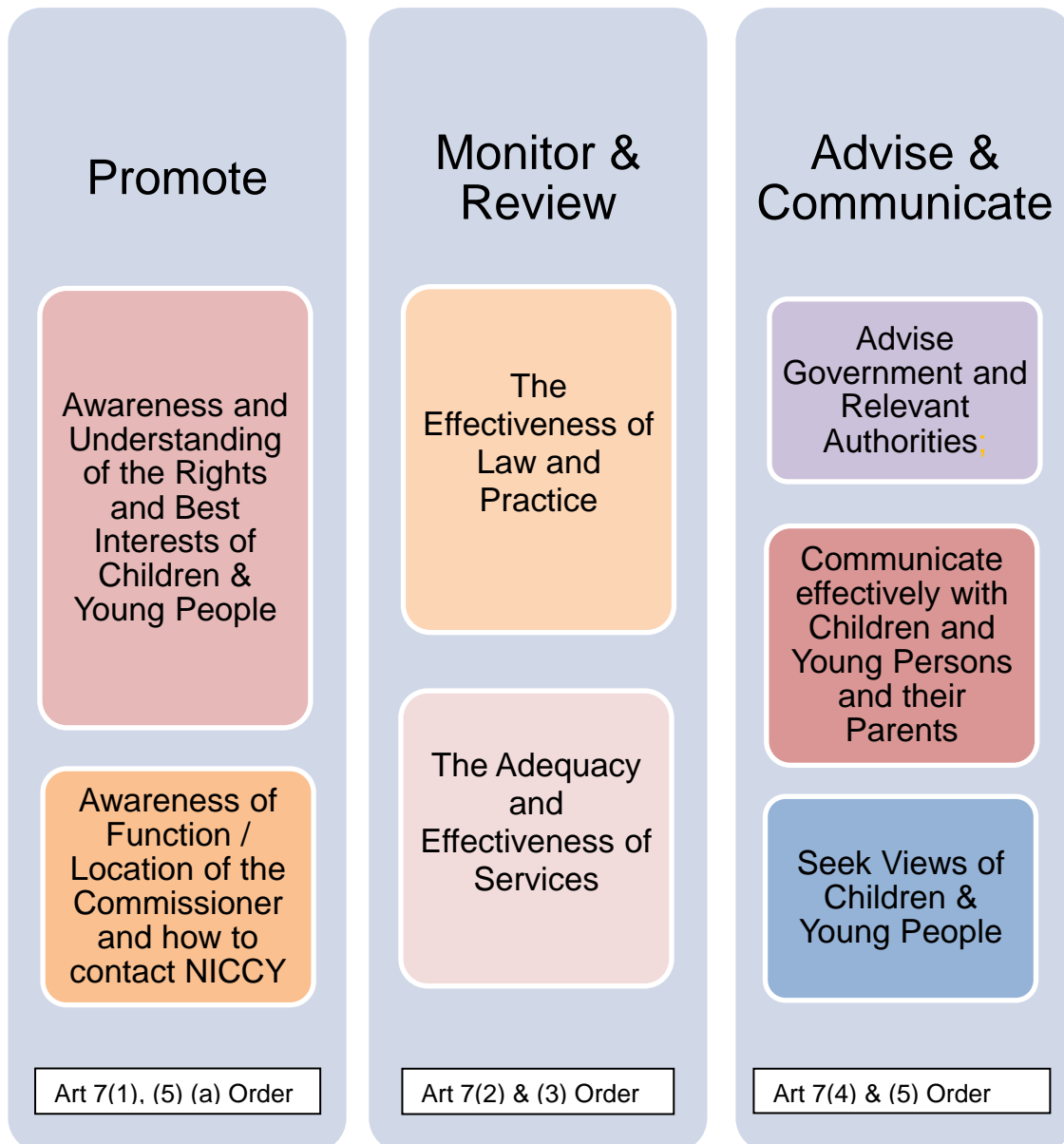
NICCY's activities are required to be guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - in fulfilling the duties and exercising the powers (see following diagrams) - as set down in the 2003 Order which states the Commissioner's paramount consideration shall be the rights of the child or young person; further, that NICCY shall have regard in particular, to the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child or young person (considered in light of his/her age and understanding); and have regard to the importance of the role of parents in the upbringing and development of their children.

The Commissioner is also supported by a NICCY Youth Panel (NYP) made up of young people from across Northern Ireland, who share and contribute their experiences and views with the organisation, to help inform on the rights based issues that affect children and young people and impact on their lives.

The organisations i.e. 'relevant authorities' under NICCY's remit are also as set out in the 2003 Order.

The duties and powers are grouped as follows:

## NICCY's Statutory Duties



## NICCY's Statutory Powers

### Undertake Commission Challenge

Research or educational activities concerning the Rights or Best Interests of Children and Young Persons or the exercise of Functions

Conduct Investigations as considered necessary or expedient to meet statutory duties

Compile info', provide Advice and publish any matter (including educational activities, investigations and advice) concerning their Rights and Best Interests

Art 8(1) & (3) & (5)

### Issue Guidance Make Representations

In relation to any matter concerning the Rights or Best Interests of Children or Young Persons

Make representations or recommendations to any Body or Person relating to the Rights and Best Interests of Children and Young Persons

Art 8 (2) & (6)

### Address Rights Breaches Advocacy

Assist with Complaints to / or against Relevant Authorities

Bring, Intervene in, or Assist in, Legal Proceedings

Art 11, 12 & 14



## **OBJECTIVES**

The Corporate Plan 2017-2020 objectives, on which these annual business targets are based, have been developed in line with the statutory duties and powers of the Office and, as required, are based on the relevant articles of the UNCRC.

### **Objective 1:**

Ensure that Children's and Young People's rights are respected, promoted and protected in the work of all duty bearers.

### **Objective 2:**

Highlight and address critical issues which adversely affect Children and Young People.

### **Objective 3:**

Address breaches of Children's and Young People's rights.

### **Objective 4:**

Raise awareness of Children's and Young People's Rights, the UNCRC and the functions of the Commissioner.

### **Objective 5:**

Promote the participation of Children and Young People in decision-making processes.

### **Objective 6:**

Ensure NICCY is an effective and efficient organisation.

Full details of these and our work on them are set out in NICCY's Corporate Plan 2017-2020, which is available on the NICCY website ([www.niccy.org](http://www.niccy.org)).

The Organisation reports internally on progress against annual Business Plan objectives and targets on a monthly and quarterly basis and externally on a quarterly basis to our Sponsor Department – Department for Communities. This Annual Report details the outputs, broad outcomes and achievements over the course of the business year.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

Our work entails effective working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, NICCY's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy identifies these as:

- Children and Young People;
- Parents and Adults;
- Relevant Authorities as laid down in statute;
- Government, Government Ministers, MLAs and Politicians (NI Executive, NI Assembly, Westminster Government);
- Government Departments (including Sponsor Department) and Officials;
- Councils;
- Statutory Bodies and ALBs (NDPBs);
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs);
- Legal institutions and agencies;
- Media – print, online, TV, radio; and
- Domestic, national and international rights bodies (Equality and Human Rights Commissions, British and Irish Network of Ombudsmen and Children's Commissioners (BINOCC), European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC), UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities UN CRPD), Council of Europe and CEDAW Committee i.e. Bodies/Committees overseeing other relevant International Human Rights Instruments whose work/reports are relevant to NICCY's work.

### **Domestic, National and International Networks**

As well as our NI specific focus, NICCY works across a range of networks in support of its remit. During the year NICCY engaged with all stakeholders listed above through our various fora and in pursuance of objectives as set out in our annual business plan.

### **British Irish Network of Ombudsman and Commissioners (BINOCC)**

The network holds quarterly meetings on a rotational basis to address and collaborate on issues of common concern across the jurisdictions. This year we have focused on a range of Children's Rights matters e.g. welfare reform/universal credit, UNCRC incorporation,

Brexit, equal protection, minimum age of criminal responsibility, child protection and digital technology as well as collaborating on a Mid-Term Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

### **European Network of Commissioners (ENOC)**

NICCY is a member of the European Network of Ombudsmen and Commissioners for Children (<https://enoc.eu/>). ENOC comprises 34 member States and 42 Bodies whose overall aim is to encourage the fullest possible implementation of the UNCRC, share and disseminate information, promote children's rights, and support and promote the development of effective independent Offices for children. The Commissioner was elected Chair of ENOC and took up this position in September.

As Chair-elect NICCY hosted the 23<sup>rd</sup> ENOC Annual Conference (25-27<sup>th</sup> September) in Belfast. The theme was '*Children's Rights in the Digital World*'. NICCY led on development of the programme and [ENOC 'Position Statement'](#) which was adopted at the final day's General Assembly.

Both the conference and statement was influenced by the European Network of Youth Advisors (ENYA) comprised of young people representing their jurisdictions. Between February and June 2019, ENYA teams in each area developed their own recommendations. Two elected young representatives per country/region, accompanied by ENYA Coordinators, then participated in the ENYA Forum in June in Brussels prior to participating in the ENOC Conference in September.

ENOC and ENYA members were joined at the annual conference by children's rights advocates, Council of Europe, EU and Government representatives, NGOs and regulators. This included recommendations to State Parties' Governments, international authorities and global technology companies, to make further efforts to provide a safer and improved online world for children - reminding relevant authorities that children must have a say on actions and decisions that affect them; that they should enjoy equality of access to technology without discrimination; that efforts should be intensified to reduce the availability of harmful content to protect children from online abuse and exploitation; and that parents should be better supported in their role as protectors and mediators.

ENOC also issued an additional [Position Statement and Recommendations on 'Ending Detention of Children for Immigration Purposes'](#) – of particular relevance given we have exited the EU (the transition period ends on 31 December 2020).

NICCY also facilitated a pre-conference seminar (24/09/19) for ENOC members with Council of Europe representatives on ‘Engaging with Council of Europe Human Rights Mechanisms relevant to the Rights of the Child’ which was extremely helpful.

### **UNCRC Committee on the Rights of the Child**

NICCY continues to engage at the UN level and issued – in collaboration with the other UK Children’s Commissioners – a ‘Mid-Term Report’ to the Committee this business year.

In preparation for our next biennial ‘Statement on Children’s Rights in Northern Ireland’ (‘SOCRNI II’), we have drafted input against key priorities and delayed its launch until November 2020 to better reflect the impact of Covid-19. This ‘Statement’ is contextualised within the UNCRC. We have received NI Government Departments’ progress against the UN Committee’s 2016 Concluding Observations in our Monitoring Table which will, as last time, be launched online and in parallel with ‘SOCRNI’.

In 2002 the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a General Comment (GC No. 5) on the role of Independent Human Rights Institutions for children. This states that it:

*‘Considers the establishment of such bodies to fall within the commitment made by State Parties upon ratification, to ensure the implementation of the Convention and advance the universal realisation of children’s rights’.*

More recently in its 2016 Concluding Observations, the UN Committee recommended that the State Party expedite:

*‘bringing in line with the Convention its domestic legislation, at the national and devolved levels ... in order to ensure that the principles and provisions of the Convention are directly applicable and justiciable under domestic law’<sup>1</sup>.*

NICCY has called for some time now, for incorporation of the UNCRC to better protect and promote the rights of our children and young people. Indeed at the political Summit led by children and young people, they asked and got agreement from Party Representatives on this.

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<sup>1</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2016 Concluding Observations S.7(a).

## KEY ISSUES AND RISKS IN DELIVERY OF OBJECTIVES

Key risks faced by NICCY in terms of delivering objectives during the majority of the 2019-20 business year were as set out below. In March, we obviously added those associated with the impact of Covid-19. These were recorded on our Corporate Risk Register and reviewed quarterly to ensure appropriate controls, mitigation measures and further action as/where necessary. Inherent and residual ratings reflected agreed levels of risk and risk appetite – some of which were outside the control of NICCY but which impacted on delivery. Our sponsor department (DfC) was kept updated on these through appropriate accountability meetings and at quarterly Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meetings.

Main corporate risks throughout the year included:

1. Financial Allocations: delivery on NICCY's statutory duties and legislative remit through Annual Business Plan objectives and targets is compromised due to insufficient budget allocation; DfC had received indicative required budget and subsequent pressure re' pension contributions, statutory duties, programmes;
2. Transformation Agenda by the NICS including Premises move (post 2021); replacement of Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) with 'Partnership Agreement' which may compromise NICCY's independence as an Independent Human Rights Institution;
3. Response to Review of NICCY's Legislation: recommendations from both reviews (2007 & 2013) of NICCY's legislation are not progressed compromising NICCY's effectiveness and status as the independent Human Rights Institution for Children and Young People; See \* on next page
4. NICCY's reputation: corporate and organisational reputation reduced due to adverse activity and/or adverse media or public attention;
5. Organisational Culture: organisational culture and developments may adversely impact performance and delivery on Business Plan objectives, staff morale, attendance, internal processes and outcomes;
6. NICCY is conducting its first formal investigation using statutory powers; difficulties may arise due to lack of capacity and/or resources causing delay and adversely impacting on time schedules and/or challenge by relevant authorities; and
7. BREXIT': process and outcome adversely impacts on NICCY's remit i.e. reduces rights protections / compromises access to services for Children and Young People / reduces family incomes contributing to child poverty.

Subsequently we added Covid-19:

- Covid-19: Staff contraction of virus and measures in place to address the crisis might cause disruption of work to such an extent that NICCY is unable to deliver on some / all of its business plan objectives and potential for reduced budget expenditure.

In relation to 'state of play' in respect of each risk:

1. We could remove the budget risk as DfC confirmed pensions costs were to be covered; we subsequently had confirmation of our successful business case to meet increasing pressures on us to meet demand particularly in our legal department; This was replaced by Covid-19 risks;
2. The proposed move was confirmed as deferred until 2024; the MSFM is still in place as we await new ALB Partnership Agreement;
3. This has been progressed insofar as possible and is now an audit recommendation;
4. Reputational risks will remain given NICCY's remit;
5. This risk is greatly reduced, given the ongoing work we have conducted this year including staff team development days and reviewing our values;
6. Work is ongoing; given heavy pressures on our legal department from Complaints casework and increasing demand for our legal services, we are pleased following our successful business case, that we can recruit much needed staff to NICCY; and
7. Risks and impacts associated with 'Brexit' and NICCY's remit still apply; these will begin to manifest more obviously from January 2021 (in next business year).

\*In its 2016 Concluding Observations, the UNCRC Committee also recommended in reference to general comment No. 2 (2003) on general measures of implementation, that:

*State Parties further strengthen the independence of established Children's Commissioners, in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).<sup>2</sup>*

The Review of NICCY's legislation and subsequent submission of our 'Article 24 Report' reiterates the above 'Call' among its recommendations.

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<sup>2</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2016 Concluding Observations. S.16(a).



## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT

The organisation met all targets in the 2019-20 business year, in relation to the 6 high level Corporate Objectives and 27 Business Plan targets / sub targets. However, as stated earlier, given the absence of the NI Executive and Assembly until January 2020, it was not possible to gain concrete progress on legislative reform for equal protection, extension of mitigation measures on welfare reforms (though these were addressed), age discrimination or monitoring the implementation of the Children’s Services Co-operation Act and ten year Children’s and Young People’s Strategy (though we did receive a commitment from the Education Minister that this would go to the NI Executive at an appropriate time, following the urgent response necessary in respect of Covid-19). The ‘New Decade, New Approach’ document highlights these and we anticipate extensive engagement on same going forward.

As is set out in the ‘Development and Performance During the Year’ summary Table’, we have nonetheless achieved substantial progress with relevant Stakeholders on a wide range of rights issues in adherence to NICCY’s statutory duties and powers. We have also taken on additional reactive areas of work following representation to the Office.

### **Protected Disclosures**

The Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998 protects workers who “whistle blow” in certain circumstances. One such circumstance is that disclosures need to be made to a ‘Prescribed Person’. NICCY were first designated as a Prescribed Person by virtue of the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) (Amendment) Order (NI) 2014 (following updating of the Order in 2010, 2012) to receive disclosures regarding safeguarding of the rights and best interests of children and young people. This business year we received 4 separate ‘protected disclosures’ during the business year (3 related to 1 matter); having investigated, we have closed all 4 as well as closing 2 carried forward from the previous year (6 in total).

### **Results for the Year**

The results for the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People for the period are set out in detail on pages 79-94. The net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2020 was £1,468,376 (2019 - £1,320,532). This net expenditure resulted in a negative balance in reserves of £15,736 as at 31 March 2020 (negative £36,685 in 2019). Whilst there is a negative balance in reserves as at 31 March 2020, NICCY is able to draw funds from our sponsor department to cover all expenditure within the limits of our Grant in Aid Budget.

### **Going Concern**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland operates as a going concern. The office is financed through Grant-in Aid from our Sponsor Department, the Department for Communities and future financing is accordingly to be met by such grants. It has accordingly been considered appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of NICCY's financial statements for 2019-2020.

### **Non-Current Assets**

Details of the movements of non-current assets are set out in Notes 3 and 4 on pages 88-91.

## PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

### HOW NICCY MEASURES PERFORMANCE

Performance, impact and outcomes are measured in NICCY against the achievement of annual objectives and targets in a range of ways:

Internally via:

- Reporting to the Commissioner;
- Senior Management Team to Chief Executive;
- Leadership and Management Team to Chief Executive;
- Staff Meetings – updates reported and shared with all;
- Departmental workplans based on annual Business Plans monitored monthly;
- Completion of quarterly Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PMEF) reports and Q4 End of Year PMEF;
- Risk Management i.e. managing risks affecting business plan delivery (see Corporate Risk Register and Departmental Risk Registers); and
- Performance management systems including annual Staff appraisals, 1-1s, line management and supervision.

Externally via Sponsor Department:

- ALB Performance Quarterly Reports;
- ALB Governance Checklists;
- Assurance Statements;
- Financial reporting against budget targets, allocations and expenditure; and
- Consumption reporting and Drawdowns.

NI Assembly:

- Annual Report and Accounts;
- Ministerial meetings;
- Committee evidence sessions; and
- Engagement with MLAs.

UN level:

- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; and
- UN Bodies as/when necessary e.g. UN CRPD, CEDAW.

The following tables summarise performance for this year across each high level objective.

## DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE DURING THE YEAR

**HLO 1 - To ensure that children's rights are respected, promoted and protected in the work of all duty bearers.**

**NICCY's work influences Government and its Agencies to more effectively deliver in compliance with children's rights and best interests and promotes respect for same at local, national and international levels.**

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlight and promote key Child's Rights issues at Local, National and International levels</li> <li>Organise and host ENOC Annual Conference in Belfast</li> </ul>	<p><b>SOCRNI 2018</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY Calls are monitored and progressed via Programmes of Work (POW) – reporting throughout the year; and</li> <li>Work has commenced on the second biennial 'Statement on Children's Rights in NI' ('SOCRNI II'), and Monitoring of the 2016 Concluding Observations.</li> </ul> <p><b>UNCRC 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Raise awareness of UNCRC Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numbers attending: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1525 children and young people, 415 adults (eg teachers, parents/carers / Summit guests) giving a total of 1940;</li> <li>Partnerships developed with 12 organisations; and</li> <li>57 NICCY Youth Panel members supported planning and delivery of activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>83%</b> rated their experience as excellent or very good.</li> </ul> <p><b>C&amp;YP Summit:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 presentations by children and young people to representatives of all the main political parties (Alliance, DUP, Green Party, SDLP, Sinn Fein, UUP); and</li> <li><b>Each political representative confirmed their support for incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic legislation.</b></li> <li><b>Mark the Day:</b> 26 agencies involved including: 3 Government Departments; 5 Councils; 12 schools; 4 ALBs &amp; 2 NGOs;</li> <li><b>Poster Exhibition:</b> In partnership with Libraries NI, 9 libraries scheduled as exhibition hosts over a 9-month period from April to December '20 but due to Covid-19, exhibition tour has been postponed to a later date; and</li> <li><b>Animation:</b> In partnership with CCEA, 'Incorporation' animation created.</li> </ul> <p><b>ENOC Annual Conference 2019:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Day Annual Conference hosted by NICCY in Belfast – preceded by CoE seminar in Belfast;</li> <li>Extensive cross organisational work involved including with ENOC secretariat;</li> <li>ENOC Members' attendance reflected membership across 42 European Countries/regions;</li> <li>NI Attendees over the 2 'open' Conference Days included Govt Depts, Officials, NGOs, Academics, Young People;</li> </ul>

**NICCY's work influences Government and its Agencies to more effectively deliver in compliance with children's rights and best interests and promotes respect for same at local, national and international levels.**

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise government on relevant policy and legislative developments to ensure compliance with children's rights.</li> <li>Monitor and advise on implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy Delivery Plans in line with Children's Services Co-operation Act (2015).</li> <li>Advise on likely impact of 'Brexit' on the rights of Children and Young People.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 'Children's Rights in the Digital World' extensively promoted with final ENOC Position Statement issued to respective Governments of each jurisdiction with specific Calls for implementation;</li> <li>NI / Belfast promoted as tourist destination / place of interest to visit; and</li> <li>All feedback extremely positive.</li> </ul> <p><b>ENYA Initiative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European Network of Youth Advisors seminar in Brussels in June in which 2 NYP members took part. ENYA statement informed by NYP input;</li> <li>NICCY Youth Panel had developed advice for ENOC members on 'Children and Young People Living in a Digital World';</li> <li>Young people's voices/ideas and opinions formulated into a set of recommendations that were shared directly with conference delegates;</li> <li>NYP representative from this group then took part (with other countries'/regions' Rep's) in the ENOC Conference in Belfast in September to inform the Ombudspersons and Commissioners' statement; and</li> <li>Young people delivered 3 sessions as part of conference programme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Children's &amp; Young People's Strategy (CYPS):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY advice provided via Project Board to this;</li> <li>CYPS issued as a 'Cross Departmental Strategy; on restoration of NI Assembly, it is now with Education Minister – to go to NI Executive for sign off;</li> <li>This has been delayed since the advent of Covid-19 pandemic however, is followed up periodically; and</li> <li>NICCY advice on participation mechanisms incorporated via membership on CYPS Participation Project Group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Children's Services Co-operation Act</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delays causing issue re' progress of implementation and effective monitoring of CSCA.</li> </ul> <p><b>UK Exit from EU 'Brexit'</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updates received from Govt Depts at NICCY roundtable meetings;</li> <li>Monitoring NI Dept's preparations for Brexit as they related to children and young people; and</li> <li>NICCY's concerns re' Children's &amp; Young People's Rights highlighted.</li> </ul>

## HLO 2: To highlight and address critical issues which adversely affect children and young people.

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<p><b>Tackling Child Poverty</b> by raising awareness of the high levels of child poverty in Northern Ireland, its impact on children's lives and advise Government on appropriate action to tackle it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a public engagement programme to raise awareness of the extent and impact of child poverty.</li> <li>Develop advice for government on legislation and policy relevant to child poverty and welfare reform.</li> </ul> <p><b>Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing</b> by gathering evidence as to the adequacy of child and adolescent mental health services with a view to outlining critical actions for Government to better meet the needs of children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise and Monitor implementation of recommendations from NICCY's Rights Based Review- Still Waiting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tackling Child Poverty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY worked in partnership to promote public awareness of Child Poverty week 7 - 11<sup>th</sup> October following 'Frameworks' project facilitated by NICCY with 12 participating NGOs - sharing information and key messages and drawing on research. Organisations posted agreed messages across social media channels during the week. All organisations reported increased engagement with posts up to 300% more impactful than average. A Commissioner blog calling for Welfare Reform mitigations to be extended was published and promoted online.</li> <li>Lack of NI Executive limited the opportunities to advise on a new child poverty or Social Strategy. Given the Welfare Reform Mitigation package was due to end in March 2020, NICCY focussed on developing clear calls in relation to a new Mitigation package, including new elements to mitigate against the 'Two Child Limit'. This was communicated to DfC and in a paper to the NI Select Affairs Committee. NICCY also liaised with the Cliff Edge Coalition.</li> </ul> <p><b>Improving Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In February 2020 we published the first (of four) Monitoring Report in response to the DoH led IDG Progress Update Report and a revised draft Action Plan. While the Monitoring Report welcomed limited progress in some areas - particularly the establishment of Multi-disciplinary teams in 5 of the 17 GP federation areas - the Commissioner expressed frustration that more progress had not been made in areas previously identified as priorities. A number of the detailed actions in the Inter Departmental Group's (IDG) draft Action Plan are subject to additional resources (both money and people) being found to implement them. A significant number of the actions are subject to Ministerial approval.</li> <li>NICCY gave evidence to the NI Assembly Health Committee;</li> <li>Evidence session to All Party Group on Mental Health; and</li> <li>NICCY meeting held with the Health Minister.</li> </ul> <p>NB: The current public health crisis surrounding Covid-19 have contributed further to the uncertainty and it is likely to significantly exacerbate existing mental health problems. We expect mental health waiting lists to increase as a result of this.</p>



Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice to government on legislation, policy and practice relevant to Child and Adolescent Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overcoming Educational Inequalities and Promoting Inclusion</b> by working to ensure that the education received by all children is of a high standard and develops every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational Inequalities - Work towards the achievement of an education system compliant with Article 29(1) of the UNCRC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NI Executive made a commitment in 'New Decade, New Approach' to publish a Mental Health Action Plan within 2 months and a Mental Health Strategy by the end of the year.</li> <li>NICCY Youth Panel engaged with Mental Health Week (see 5.1);</li> <li>Terms of Reference created between NICCY and Elephant in the Room (Belfast City Council Youth Forum and the NI Youth Forum) to develop a young people's campaigning advocacy toolkit. (see 5.1);</li> <li>NYP Young people attended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Party Group for CYP and meeting with HSCB;</li> <li>Launch of University of Ulster (UU)/Adult Mental Health (AMH) report Launch at Stormont (see 5.1).</li> </ul> </li> <li>NYP gave feedback on IDG report and NYP self-selected to be part of IDG subgroup to monitor future reports; and</li> <li>Young people speaking on behalf of themselves and their peers provided a powerful voice, welcomed by practitioners / professionals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overcoming Educational Inequalities and Promoting Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throughout the year, regular meetings were undertaken with Department of Education (DE), Education Authority (EA) and; Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) on a range of educational inequalities. DE, EA and ETI are, therefore, aware of the predominant issues impacting on children's right to an effective education and where fundamental reform is required;</li> <li>In addition, NICCY issued comprehensive advice to the DE and EA on various issues throughout the year including Home to School Transport; Guidelines for Elective Home Education; DE's Review of suspensions and expulsions; DE's draft Newcomer Policy; and the socially disadvantaged criteria for pre-school admissions;</li> <li>The provision of such advice ensured that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EA and DE are aware of child rights issues relating to School Transport;</li> <li>EA and DE are aware of (1) how issues relating to elective home education can affect children's rights and best interests and (2) action required to ensure that home schooled children receive a quality education and have a say in decisions regarding the nature of their own education;</li> <li>DE is informed of the key issues for Newcomer children and where supports are lacking. This includes supports to recognise and respond to the diverse needs of Newcomer pupils, to improve the integration of Newcomer pupils, to address bullying and discrimination, and to improve funding and accountability;</li> <li>DE is informed of the issues regarding the current suspension and expulsion arrangements at the earliest opportunity in the review process; and</li> <li>DE, EA and ETI are aware of the predominant issues impacting on children's right to an effective education including the need to combat inequalities in education arising from socio-economic disadvantage.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Discussions were also had with NYP in relation to the Special Educational Needs (<b>SEN</b>) Review work. This provided youth panel members the opportunity to learn more about the rationale for this work, the issues found, and the recommendations for improving the system for CYP with SEN in mainstream schools;</li> </ul>

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs of Education – Ensure the rights and best interests of children are upheld in accessing and participating in education.</li> <li>SEND and Inclusion – Ensure the rights and best interests of children are protected, promoted and realised in the SEND Framework and associated work on SEND undertaken by Government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>133 primary and 57 post-primary pupils took part in 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary our ‘Big Conversation on Education’. The biggest issues, identified by both primary and post-primary pupils, included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pressure put on young people to do well in exams;</li> <li>The cost of education for families;</li> <li>Academic selection;</li> <li>Children and young people not having a voice in schools about the issues that affect them; and</li> <li>Insufficient mental health and well-being supports in schools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>This feedback was shared with the Departmental Children’s Champions at a meeting in December 2019, ensuring that all Departments were informed of their concerns regarding the NI Education system;</li> </ul> <p><b>Funding in education</b> was addressed at quarterly meetings with EA, ETI and DE. In Sept, we met with DE to explore its intended response to the NIAC Inquiry into education funding in NI and its long-term vision for education funding in NI. Specific consideration was given to the insufficiency of financial investment in supports/services for children with SEN at a meeting with EA in November.</p> <p>A briefing paper was prepared and submitted to the NI Assembly Education Committee at the end of March 2020. The outlined costs associated with education are impacting on the ability of many children and young people to fully participate in their education and also highlighted NICCY’s priorities for education including the need to fundamentally reform NI’s education system in order to address the financial crisis facing the sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DE consultation on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) framework was expected for November 2019, and then spring 2020, however, this has now been postponed further in light of the Covid-19 outbreak;</li> <li>The vast majority of NICCY’s work this year related to <b>SEND and Inclusion</b> has been the completion of the investigatory review of SEN Provision in Mainstream Schools ‘<b>Too Little, Too Late</b>’. This was an extensive piece of work and comprised an (1) analysis of operational data provided by the EA and (2) a comprehensive process of stakeholder engagement to capture the experience and views of key stakeholders. This included: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Parents/Carers; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 608 parents/carers responded to a survey;</li> <li>b. 55 parents/carers took part in a focus group; and</li> <li>c. 6 in-depth interviews conducted;</li> </ol> </li> <li>II. Principals/ Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs); <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 84 principals/SENCOs completed an online survey which explored experiences of accessing supports via the time allocation model;</li> <li>b. A total of 17 primary and 10 post-primary schools participated in six focus groups. The groups comprised 21 Principals and one Vice Principal, seven SENCOs and two representatives from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). The majority of</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Wellbeing in Education – Ensure the promotion of child wellbeing in children's participation in, and access to, education.</li> </ul>	<p>focus groups were conducted between April and June 2019, and one final focus group discussion was facilitated on 2 October 2019;</p> <p>III. Educational Psychologists;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A total of 57 EPs responded to the survey, with 21 completing the survey in full. Two thirds of responses from EA employed EPs;</li> <li>Six in-depth interviews were conducted;</li> <li>Non Government Organisations (NGOs) including organisations who provide educational advocacy support.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Too Little, Too Late' was published on the 31st March 2020. The findings were presented in many forms including a main report, summary report, easy read, report of parents/carers' engagement. The reports outlined a series of significant flaws in the system which have presented barriers for children and young people in accessing vital supports and services. It sets out 40 recommendations to address these fundamental weaknesses in the system;</li> <li>The report was subsequently shared with all relevant authorities and advice provided on the necessary next steps required to address the recommendations from the Review. This included ensuring that relevant authorities recognised the need for a system-wide approach to progress the implementation of the recommendations; and</li> <li>As a result of the health crisis caused by Covid-19, the public launch event, originally scheduled for the 31st March, was cancelled. However, we facilitated a soft-launch, which involved sharing the reports with key stakeholders and hosting the reports online. We intend to hold a public event later in the year which will focus on the progress made by the relevant authorities in responding to the recommendations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Review of Education System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In line with NICCY's calls including those outlined in SOCRNI, 2018 that NI's education system must be UNCRC Article 28 and 29 compliant, fit for purpose, provides greater efficiency and addresses the cost of education for families the 'New Decade, New Approach' deal will established an expert panel to address educational inequalities and an independent fundamental review of the Education System.</li> </ul> <p><b>Children's Wellbeing in Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings with the DE, EA, PHA, and ETI this year provided an opportunity to engage relevant authorities in discussion about the inadequacy of counselling provision, particularly its lack in primary school settings. It also provided opportunity to discuss the proposed development of an 'emotional health and wellbeing framework' for children and young people;</li> <li>We produced a report on School Counselling Provision which was based on the findings of a survey of school Principals. The survey was carried out in response to concerns raised by school Principals and staff on the level of mental health needs in children which were going unmet. It explored school counselling provision in primary, post-primary and special schools in Northern</li> </ul>

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<p><b>Addressing the Legacy of the Conflict:</b> We will hold government to account in relation to the effective protection of children and young people from trauma, violence or mistreatment due to the continuing legacy impact of the conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to ensure the protection of children and young people from trauma and violence due to the continuing legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland.</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenging Discrimination:</b> We will provide robust challenge where children and young people experience discrimination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age discrimination legislation in accessing</li> </ul>	<p>Ireland. Findings yielded a series of recommendations which NICCY believes should be taken forward to improve school counselling provision for children in Northern Ireland;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We informed the Education Committee of the need for Government to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in schools by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that all children who require access to counselling services can do so. This must include ensuring access to ICSS in primary schools;</li> <li>A prevention and early intervention approach to emotional health and wellbeing. This must include prioritising the implementation of a rights based Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework in schools; and</li> <li>Implementing a measure of well-being across all schools in Northern Ireland and ensuring that this is completed by every pupil and monitored.</li> </ul> </li> <li>It is noted the DE/PHA proposed framework has been informed by evidence from NICCY's "Still Waiting" report.</li> </ul> <p><b>Legacy of the Conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing engagement throughout the year and advice on child rights issues provided to CVS / Researchers through representation on their Research Advisory Committee and separate Research Project Sub Groups on transgenerational impact of the conflict;</li> <li>Progress towards community led solutions in tackling PSAs through an integrated services approach as identified by us;</li> <li>Belfast City Council have confirmed their 'commitment to preventative approaches towards embedding a culture of lawfulness, tackling organised crime and paramilitaries'; and their Corporate Plan 2019-23 commitment 'to develop and deliver integrated services', an element of which is 'delivery of Community Safety priorities ... developing neighbourhood regeneration based on need and community led solutions';</li> <li>NICCY periodic update meetings with DoJ team re' Executive action plan on 'Tackling Paramilitarism' is ongoing;</li> <li>Input/advice provided to the Independent Reporting Commission established through the Fresh Start Agreement to tackle paramilitary activity; and</li> <li>Commissioner and NYP members participated on discussion panel in CVS/NICCY event as part of Féile an Phobail, titled 'Troubled Consequences', focussing on the transgenerational impact of the conflict on children &amp; young people and spoke directly to adults on this. "I was quite taken by the dynamism and powerful stances made by the three members of the Youth Panel" (audience member)</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenging Discrimination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There has been little activity to progress legislation to address Age discrimination due to the fact that there was no NI Executive in place for the majority of the year. We are pleased to see the Commitment in 'New Decade, New Approach' deal to bring an '<b>Age, Goods and Facilities and Services</b>' Bill forward by the Executive. NICCY continues to call 'Age GFS' legislation protect all groups, including children and young people from discrimination on the grounds of their age when accessing goods, facilities and services; and</li> </ul>

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<p>goods, facilities and services includes all children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure equal protection from assault in the home for children and young people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strengthening Safeguarding provisions:</b> Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people are strengthened as NICCY monitors and provides advice on provisions to protect children, including in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and Separated Children Subject to Immigration Control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - Ensure effectiveness of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY also welcomed that the parties agreed that the Executive should commit to becoming a Living Wage employer and that the Executive should move to ban zero hours contracts and that powers to set minimum wage levels should be made a devolved matter.</li> <li>NICCY has continued to engage with politicians and officials on Equal Protection, convene the NGO Group, meeting with regional organisations, and through ongoing contact with a wide range of statutory and other bodies in Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions. <b>Equal Protection</b> has been raised as a matter of urgency with incoming Ministers. Information and interviews have also been provided to the media. NICCY's role as a trusted source of authoritative advice has been recognised by stakeholders as they have increasingly sought our advice on this issue. This activity builds on previous work including commissioned research and dissemination and political engagement and at all times NICCY's work references our two key calls regarding law reform and improved 'positive parenting' support;</li> <li>Partnership work with Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) and Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment led to the production of a joint animation and this successfully reflected NICCY's language and dual Equal Protection calls on law reform and promoting positive parenting. Ensuring there was engagement with the NYP as the animation developed also provided opportunities for Panel members to meaningfully advise on and influence the animation with the final product reflecting their feedback. Successful launch event and dissemination took place; and</li> <li>Draft Family and Parenting Support Strategy - NICCY has previously provided formal and informal advice on this, during 2019-20 DoH have not progressed the Strategy. However, NICCY has continued to engage with DoH officials and NGO Group members on developments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strengthening Safeguarding Provisions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following NICCY's earlier in-depth Review of third and fourth rounds of Government <b>CSE</b> Progress Reports, Departments and statutory agencies are aware of the need to ensure effective implementation of the Inquiry recommendations and also to provide effective reporting of this. Government have not published any further reports. NICCY's Reviews and their recommendations have been highlighted in Sir John Gillen's Review on law and procedures in cases of serious sexual offences. NICCY continues to be recognised as the lead independent body in monitoring CSE Progress Reports; and</li> <li>NICCY has also provided detailed advice to DoJ on the Review of the law on CSE which covered a range of issue broader than sexual exploitation, including user generated self images, abuse of trust offences and the defense of 'reasonable belief'.</li> <li>NICCY's comprehensive advice to Sir John Gillen's Review on law and procedures in serious sexual offence cases was wholly reflected in the Review's preliminary and final reports, including the recommendation that the</li> </ul>



Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<p>arrangements to protect children and young people from CSE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and Families Subject to Immigration Control - Ensure effectiveness of arrangements to support Separated Children and families subject to immigration control.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Barnahus model</b> be considered for all child victims of sexual offences in Northern Ireland. In turn, New Decade New Approach includes a commitment to address the Gillen Review signalling support for taking forward the Review recommendations, including in relation to children;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY has continued to promote Barnahus. At the request of the Lord Chief Justice, NICCY has produced a detailed Barnahus advice paper. DoJ and other CJS agencies are aware that NICCY will be monitoring how the Gillen Review recommendations will be implemented and how Barnahus will be progressed and it is positive that DoJ has engaged with NICCY in their Barnahus scoping study. Engagement with specialist NGOs working directly with vulnerable children and young people and with statutory agencies working with child victims and witnesses, has continued as well as through expert networks. NICCY's papers have also been referenced in a recent Barnahus publication undertaken through the Council of Europe's PROMISE project and NICCY's work and our focus on children's rights and international obligations continues to influence developments in Northern Ireland;</li> <li>There has also been ongoing engagement with CJI in relation to their CSE Inspection and they considered the Barnahus model as part of this work; and</li> <li>NICCY has also continued to support and raise awareness of the Council of Europe annual day on Protecting Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse as well as calling for the ratification of the 'Lanzarote Convention'.</li> </ul> <p><b>Children and Families subject to Immigration Control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separated Children - the Guardianship Service is operational and delivering on NICCY's recommendation that Separated Children subject to immigration control should have access to a Guardian, the obligations of Section 21 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the 2016 Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. NICCY has continued to engage with the NGO providing the service as well as the statutory body leading regional responses to Separated Children;</li> <li>NICCY's work has included addressing concerns regarding unplanned increases in numbers of Separated Children and the capacity of arrangements to safely respond to this with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and the media. Positive engagement with devolved agencies has ensured NICCY is able to raise pertinent operational as well as strategic issues directly with Home Office; and</li> <li>In relation to families subject to immigration control, NICCY ensure a focus on the rights and best interests of all children, importantly regardless of entry route to Northern Ireland. NICCY has engaged with a number of Home Office directorates on a range of issues, including immigration interview arrangements, the immigration implications of travel across the land border with RoI and access to basic services. Progress now being made by Home Office includes planning to interview Separated Children in other settings and in acknowledging the need to address cross border travel, including all Island</li> </ul>



Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting children's rights in a digital world</li> <li>Safeguarding and social care overall – Provide advice on matters as determined by NICCY.</li> </ul>	<p>healthcare services. There has also been ongoing engagement with HSCB in regard to equal access to Family Support Hubs and associated services and interventions for families requiring interpreter services. Again, engagement with specialist NGOs ensures the experience of children and families informs advice to government while also further developing collaborative working across sectors. Relevant authorities are aware of NICCY's role in this area.</p> <p><b>Protecting Children's Rights in the Digital World</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY led the development of ENOC's position statement and recommendations on Children's Rights in the Digital Environment. NICCY ensured an approach to development and drafting of the Statement and associated pieces of work were based on the relevant Council of Europe recommendation and children's rights standards. Three detailed strands of work were undertaken and completed: an ENOC member's questionnaire and subsequent report; a commissioned expert evidence paper; and the ENOC statement and recommendations which were subject to extensive feedback and revision rounds by members. The NYP were supported to participate in the parallel ENYA participatory project which informed the ENOC statement;</li> <li>A comprehensive and detailed Statement and recommendations embedded in children's rights in this complex and rapidly evolving area were agreed and issued at ENOC's 2019 conference and disseminated alongside the questionnaire report and expert evidence paper; and</li> <li>NICCY has provided advice to DoH in relation to the Online Safety Strategy both as part of the formal consultation process and, following a DoH request, building on the ENOC conference and Statement, for further advice on how effectively the draft Strategy reflected ENOC's recommendations. NICCY provided clear detail on the necessary steps to be taken to ensure the draft was embedded in a child rights approach. To date, a final strategy has not been published.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safeguarding and Social Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of authoritative advice has been provided to ensure that as government takes forward legislative and policy developments, these are embedded within a children's rights framework. The Looked After Children's Strategy CRIA which DoH has developed building on advice from NICCY and advice on the child death overview function of the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 Section 3(5) which has not yet been commenced and was an outstanding recommendation (no. 88) of the 2018 Inquiry into Hyponatraemia Related Deaths. The Adoption and Children Bill has not been brought forward by DoH; and</li> <li>In relation to restraint and seclusion, NICCY is now planning to undertake joint work on restraint in educational settings with NIPSO and so no scoping paper was completed.</li> </ul>

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<p><b>Addressing Issues In Youth Justice:</b> NICCY's advice promotes greater adherence to and consideration of, the Rights of Children and Young People Rights in the youth justice system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and Young People involved with the youth justice system have their rights respected and protected.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Addressing Issues in Youth Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant agencies have been held to account in relation to their children's rights obligation e.g. advice to PSNI provided to inform work and their obligations under the UNCRC; PPS have been advised in relation to their children's rights obligations;</li> <li>NICCY continues to provide advice on issues including Stop &amp; Search, Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR), Spit &amp; Bite Guards, Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS), youth justice system and processes;</li> <li>We have advised PSNI on their children's rights obligations in relation to youth welfare while in custody – engaging and advised on Young People's Strategy and Youth Custody Charter;</li> <li>We have engaged with DOJ on the application of the 'best interests' principle and will continue to work to ensure that these are a primary consideration across the Youth Justice System including through formal advice to PPS; and</li> <li>Advice provided on development of the new regional care and justice campus ensuring children's rights are to the fore.</li> </ul>

### HLO 3: To address breaches of children’s and young people’s rights.

<b>Potential breaches of children and young people’s rights are fully investigated and addressed.</b>	
<b>Sub-objective</b>	<b>Outcome/Impact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Formal Investigation and Produce Report</li> <li>• Conduct Independent Investigations.</li> <li>• Assist children and young people with complaints</li> </ul>	<p><b>Formal Investigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NICCY’s formal investigation is well underway as per legislative requirements. The “formal investigation” refers to an investigation into and report on the breaches of statutory and human rights of a specific young person who has significant medical and intellectual disability, as indicative of systemic failures within the social care system in Northern Ireland, and the potential impact of such issues on other similarly placed children and young people in Northern Ireland. We are conducting a thorough analysis of all the documentation/papers received and have developed a set of evidence based emerging findings. External experts have been commissioned as required. Work is ongoing to ensure publication in as timely a manner as possible while adhering to robust processes.</li> <li>• New complaints are triaged with those appropriate for Investigation identified; none were taken forward as independent investigations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Complaints</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints received were investigated through our casework service run by our Legal and Investigations Department. Rights breaches were addressed and investigated through to resolution. Legal support, representation and interventions were provided as appropriate in respect of individual cases;</li> <li>• Referrals from parents, practitioners and young people etc were actioned in a number of ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ by offering advice and guidance;</li> <li>○ by engaging with the relevant authority to seek resolution of the issue in the interest of the child;</li> <li>○ by advising the referrer that the matter had a potential legal resolution and taking this forward; and</li> <li>○ by issuing legal cases Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SENDIST) tribunals in appropriate matters.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the 2019/20 business year our Complaints Casework Service Staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dealt with 302 new cases;</li> <li>○ Carried forward 108 cases ongoing from the previous business year;</li> <li>○ Closed 382 cases; and</li> <li>○ Exceeded our 90% successful closure rate.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 75% were education related;</li> <li>• 13% of matters related to health or social care queries; and</li> <li>• Our evaluation process indicated a 90% + client satisfaction rate with negative feedback attributed to dissatisfaction related to limitations in remit.</li> <li>• We progressed completion of our new <b>Annual Complaints &amp; Legal Report 2019-‘20</b>, which gives an overview of our work for that year both in quantitative and qualitative formats. The Report this year is much more extensive as we wanted to give more of an in depth insight into the work of the</li> </ul>

Potential breaches of children and young people's rights are fully investigated and addressed.	
Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring, Intervene in or assist with legal proceedings</li>   <li>• NICCY's work is supported by robust legal advice.</li>   <li>• Address and investigate Protected Disclosures in line with legislative requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>Legal &amp; Investigations Department. Demand for our services has been increasing necessitating additional Staff which we are progressing.</p> <p><b>Legal Proceedings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this Business Year, more than any before, we have used our powers to bring legal cases in the area of Special Educational Needs and Disability to the SEND <b>Tribunals</b>. We have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ issued appeals;</li> <li>○ prepared written submissions;</li> <li>○ conducted pre-hearing negotiations on behalf of the child or young person; and</li> <li>○ represented clients when the cases have run to hearing, before the Tribunal and advocated on their behalf.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• We also represented two children at expulsion appeals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NICCY intervened in two Judicial Review cases (still 'live').</li> </ul> <p><b>Applications for Legal Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We granted two applications for legal funding in cases of merit as per our LF criteria.</li> </ul> <p><b>Legal Advice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal advice has been provided throughout this year e.g. we have provided specific advice to inform our broader work on education, notably special educational needs provision (in relation to the SEN review), the new Mental Capacity legislation, our broader Youth Justice work and our safeguarding workstream. We commissioned an external legal opinion in relation to the Mental Capacity legislation which will assist us in our ongoing work including advising the Department of Health, HSCB and relevant Trusts to ensure Children's and Young People's Rights are being upheld.</li> </ul> <p><b>Protected Disclosures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have investigated and processed 6 referrals by way of 'Protected Disclosures' in this Business Year. We received 4 separate 'protected disclosures' during the business year (3 related to 1 matter); having investigated, we have closed all 4 as well as closing 2 carried forward from the previous year (6 in total). Under separate legislation, NICCY is a 'prescribed organisation' to whom breaches of rights or the safeguarding of children and young people can be brought; our organisational policy and a dedicated referral form has been published on our website.</li> </ul>

#### HLO 4: All To raise awareness of children’s and young people’s rights, the UNCRC and the functions of the Commissioner.

#### Greater understanding and awareness of children’s and young people’s rights, the UNCRC and NICCY’s functions and work in achieving its mission.

Sub-objective	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance awareness of the UNCRC, C&amp;YP’s Rights and NICCY’s work/role.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Awareness Raising / Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building session on effective participation with St John’s Ambulance Youth liaison and Area coordinators from across Northern Ireland. Feedback from the event showed that participants had an increased understanding of Children’s Rights and Participation. A number of centres have since increased the role of Cadet advisory groups;</li> <li>Training session on Children’s Rights and the role of NICCY for QUB School of Nursing and Midwifery Childcare and the law postgraduate module. Three participants have since requested the training for their teams;</li> <li>Children’s Rights awareness session for trainee youth workers with YouthLink OCN class. 15 youth workers have increased knowledge on children’s rights and how they can protect and promote rights through their work. Plans to formally incorporate rights into this module in to the course;</li> <li>Workshop/presentation delivered at Early Years Professional Practice Conference. Early Years practitioners aware of the role of NICCY and the importance of Child Rights in Early Years work;</li> <li>Training session was delivered to 15 professionals of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust raising awareness of children’s rights;</li> <li>NYP participated in the Pride Parade &amp; assisted at the NICCY stand at Belfast Mela and in the Belfast Feile event. NYP had the opportunity to support and participate in public events on diversity and inclusion;</li> <li>Development and piloting of exercises for Commissioner’s visits to schools. Pupils awareness of children’s rights and the role of the commissioner is increased through age appropriate, engaging activities;</li> <li>Young people engaged directly with the Commissioner to discuss their experiences particularly in the areas of education, community safety, counselling and mental health, hygiene were all mentioned as areas for concern for young people; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beechcroft Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Unit;</li> <li>Woodlands JJC; and</li> <li>Lakewood Secure Centre.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Corporate Plan consultation held as part of 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event on 20<sup>th</sup> November. Feedback was considered when finalising Corporate Plan;</li> <li>Additional issues included in Corporate / Business Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment / climate change; and</li> <li>Homelessness.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Promote and monitor awareness of NICCY's work and profile among relevant 'audiences' i.e. media outlets / public / political / CYP.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote awareness of Children's Rights within the school curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Promotion &amp; Monitoring Awareness of NICCY's Work</b></p> <p><b>Media:</b> Stakeholders including the public continued to be made aware of NICCY, our work, the Commissioner and her priorities. Targets were exceeded in all but one area (regional newspapers) this year - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>69 Proactive and Reactive media engagement actions, issuing 9 releases, 19 quotations and 11 statements, the Commissioner was supported with 14 media briefings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Newspaper coverage 47 - (Target 30);</li> <li>Regional Newspapers - 28 (Target 70);</li> <li>Online Coverage – 73 (Target 50);</li> <li>Radio coverage - 56 (Target 45); and</li> <li>TV Coverage - 14 (Target 10).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Website:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The website continued to show strong growth with 25,634 people coming to the site, up from 20,325 last year (over 25% increase), with a similar near 25% increase in number of sessions (visits) to the site. Included developing 'Too Little, Too Late', 'Still Waiting', 'ENOC', 'UNCRC 30th Anniversary', Covid-19 and NICCY Youth Panel recruitment sections as well as publishing 12 press releases and 9 publications/advice to Government;</li> </ul> <p><b>Publications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A wide range of publications produced and disseminated throughout the year – we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published a suite of 'Too Little, Too Late' publications and developed a range of ENOC Conference publications;</li> <li>Published the Annual Legal and Casework Report;</li> <li>Developed 30th Anniversary celebrations support materials and a new NICCY UNCRC pocketbook;</li> <li>Developed a range of new and replacement promotional items and a set of new traveling exhibition boards, NICCY Christmas e-Card, reprint of NICCY's 42 Rights booklets;</li> <li>Worked in partnership with CCEA to support the development of a UNCRC 30th celebration animation and two live webinar events to engage children and young people and help highlight key areas of work; and</li> <li>Produced 16 NICCY YouTube videos and disseminated via our YouTube channel and social media.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Social Media:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased activity across our social media sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Twitter continued to be our key social media site (followers up nearly 10% to 5579), and integral to how NICCY engages with its stakeholders, and as a channel to push further traffic to the corporate website; and</li> <li>The NICCY Facebook grew quite substantially with 1733 'likes' (up 30%), while NICCY's Instagram site also saw steady growth with 162 new followers to a total of 1101 followers (17% increase).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>In partnership with CCEA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing development of the online resource hub including video of 'C&amp;YP living in a Digital Environment' webinar.</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of the Legal functions within NICCY and how we can safeguard and promote the rights of Children and Young People.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned and hosted two webinars:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C&amp;YP living in a Digital Environment' (primary and post primary sessions)                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 29 schools registered (19 primary, 10 post primary);</li> <li>○ 87% thought that webinar was very good/good - "We were able to use the information &amp; discuss some of the questions ourselves in small groups - probed lots of thinking".</li> </ul> </li> <li>• C&amp;YP's Mental Health.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 96 registrations (66 Primary Schools, 18 Post Primary, 12 individuals);</li> <li>○ 86% thought webinar was good/very good - "Great for our RR ethos and linked in with NSPCC workshops that week".</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Creation of animation to celebrate 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UNCRC.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Working with NYP, new characters created to support this process and to develop a wider suite of characters;</li> <li>○ Young person provided voiceover;</li> <li>○ Animation used to promote incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic legislation; and</li> <li>○ Ongoing updates to the UNCRC Resource Hub throughout the year.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Commissioner visited 20 schools and engaged with over 2,500 children discussing their rights and their role as Child Rights Defenders.</li> <li>• Annual Casework Report 2018-19 published for dissemination. Our new Annual Complaints &amp; Legal Report 2019-20 to be disseminated (Covid-19 impact has meant events / seminars are not possible however, we hope to promote these as/when restrictions ease);</li> <li>• A review of our L&amp;I work and processes is to be finalised; this will necessitate update to our website and information literature to our key stakeholders; and</li> <li>• Increased links made with Law Society and external legal stakeholders.</li> </ul>
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## HLO 5: To promote the participation of children and young people in decision making.

Increased involvement of, and effective mechanisms for, the participation of Children and Young People in decision making affecting their lives.	
Targets	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain NYP input to ensure that their voice is integral to the work of NICCY</li> </ul>	<p>The NYP currently has 80 members and held full panel meetings and sub group meetings throughout the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 full panel meetings including one via Zoom; and</li> <li>NYP News – internal update newsletter for youth panel, edited by NYP - 3 issues produced;</li> </ul> <p>Meetings included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction of new members; discussions; sub groups updates and building activities; and</li> <li>Team development sessions included developing strategies for dealing with potential conflict when working together; circus skills team building training and Leaver’s Celebration.</li> </ul> <p>Consultations / focus groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues discussed included Environment Strategy; CCEA website; Liquor Licencing law; 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event planning; Reviewing Corporate Plan 2020-’23; Reviewing 2020/21 Business Plan and areas of work they will have the opportunity to be involved in; and</li> <li>Contribution to NICCY’s corporate plan.</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30th Anniversary event planning - 56 NYP volunteered to support the event. NYP Sub groups met to develop and facilitate the event and final preparations, briefings and run through roles for the event. Sub groups included - 30th Anniversary Steering group; Under 8s &amp; Summit subgroup, Drama Subgroup, NICCY Corporate Plan subgroup; Rights Challenge subgroup; and</li> <li>NYP Residential. The residential was planned for 20th -22nd March at Greenhill YMCA Centre in Newcastle. Now postponed until 9-11th October 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdown.</li> </ul> <p>NYP engaged with C&amp;YP at public and other events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated BBC Top Table and BBC Spotlight programmes;</li> <li>Belfast City Council’s and Northern Ireland Youth Forum’s (NIYF) ‘Rights Here, Rights Now’ event;</li> <li>Meeting Jersey Children’s Commission staff;</li> <li>Reviewed the Children’s Law Centre (CLC) chat bot App;</li> <li>Belfast Pride Parade &amp; Belfast Mela; (see 4.1)</li> <li>“Resilient City, Global Ambition” Event at Stormont;</li> <li>International Women’s Day event at Stormont;</li> <li>Royal Collage of Child Health and Pediatrics (RCPCH) workshop (with young people from Voice of Young People in Care -VOYPIC) and subsequent event at Stormont; and</li> <li>Supported VOYPIC’s Care Day.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote best practice by Government in the Participation of Children and Young People (C&amp;YP)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mental Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Mental Health week produced 4 Blogs &amp; 1 Vlogs and promoted same through social media; (see 2.2.1)</li> <li>Recorded a voice over for info graphics on Mental health;</li> <li>NYP attended All Party discussion at Stormont when Still Waiting Report was discussed;</li> <li>Attended launch of UJJ and Action Mental Health's 'Making Parity a Reality' Review of Mental Health Policies in Northern Ireland' event and recorded a feedback video;</li> <li>Gave feedback on IDG report and NYP self-selected to be part of IDG subgroup to monitor future reports; and (see 2.2.1)</li> <li>Young people speaking on behalf of themselves and their peers is very powerful and welcomed by practitioners / professionals. NICCY will continue to work to find all available opportunities for young people to be visible and at the forefront of our work on mental health.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mental Health Toolkit:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms of Reference (ToR) created and agreed between NICCY and Elephant in the Room (EITR) groups to develop a self-help campaigning advocacy toolkit on Mental Health to enable young people to campaign on the issue;</li> <li>Agency Partnership meetings and young person's steering group of 12 members (NYP, NIYF and Belfast City Council - BCC Youth Forum) met;</li> <li>Programme include teambuilding and capacity building sessions;</li> <li>Group explored, agreed and drafted Mental Health self-help campaigning advocacy toolkit;</li> <li>Toolkit at designer stage and launch due for April has been postponed due to COVID19; and</li> <li>Representatives participated in NICCY/CCEA Mental Health webinar.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Body Image group met OFCOM's NI Director and presented their work on the use of adult actors playing teenage roles in live action drama. Following this, group to review potential avenues for further action;</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HRO / PO provided Recruitment and Selection training for NYP members - now 19 panel members trained. NYP participated in 5 recruitment campaigns; and</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NYP Leaving and Celebration/Recognition Event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 NYP Leavers reflection session – 'journey' and 'future direction';and</li> <li>Leavers Celebration and Recognition of achievements event;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice and information provided to EA on involving young people on interview panels. 2 young people subsequently participated in interview process for recently recruited Director of Education;</li> <li>Advice given to NIHRC on Rights Based Workshops;</li> <li>Participation Staff met with DE Transformation Programme to provide advice about engaging with C&amp;YP. They identified one of the Projects "Transition of Young People into Careers" as potentially an area that they want to seek the views and opinions of Children and Young People;</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote effective Pupil Participation mechanisms in Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation Staff advised a number of Stat Orgs in the lead up to the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Libraries NI;</li> <li>Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon BC;</li> <li>Derry City and Strabane District Council;</li> <li>Fermanagh and Omagh DC; and</li> <li>Woodlands JJC;</li> </ul> </li> <li>Senior Participation Officer is on CYPS Board iro 'Participation' mechanism of CYPS. Ongoing participation advise provided; and</li> <li>On-going engagement and formal advice issued to the NI Assembly Commission regarding the importance of establishing an NI Youth Assembly.</li> </ul> <p>Delivered Community Planning Seminar – 'Engaging with C&amp;YP'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement reached with DE (CYPS Team) and DfC (Local Government Policy Division) to present at seminar;</li> <li>3 models of good practice from 3 Council areas Derry City and Strabane District Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council &amp; Belfast City Council identified and agreed to present at Seminar;</li> <li>16 Community planning officers plus an NIA representative of the forthcoming NI Youth Assembly attended the seminar;</li> <li>Feedback:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of participant felt the seminar was useful, <i>To hear about the direction of travel NICCY are taking in relation to Children &amp; Young People and the requirements for Departments and statutory bodies etc. to implement and embed the legislation into everyday practice.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Report complete and circulated to DE and DfC for comment on recommendations; DfC and DE responded positively to recommendations and provided written replies of forthcoming plans; and</li> <li>Report circulated to seminar participants; Local Council Chief Executives &amp; Community Planning Partnership organisations.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two Participation Forum meeting held (June &amp; December);</li> <li>Total of 34 attendees (16 Stat, 16 NGO, 2 Academic); and</li> <li>Key stakeholders share good participative practices to help improve both strategic and operational participation practices with C&amp;YP across statutory, academic &amp; voluntary sectors.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to absence of NI Executive and in particular DE Minister, no actions during this BP year;</li> <li>The need for a policy driven pupil participation initiative highlighted during the CYPS's Participation Project Board meetings;</li> <li>Commissioner regularly engages with pupils who are members of school councils during school visits; and</li> <li>Teacher enquires about pupil participation signposted to Pupils Voices resources on <a href="http://niccy.org">niccy.org</a>.</li> </ul>
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## HLO 6: To ensure NICCY is an effective and efficient organisation.

NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently in achieving its mission to safeguard and promote the rights of Children & Young People.	
Targets	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver on our Annual Business Plan 2019-20</li> </ul>	<p><b>Effectiveness and Efficiency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff resources were effectively assigned to business plan targets through integrated working on Programmes of Work, core business and relevant areas as well as during the number of recruitment processes which were conducted through the year. This ensured during the business year, that we minimised gaps and adverse impact on delivery on objectives; and</li> <li>Successful business cases for additional resources to sponsor department ensured financial resources were available to support delivery in year. We were also successful in gaining necessary additional allocation to our annual baseline which will support next business year's delivery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Annual Business Plan 2019-20</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departmental workplans were also in place to support delivery of Business Plan objectives and targets and to ensure effective utilisation of resources. This ensured clarity re' reporting and achieving delivery on targets. Effective recruitment and selection processes were in place along with individual annual objectives (PPA / PDP) forms, learning and development, staff supervision and support, Planning days, assigning staff to additional reactive work as necessary, integrated programmes of work (POW teams from across the organisation). Core business work including corporate governance systems, effective risk management, systems of internal control and periodic reporting were also in place. There was effective management of legal casework and investigations, policy work, research and participation, effective financial management and allocation of departmental budgets. NICCY participated in collaborative working with external partners and was involved in managing events and hosted delegations. Briefing meetings with political parties and elected representatives took place throughout the year and, monitoring of progress across all areas throughout the year with formal reporting on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis took place. There was continued progress on leadership culture during the year;</li> </ul> <p>A range of Meetings/engagement were held including with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political representatives;</li> <li>NGOs;</li> <li>Departmental Officials;</li> <li>Relevant authorities;</li> <li>ENOC CCs &amp; Ombud's &amp; Secretariat;</li> <li>Council of Europe (COE); and</li> <li>Relevant Stakeholders.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This engagement supported Staff in achievement of business targets and areas of work iro NICCY's remit / children's rights and best interests.</li> </ul>

**NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently in achieving its mission to safeguard and promote the rights of Children & Young People.**

Targets	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure efficient systems of Corporate Governance and Performance Management.</li> <li>Accurately Monitor and Report on NICCY's Performance and Impact.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Corporate Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance mechanisms and reporting requirements were adhered to throughout the year. Robust systems of internal control and governance mechanisms were in place. Robust financial management was maintained to meet demands of NICCY's remit. No issues were raised by DfC / ARAC / Auditors;</li> <li>NICCY continued ongoing communication iro draft 'ALB Partnership Agreement';</li> <li>Effective <b>risk identification, management</b> and mitigation measures were in place as per policy. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee input and advice was provided in relation to their range of responsibilities and Corporate risk register;</li> <li>Corporate and Departmental Risk Registers were updated regularly throughout the year to ensure they were kept up to date;</li> <li>NIAO External <b>Audit</b> provided an unqualified certificate and a "Report to Those Charged with Governance" which did not contain any priority one recommendations.</li> <li>Review of the legislation i.e. <b>Article 24</b> was progressed – now an audit recommendation and DfC notified; requires Ministerial involvement. NI Executive restored during this business period and meeting scheduled; and</li> <li>There was adherence to Organisational policies and effective dissemination of updates on review. The Performance Management Policy template forms were updated and implemented.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY's Annual Report &amp; Accounts were laid in NI Assembly on 12 November 2019. Required reporting on performance, activities and expenditure of public funds ensuring appropriate accountability and transparency in relation to NICCY's performance, work, remit, impact and value for (public money) was in place throughout the year;</li> <li>Effective reporting systems were in place internally and externally in relation to performance across all disciplines/functions, achievement of objectives / targets, governance, finance, risk management, staff attendance, communications, FOIs, whistleblowing, Fraud etc. Department can also have confidence in NICCY's operational systems and work outputs;</li> <li>Stakeholders have been kept up to date on areas of work through effective information sharing including across respective jurisdictions throughout the year; and</li> <li>This enhanced the profile and awareness of NICCY, UNCRC, Children's Rights and our effectiveness as an organisation.</li> </ul>

**NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently in achieving its mission to safeguard and promote the rights of Children & Young People.**

Targets	Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Corporate Plan 2020–23</li>   <li>• Develop Annual Business Plan 2020-21</li>   <li>• Progress Organisational Accreditation levels</li> </ul>	<p><b>Corporate Plan 2020-23</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiency in the production of the Corporate Plan 2020-23 was evident. The plan was produced based on knowledge of ongoing and emerging issues. There was a focus on stakeholder consultation which took place with key stakeholders including Children and Young People at our annual event – celebrating the UNCRC 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. All input received was fully considered and informed our final plan. This was submitted to DfC in February 20 as per agreement providing sponsor Department with clear outline of strategy for the next 3 years and provided assurance as to the work produced by NICCY.</li> </ul> <p><b>Annual Business Plan 2020-21</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Annual Business Plan 2020-‘21 was developed following finalising of Corporate Plan 2020-‘23. Efficiency in robust process and production of Business Plan 2020-21 was evident in the development of plan;</li> <li>• The Business Plan 2020-21 was submitted in tandem with Corporate Plan 2020-23 in Feb’ ’20 before agreed deadline ensuring Sponsor Department was aware of work plan for this business year; and</li> <li>• <b>Indicative budgets</b> were developed and a business case was submitted for an increase to annual baseline allocation to support delivery of objectives. This was accepted by DfC. Budget forecasting was in place throughout the year to ensure adequate cover for delivery of Corporate Plan and enabled objectives to be met.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisational Culture &amp; Accreditation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational culture change was driven forward during the business year to support our Investors in People accreditation and continue NICCY’s journey through IIP standards. This was beneficial for all staff as culture improved and all staff participated in decisions and subsequent actions;</li> <li>• We developed an Action Plan to ensure ongoing areas of work were actioned to continue driving forward areas of work. Staff consultation continued throughout the year and ownership of changes / actions identified assisted by the Staff Development day to focus on these;</li> <li>• Values were reviewed and associated behaviours identified and agreed. A new Staff Charter was developed to further support and enhance values and behaviours and communicated with all staff for input/comment; and</li> <li>• Line Management training provided both externally and in-house was delivered to support new Line Managers and current members of LMT to develop and maintain consistency in approach.</li> </ul>

**NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently in achieving its mission to safeguard and promote the rights of Children & Young People.**

<b>Targets</b>	<b>Outcome/Impact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review NICCY's Corporate Social Responsibility activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Corporate Social Responsibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was ongoing review of shared services throughout the year. Participation in Equality House Premises Committee assisted in identifying opportunities for further shared resources and value for money. Opportunities to work in partnership were promoted e.g. with CCEA, CLC and in procurement activities etc; and</li> <li>Environmentally friendly activities played an ongoing part in NICCY's day to day activities e.g. recycling and reducing carbon footprint by encouraging less use of paper, plastic, and travel by taxi, plane etc.</li> </ul>



## ARAC NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' REPORT

It has been a busy year for NICCY and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) played its part by providing independent assurance to the Commissioner and the Chief Executive on the comprehensiveness of governance and control, risk management and the integrity of financial statements including the Annual Report.

The year commenced in the environment of a suspended NI Assembly with no local Ministers and ended with devolved government returning in January 2020 after 3 years with the UK government having negotiated the terms of Brexit. Meanwhile the Coronavirus pandemic was spreading quickly from China across Europe leading to a crisis 'lockdown' of UK and Ireland citizens towards the end of March. This prevented important meetings taking place at that time as scheduled and alternative arrangements having to be made.

NICCY hosted a highly prestigious European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) conference in Belfast in September 2019 at which the Commissioner was installed as Chair for the year. This was a huge conference taking place over 3 days with representatives from 34 member countries/regions across Europe and at which ARAC members were privileged to attend. Unfortunately, Coronavirus has since restricted many visits throughout Europe which the Commissioner should have made in her role as Chair. NICCY also hosted in Belfast, in November 2019, the 30th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and this event attracted almost 2000 people most of whom were children and young people. NICCY is progressing the UNCRC 2016 Concluding Observations plus a Statement on Children's Rights NI which will be issued during 2020. It was planned to launch 'Too Little, Too Late': A Rights Based Review of Special Educational Needs at Queens University, Belfast on 31st March 2020. However due to the pandemic the launch had to be online instead but nevertheless still attracted much attention from the media and interested stakeholders.

Although the NI Assembly was re-established in January 2020 and meetings with relevant Ministers have since taken place it was only a matter of weeks before the Coronavirus pandemic forced the NI Government into crisis measures and at the end of March there had been no progress to report on the long standing issues of the Department for Communities' Review of NICCY, the Review of Arms Length Bodies and the Review of the 'Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003' which NICCY had undertaken after 3 years of being established, and again in 2012, the most recent 'Article 24 Report' being submitted in 2019.

The review of this legislation underpins NICCY's statutory functions and has now been escalated to the DfC Minister to respond.

ARAC is informed by the reports from both the Internal and External Auditors and was pleased that Internal Audit provided 'Satisfactory' assurance for 2019-20 and the External Audit Report To Those Charged With Governance received during the year for the previous year's audited Accounts was 'Unqualified'. We were also pleased to see that during the year the Internal Auditor was reappointed for another 3 year term following competitive tenders. ARAC pays much attention to the Corporate Risk Register and lists the effects of Coronavirus (with staff practising 'agile' working remotely from home), the forthcoming Brexit (with the possibility of a 'no deal') plus the legislation review in the higher categories. ARAC also examines any incidents of fraud or whistleblowing, should there be any.

ARAC met in June, October and December 2019 and just before 'lockdown' in March 2020 with each Member being present. In addition to the Members the normal attendees at each meeting are the Commissioner, Chief Executive and Finance Officer plus representatives from Internal and External Audit and DfC. During the year we bade farewell to Joseph Campbell who had served 2 terms and he was replaced on 1 August 2019 by Lesley Mitchell, a Certified Accountant and recently retired Director of Finance and Contracting with the Western Health and Social Care Trust. The other ARAC Member is Larry O'Neill who, like myself, is now in his 2nd term of appointment. In addition to ARAC meetings Members contributed to the Corporate Plan 2020-23 and the Annual Business Plan for 2020-21 and attended several appropriate functions. This included a course run in March 2020 by the Chief Executives' Forum on Public Accountability and Governance for Audit & Risk Assurance Committees and earlier in the year I attended a Chairs Forum for DfC Arms Length Bodies.

Paul Archer  
**Chairperson**  
**NICCY Audit & Risk Committee**

## CORPORATE ETHOS

At NICCY we are expected to comply with all organisational policies including those relating to conduct, propriety and respect for human rights and equality. NICCY's policies are based on those of NICS and all staff adhere to these as well as our organisational values - these have been reviewed during the business year under report and are now included in our next triennial Corporate and annual Business Plans going forward. Relevant policies governing fraud, bribery, whistleblowing and codes of conduct are periodically reviewed as scheduled and updates implemented.

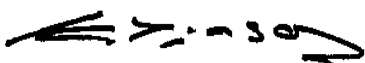
We also monitor developments to ensure NICCY can respond in a timely and effective manner as/when required. This includes 'horizon scanning' where potential emerging issues can be identified and necessary action taken; these may be in the political, social, economic, legal, environmental or technological fields. NICCY complies with the guidelines of the Data Protection Act 2018 which adopted GDPR into UK law.

## **SUSTAINABILITY REPORT**

NICCY is committed to ensuring that sustainable development becomes an integral part of our business / corporate social responsibility. To this end the Commissioner meets periodically with other Commissioners/Chief Commissioners and the Chief Executive meets with corresponding Chief Executives. The Commissioner is a member of the Chairs' Forum and the Chief Executive is a member of the Chief Executive's Forum and the Institute of Directors. This facilitates sharing of good practice and information, partnership working and exploration of innovation and shared services as/where possible thus ensuring a focus on efficiencies and 'value for money'. This year we progressed partnership working and have done so with CCEA, CLC, etc; as NICCY currently shares premises, facilities and IT, it is not possible to do anything further on these however, we have been preparing for 'agile' working pending premises move (now, we are informed, to be in 2024). Staff are also members of the Equality House 'Premises' and 'HR' sub groups which consider ways to promote sustainability throughout the year. Relevant actions in summary also include:

- Partnership working with external organisations as/where possible and appropriate in pursuit of common objectives in line with respective remits e.g. this year we continued our partnership work with CCEA and legal work with CLC;
- Reducing business travel as/where possible, through greater use of video/teleconferencing/Skype facilities; this has become more prevalent since the advent of Covid-19;
- Reducing paper use / printing by use of Tablet PCs and encouraging duplex printing two pages, multi-page printing on A4 paper;
- Staff participation in the Government's "Cycle to Work" Scheme;
- Reducing our waste and increasing recycling levels; and
- Reducing our contribution to climate change in terms of energy consumption and related CO2 emission.

It is pertinent to reiterate the pending premises move now rescheduled by DoF to 2024; when as part of the ongoing rationalisation of the civil service estate, the 5 ALBs/NDPBs in Equality House will be moving. It is envisaged this will reduce costs, carbon footprint and be value for money in the longer term.



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
**23 October 2020**

## **2. ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

### **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT**

The Corporate Governance Report explains the composition and organisation of NICCY's governance structures and how they support the achievement of NICCY's objectives.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

NICCY as a 'Corporate Sole' does not have a Board or Directors. The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland (NICCY) is an NI Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). The Sponsor Body for NICCY is the Department for the Communities (DfC). NICCY was established on 1 October 2003 under the 'Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003'.

The current Commissioner, Koulla Yiasouma, was appointed for a four year term on 2 March 2015 and re-appointed for a second term of Office on 2 March 2019. The Commissioner is also the Accounting Officer. A Scheme of Delegation is in place as necessary.

NICCY has identified which data is required for governance meetings and reports and confirms that she is content with the quality of the data and information provided.

These accounts are prepared in accordance with Schedule 2 11 (1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, and in accordance with the 2019-20 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) issued by the Department of Finance. The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland seeks to ensure the highest standards of corporate governance and complies with the principles outlined in Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland (MPMNI) and the Department of Finance Orange Book Management of Risk- Principles and Concepts.

#### **STAFF COMPLEMENT**

NICCY's staff complement in 2019-'20 totalled 22 staff (19.1 FTE) - 6 male and 16 female. The Commissioner is a public appointment.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TEAM (LMT)**

The Leadership and Management Team (LMT) established during the 2018-19 business year by the Chief Executive meets monthly and adheres to the terms of reference as necessary. The Senior Management Team continues to operate and meets on a quarterly basis. NICCY has 4 main functional areas i.e. Corporate Services (including

Communications); Legal & Investigations; Policy & Research and Participation. Following restructure in 2018-19 and staffing level reductions due to the NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme, the Chief Executive assumed direct responsibility for Legal & Investigations and Communications; the Head of Policy & Research assumed direct responsibility for Participation. The LMT comprises:

<b>Mairéad McCafferty</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Alex Tennant</b>	Head of Policy & Participation
<b>Paula Gillespie</b>	Senior Corporate Services Officer
<b>Niamh Devlin</b>	Senior Policy & Research Officer
<b>Fiona Hunter</b>	Senior Legal & Investigations Officer
<b>Ken Smyth</b>	Senior Participation Officer

### **Important Events Occurring After the Year End**

During March 2020 the impact of Covid-19 resulted in all staff in NICCY working from home. This was managed by the availability of the necessary IT equipment and systems and has ensured NICCY continues business as usual.

### **Research and Development**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland does not engage in any research and development activities as defined by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

### **Charitable Donations**

No charitable donations were made during this financial year.

### **Payments to Suppliers**

NICCY is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with Managing Public Money NI, which states that Public Sector Organisations should aim to pay suppliers wherever possible within 10 working days.

During the period 86% of invoices (99.4% in 2018-19) were paid within 10 working days and 92% of invoices (100% in 2018-19) were paid within 30 calendar days.

### **Data Protection and Freedom of Information**

The Commissioner has in place policies and arrangements for compliance with Data

Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. NICCY is confident that the organisation has complied with the Data Protection Act / GDPR and Freedom of Information Act and will continue to monitor this on an on-going basis. There were no incidents of data loss or personal information breach during the year. During the year there were two Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, all of which were responded to within the statutory time limit.

### **Whistleblowing**

There were no incidents of whistleblowing during the year.

### **Complaints**

There were two complaints received during the year, both of which were managed in line with NICCY's complaints procedures.

### **Fraud Reporting**

There were no cases of attempted fraud.

### **Register of Interests**

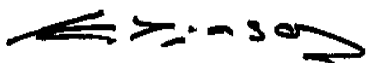
An up to date 'Register of Interests' is maintained by NICCY and is available for inspection at the offices of the Commissioner for Children and Young People N. I. offices in Equality House, 7 – 9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP.

### **Auditors**

These financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) in accordance with the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

The audit of the financial statements for 2019-20 resulted in an audit fee of £9,500 which is included in the Operating Costs within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. No additional remuneration was paid to the NIAO for non-audit work during the 2019-20 year.

Signed by:



**Koulla Yiasouma**

**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**

**23 October 2020**



## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under Schedule 2 11 (1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Department for Communities has directed the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland to prepare, for each financial year, a statement of accounts 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 state of affairs of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland, and of its comprehensive net 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, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards, as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual, have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer of the Department for Communities has designated the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland as Accounting Officer. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People's assets, are set out in *Managing Public Money NI* published by the Department of Finance.

## Disclosure of Audit Information

The Accounting Officer can confirm that:

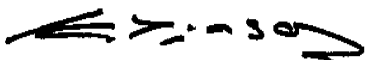
- So far as she is aware there is no relevant audit information of which the NICCY's auditors are unaware; and
- All steps that she ought to have taken to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the entity's auditors are aware of that information have been taken.

The Accounting Officer confirms 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.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland:  
Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast  
BT2 7DP

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

Signed by:



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
**23 October 2020**

## **GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland (NICCY) is a Corporate Sole and is an executive non-departmental public body funded and sponsored by the Department for Communities.

This Governance Statement for the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People sets out the governance structures, risk management and internal control procedures that operated during 2019-20 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts. This Governance Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance issued by the Department of Finance and is aimed at supporting better governance and driving more consistent, coherent and transparent reporting. NICCY follows the Department of Finance guidance 'Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013'.

The Accounting Officer of the Department for Communities designated me as the Accounting Officer for NICCY. In this role I am personally responsible for propriety and regularity in the management of public funds for which I have charge and for the day to day operations and management of NICCY.

### **Framework and Instruments of Governance**

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a robust system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and departmental assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI) and the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM).

The system of governance, internal control and risk management put in place is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level, rather than eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide high and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

### **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

NICCY has appointed an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) which oversees internal audit arrangements and ensures they are conducted in accordance with the

standards as set out in the Government Internal Audit Manual. It is an advisory committee with no executive functions. It provides assurances concerning the Commissioner's arrangements for risk management and supports NICCY in regard to systems of internal control.

Member	Meetings attended	Possible meetings
Paul Archer (Chairperson)	4	4
Laurence O'Neill	4	4
Lesley Mitchell (took up post 1 <sup>st</sup> Aug 2019)	3	3

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members undertake an annual evaluation of the committee's effectiveness and performance. The Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee were reviewed in January 2016. The Committee makes regular reports to me as Commissioner and has confirmed that it is satisfied with its effectiveness and performance in providing assurance in 2019-20.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is required to meet quarterly in line with its Terms of Reference. The ARAC met once per quarter, adhered to the agreed work programme, ensuring that all issues were dealt with on a timely basis. Meetings were held on 13 June 2019, 24 October 2019, 12 December 2019 and 12 March 2020. The meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee are attended by the above members, the Commissioner, the Chief Executive, NICCY's Finance Officer, NIAO, Internal Auditors and the Sponsor Department.

The Chief Executive of NICCY has delegated authority for day-to-day management of the organisation, staff, finances, strategic planning, resources and governance arrangements, as well as implementation of Corporate and Business Plan objectives. The Chief Executive reports directly to me.

Finally as Accounting Officer, I am cognisant of the 'Corporate Governance Code in central government departments: Code of good practice'. In discharging my duties in relation to governance within NICCY, it has been in full compliance with the guidance in the period under review.

## **Internal Control and Risk Management**

As Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland, I have ensured robust systems and processes are in place for overseeing the risk management process within NICCY and for ensuring that objectives and risks have been identified alongside a range of organisational controls to manage and mitigate these risks.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk. NICCY is committed to the principles endorsed by Northern Ireland Audit Office in its guidance “Good Practice in Risk Management” issued in June 2011.

NICCY’s risk management and internal control framework is as follows:

- The Commissioner has overall responsibility for ensuring risks are identified and an appropriate framework is in place to manage risks;
- The Chief Executive reviews, assesses and updates the Corporate Risk Register and advises the Commissioner of new, emerging and/or escalation of risks;
- The Senior Management Team (SMT) and Leadership & Management Team (LMT) implement NICCY’s Risk Management Strategy approved by the Commissioner;
- The SMT and LMT review risks including departmental risks on a quarterly and monthly basis respectively;
- The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee receive an update on risk management during each committee meeting. The Committee provide independent advice and expertise on issues as they arise;
- Key risks are identified and closely monitored on a regular basis; and
- All risks are reported to the sponsor department on a regular basis.

All members of the Senior Management Team and Leadership & Management Team have been trained in risk management best practice, to identify and assess risks which might impact on Corporate or Business Plan objectives.

Alongside the Corporate Risk Register, departmental risk registers are reviewed on a monthly basis. Appropriate controls and mitigation measures are in place and reviewed to ensure effectiveness. Risk management including potential escalation of risks is a standing agenda item at ‘Board’, SMT, LMT and departmental team meetings. The departmental risk registers link directly with the Corporate Risk Register and Business Plan.

During the year under report, the Corporate Risk Register detailed the following key business risks: (see earlier for status update on these):

- Financial Allocations: delivery on NICCY's statutory duties and legislative remit through Annual Business Plan objectives and targets is compromised due to insufficient budget allocation; DfC had received indicative required budget and subsequent pressure re' pension contributions, statutory duties, programmes;
- Transformation Agenda by the NICS including Premises move (post 2021); replacement of MSFM with 'Partnership Agreement' which may compromise NICCY's independence as an Independent Human Rights Institution;
- Response to Review of NICCY's Legislation: recommendations from both reviews (2007 & 2013) of NICCY's legislation are not progressed compromising NICCY's effectiveness and status as the independent Human Rights Institution for Children and Young People;
- NICCY's reputation: corporate and organisational reputation reduced due to adverse activity and/or adverse media or public attention;
- Organisational Culture: organisational culture and developments may adversely impact performance and delivery on Business Plan objectives, staff morale, attendance, internal processes and outcomes;
- NICCY is conducting its first formal investigation using statutory powers; difficulties may arise due to lack of capacity and/or resources causing delay and adversely impacting on time schedules and/or challenge by relevant authorities; and
- BREXIT': process and outcome adversely impacts on NICCY's remit i.e. reduces rights protections / compromises access to services for Children and Young People / reduces family incomes contributing to child poverty.

Subsequently we added Covid-19:

- Covid-19: Staff contraction of virus and measures in place to address the crisis cause disruption of work to such an extent that NICCY is unable to deliver on some / all of its business plan objectives and potential for reduced budget expenditure.

I am satisfied that NICCY's risk appetite is appropriate for such an organisation. In operational and governance matters, NICCY has a low risk tolerance. In matters relating to the principal functions of the Commissioner to promote children's rights and hold government to account, NICCY has a higher risk tolerance.

Each action, particularly that which affects the reputation of the organisation, such as public statements or formal complaints or actions are only taken once the relevant risks have been assessed.

### **Internal Control**

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the systems of internal control. NICCY confirms review of the governance, internal control and risk management arrangements which are operational within NICCY.

My review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal control is informed by:

- The work, quality, accuracy and timeliness of outputs, information and advice from the Chief Executive;
- The work of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and comments/recommendations made by them in their Report to Those Charged with Governance;
- The work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee including observations made, and advice given, at ARAC meetings throughout the year;
- The work of the Internal Auditors as part of the annual internal audit plan;
- The progress observed in the implementation of recommendations stemming from various audit reports throughout the year; and
- Assurances provided by Head of Department and Senior Officers.

### **Internal Audit**

NICCY appointed ASM as its internal auditors. The internal audit work concentrates on areas of key activities determined by an analysis of the areas of greatest risk and in accordance with the annual internal audit plan for 2019-20 approved by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which was carried out by ASM.

The main remit of the internal audit function is to provide the Accounting Officer with an independent and objective opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes. The Annual Opinion and Report, provided by the Internal Audit function, is a key element of the framework of assurance that the Accounting Officer needs to inform this Governance Statement. The Internal Audit function operates in accordance with HM Treasury's Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).



The internal audit Annual Assurance Report, in respect of the year ended 31 March 2020, provided an overall level of assurance of “Satisfactory”, in relation to the adequacy of the systems of control in place within the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland, and their operation throughout the period under review. The areas under review for the 2019-20 year were as follows:

<b>Audit Area</b>	<b>Assurance Rating</b>
Review of Organisational alignment with legislative requirements	Satisfactory
Internal and External communications	Satisfactory

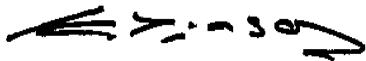
Updates on the implementation of audit recommendations are provided to the Department via quarterly Assurance Statements.

The Assurance Statement addresses a range of governance and control areas across the organisation, including progression on internal/external audit recommendations, as well as risk management reporting and Direct Award Contracts (DACs). Assurance Statements are completed and forwarded on to the sponsor department at the end of each quarter.

## **Review of my own effectiveness**

In order to review and ensure my own effectiveness as Accounting Officer, I have had an annual appraisal process with the Deputy Secretary, Work and Inclusion group within the Department for Communities. This meeting provides an opportunity for the Department to raise any issues in relation to my performance, and if necessary put in place arrangements to address any problems. No issues have been raised and I have received a satisfactory appraisal.

Furthermore, I have quarterly accountability meetings with Officials from the Department. In preparation for these meetings, a Checklist of NICCY's Governance and risk management arrangements, an ALB Quarterly Performance Report and an Assurance Statement will have been completed, to inform discussions at these meetings. During the meetings held in the period under review there were no exceptions or issues noted.



**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**

## REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT

### Remuneration Report

The report provides information in relation to the remuneration and pension packages of the Commissioner, the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team and outlines the arrangements which operate within the Department of Finance and our sponsor department, DfC to determine this. It also includes information on staff numbers, composition, sickness absence data, staff policies applied during the year, expenditure on consultancy, off payroll engagements and exit packages.

### Remuneration Policy

The Senior Civil Service (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 2017 (the scales now have up to 8 pay points) to allow progression through the pay scales within a reasonable period of time. The pay award for 2019/20 was approved by the Finance Minister in May 2020 and the pay remit is currently being processed.

### Service Contracts

The appointment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is made by the First Minister and deputy First Minister under Article 5 of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003, and in accordance with the recruitment code of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The terms and conditions are as set out in Schedule 2 to the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003.

Koulla Yiasouma was appointed as Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland, and took up appointment on 2 March 2015 for a four year term. She was reappointed for an additional 4 year term on 4 March 2019.

The members of the Senior Management Team are direct employees of the Commissioner (as are all Staff); the appointments, which are open ended, are analogous to grades in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), with terms and conditions that are very similar but not necessarily identical to those that apply to the NICS. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

## Salary and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioner and Senior Management.

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

	2019-20			2018-19		
<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>Salary £'000</b>	<b>Pension Benefits * (to nearest £1000)</b>	<b>Total (to nearest £1000)</b>	<b>Salary £'000</b>	<b>Pension Benefits** (to nearest £1000)</b>	<b>Total (to nearest £1000)</b>
K Yiasouma	75-80	67	140-150	75-80	9	85-90
<b>General Management</b>	<b>Salary £'000</b>	<b>Pension Benefits * (to nearest £1000)</b>	<b>Total (to nearest £1000)</b>	<b>Salary £'000</b>	<b>Pension Benefits** (to nearest £1000)</b>	<b>Total (to nearest £1000)</b>
M McCafferty (Chief Executive )	75-80	28	100-105	70-75	31	100-105
A Tennant (Head of Policy & Research)	50-55	22	70-75	50-55	21	70-75
Band of Highest Paid Staff	75-80			70-75		
Member's Total Remuneration						
Median Total Remuneration	32,800			28,167		
Ratio	2.4			2.6		

\*\* 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 decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

### **Fair Pay Disclosures (Audited Information)**

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

The banded remuneration of the highest paid staff member in the financial year 2019-20 was £75-80K (2018-19 £70-75k). This was 2.4 times (2018-19 2.6) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £32,800 (2018-19, £28,167).

Remuneration ranged from £10,207 to £76,445 (2018-19 £10,007 to £74,946). Total remuneration does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions, nor the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

### **Salary**

'Salary' includes gross salary, severance on; 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 the HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. The Commissioner and other members of the Senior Management Team did not receive any benefits in kind during the year ended 31 March 2020.

## Pension Entitlements – Commissioner and Senior Management (Audited Information)

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31 March 2019 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31 March 2019 £'000	CETV at 31 March 2018 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account  Nearest £100
<b>Commissioner</b>						
K Yiasouma	25-30 No lump sum	2.5-5 No lump sum	387	323	42	-
<b>Senior Management</b>						
<b>M McCafferty (Chief Executive)</b>	10-15 No lump sum	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	201	168	18	-
<b>A Tennant (Head of Policy &amp; Participation)</b>	5 – 10 No lump sum	0 – 2.5 No lump sum	77	59	12	-

## Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes

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

The alpha pension scheme was introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of existing members of the classic, premium, classic plus and Nuvos pension arrangements also moved to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age did 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 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 is 2.32%.

New entrants joining can choose between membership of alpha 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 also a 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%.

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). From April 2011, pensions payable under classic, premium, and classic plus are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining the partnership pension account.

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2019 was 3.1% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2020.



Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 are as follows:

**Scheme Year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020**

<b>Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands)</b>		<b>Contribution rates – Classic members or classic members who have moved to alpha</b>
<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>From 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020</b>
£0	£23,500.99	4.6%
£23,501	£54,500.99	5.45%
£54,501.00	£150,000.99	7.35%
£150,001.00 and above		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 their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Scheme Pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium, and classic plus and 65 for members of Nuvos. The normal scheme

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-civilservice/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 2015 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.

## Staff Report

### Number of Senior Staff

	2019-20	2018-19
Band (£75k-£80k)	Total	Total
Commissioner (Public Appointment)	1	1
Grade 5	1	1

### Staff Costs, including Commissioners Fees (Audited Information)

Staff costs comprise:

	Permanently employed staff	Others	2019-20 Total	2018-19 Total
	£	£	£	£
Wages and Salaries	741,377	61,055	802,432	762,844
Social Security Costs	66,863	-	66,863	67,791
Other Pension Costs	192,033	-	192,033	160,094
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,000,273</b>	<b>61,053</b>	<b>1,061,328</b>	<b>990,729</b>

Others includes agency staff costs and inward secondment costs.

### Pension Arrangements

The Northern Ireland Civil Service main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland 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 2019.

For 2019-20, employers' contributions of £192,033 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2018-2019 £160,094) at one of three rates in the range 28.70%-34.20% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The Scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A scheme valuation exercise was undertaken to set employer contribution rates to the scheme.

For 2019-20, the rates will range from 28.7-34.20. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2019-20 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. No employees of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland have taken up this option.

No employees retired early on ill-health grounds during 2019-20.

### **Average number of persons employed (Audited Information)**

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

<b>Number</b>	<b>Permanently employed</b>		<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
	<b>staff</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
Directly Employed	20.2		20.2	20.2
Other		0.95	0.95	0.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>21.15</b>	<b>21.15</b>

Others includes agency staff and an inward secondment.

## Staff Composition as at 31 March 2020

			2019-20
	Male	Female	Total
Commissioner	-	1	1
Other senior staff	-	1	1
Other staff	6	14	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>

## Disabled Persons

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland seeks to follow best practice guidance as set out in Disability Codes of Practice, on employment and the provision of services to disabled persons.

NICCY has a Disability Action Plan which covers the period from 2018 – 2023.

## Equality of Opportunity

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity and fair participation to all persons regardless of gender, marital status, religious belief, political affiliation/opinion, age, family status, ethnic or racial background, sexual orientation, disability, nationality or trade union membership.

NICCY has an Equality and Diversity Policy, which details NICCY's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and respecting diversity in the workplace.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland will, in all its actions, conform to both the letter and the spirit of the relevant equality legislation. The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland will provide equality of opportunity to all persons irrespective of whether or not there are legislative provisions in place.

## Employee Involvement

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland encourages widespread consultation, dissemination and exchange of information at all levels within the organisation through senior management team meetings, staff meetings, team briefings and union meetings.

### **Sickness Absence Data**

During the course of the year, 5.9% of the available working days were lost due to staff sickness in NICCY (3.8% in 2018-19). This figure also includes long-term absence which contributed 4.4% of the working days lost (1.1% in 2018-19).

### **Expenditure on Consultancy**

There was no Consultancy expenditure in the financial year 2019 - 20.

### **Off Payroll Arrangements**

NICCY adheres to off-payroll working rules, whereby in the event that we offer a temporary job to someone who works through their own intermediary, they pay broadly the same tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) as an employee.

### **Exit Packages (audited)**

NICCY released no staff members in 2019-20 under Voluntary Exit Packages. (2018-19 1 member of staff released, cost £43k).

## **ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT (Audited Information)**

### **Regularity of Expenditure**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland has appropriate systems in place to ensure the propriety and regularity of public finances. There was no irregular expenditure in 2019-20.

### **Losses and special payments (Audited Information)**

No losses or special payments were made during the financial year 2019-20.

### **Fees and Charges (Audited Information)**

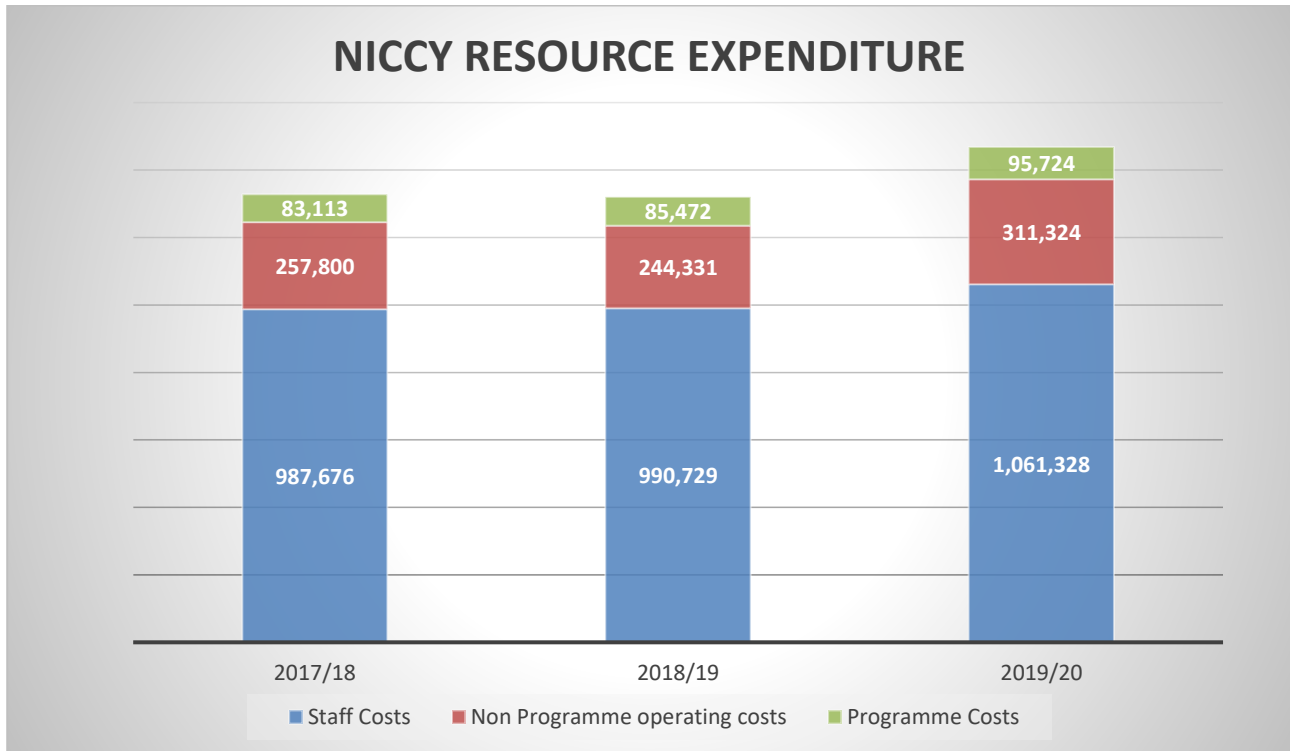
The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland did not earn any income from fees and charges in 2019-20

### **Remote Contingent Liabilities (Audited Information)**

There were no remote contingent liabilities in 2019-20



Long term expenditure trends



Signed by:

**Koulla Yiasouma**  
**Commissioner and Accounting Officer**  
 23 October 2020

## **NORTHERN IRELAND COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THE AUDIT REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

### **Opinion on financial statements**

I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and young People (NICCY) for the year ended 31 March 2020 under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The financial statements comprise: the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the 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 Commissioner for Children and Young People's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People's net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and Department for Communities 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 of opinions**

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate. My staff and I are independent of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

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

- the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis.

## **Other Information**

The Commissioner, as Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information included in the Annual Report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in the report as having been audited, and my audit certificate. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

## **Opinion on other matters**

In my opinion:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003; 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.

## **Responsibilities of the Commissioner and Accounting Officer for the financial statements**

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

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

My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order.

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

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.

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

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

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

### **Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



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

*27<sup>th</sup> October 2020*

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

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

	Notes	2019-20 £	2018-19 £
Staff Salaries and Commissioner's Fees	2	(1,061,328)	(990,729)
Other Operating Expenditure	2	(398,460)	(325,222)
Depreciation and impairment charges	2/3/4	(8,588)	(4,581)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net operating expenditure for the year</b>		<b>(1,468,376)</b>	<b>(1,320,532)</b>
<b>Other comprehensive net expenditure</b>			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net gain/loss on revaluation of property plant and equipment	3	325	-
Net gain/loss on revaluation of intangible assets	4	-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Comprehensive net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>(1,468,051)</b>	<b>(1,320,532)</b>
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

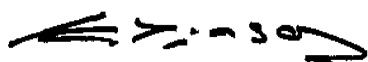
The notes on pages 83-94 form part of these accounts.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

This statement presents the financial position of NICCY. It comprises three main components: assets owned and controlled; liabilities owed to other bodies; and equity, the remaining value of NICCY.

	Notes	2020	2019
		£	£
<b>Non-current assets:</b>			
Property, plant & equipment	3	19,514	4,746
Intangible assets	4	-	-
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<u>19,514</u>	<u>4,746</u>
<b>Current assets:</b>			
Trade and other receivables	7	11,403	9,012
Cash and cash equivalents	6	44,923	66,899
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>56,326</u>	<u>75,911</u>
<b>Total assets</b>		<u>75,840</u>	<u>80,657</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	8	(91,576)	(117,342)
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<u>(91,576)</u>	<u>(117,342)</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<u>(15,736)</u>	<u>(36,685)</u>
<b>Total assets less total liabilities</b>		<u>(15,736)</u>	<u>(36,685)</u>
<b>Taxpayers' equity and other reserves:</b>			
Revaluation reserve		4,028	3,703
General reserve		(19,764)	(40,388)
<b>Total equity</b>		<u>(15,736)</u>	<u>(36,685)</u>

The financial statements on pages 79-82 were approved by the Commissioner on 27th October 2020. The notes on pages 83-94 form part of these accounts.



Koulla Yiasouma, Commissioner and Accounting Officer

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS - FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

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

	Notes	2019-20	2018-19
		£	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net Operating Expenditure		(1,468,376)	(1,320,532)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	2/3/4	8,588	4,581
(Increase)Decrease in trade and other receivables		(2,391)	3,942
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables		(25,766)	(1,827)
<b>Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities</b>		<b>(1,487,945)</b>	<b>(1,313,836)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant & equipment	3	(23,030)	-
<b>Net cash inflow/(outflow) from investing activities</b>		<b>(23,030)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Grants from sponsoring department		1,489,000	1,357,000
<b>Net financing</b>		<b>1,489,000</b>	<b>1,357,000</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period</b>		<b>(21,975)</b>	<b>43,164</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	6	66,899	23,735
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	6	44,924	66,899

The notes on pages 83-94 form part of these accounts.



## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAXPAYERS' EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

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

	<b>General Fund £</b>	<b>Revaluation Reserve £</b>	<b>Taxpayers' Equity £</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2018</b>	(76,856)	3,703	(73,153)
Grants from Sponsoring department	1,357,000	-	1,357,000
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year	(1,320,532)	-	(1,320,532)
Other reserves movements including transfers	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2019</b>	<u>(40,388)</u>	<u>3,703</u>	<u>(36,685)</u>
Grants from Sponsoring department	1,489,000	-	1,489,000
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year	(1,468,376)	325	(1,468,051)
Revaluation Gains/(losses)	-	-	-
Other reserves movements including transfers	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2020</b>	<u>(19,764)</u>	<u>4,028</u>	<u>(15,736)</u>

The notes on pages 83-94 form part of these accounts.

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

### 1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2019-20 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland. The accounting policies contained in the 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 which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Commissioner for Children and Young People are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

See IAS 1 and IAS 8 for further guidance.

#### 1.1 Accounting convention

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

#### 1.2 Funding

The activities of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland were fully funded by the Department for Communities. Income from other sources is immaterial. Permission must be sought from the Department for Communities before non-grant income can be applied to the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's activities. Non-grant income for which departmental approval to use is not forthcoming is surrendered to the Consolidated Fund.

Grant-in-Aid received, used to finance activities and expenditure which support the statutory and other objectives of the Commissioner for Children and Young People are treated as financing. It is credited to the General Reserve because it is regarded as contributions from a controlling party.

### 1.3 Expenditure

All expenditure on goods and services fall within the ambit of the Grant-in-Aid and complies with the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's Financial Memorandum and government purchasing requirements.

#### 1.4 Property, plant and equipment

The property, plant and equipment additions fall within the ambit of the Grant in Aid and were fully funded by the Department for Communities (DfC).

The cost of all property, plant and equipment has been restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end. The revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve.

A capitalisation threshold of £1,000 has been applied, although when various purchases of the same class are made at one time these can be pooled. This is in accordance with IAS 8.

#### 1.5 Intangible assets

Whilst there were no intangible asset additions, new additions fall within the ambit of the Grant in Aid and will be fully funded by the Department for Communities.

The cost of all intangible assets has been restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end. The revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve.

A capitalisation threshold of £1,000 per asset or pool of assets has been applied. This is in accordance with IAS 8.

#### 1.6 Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation and amortisation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset evenly over its expected life as follows:

Type of Asset	Useful Life
• Furniture	10 years
• Fixtures	10 years

• Office Equipment	3 years
• Information Technology	3 – 4 years
• Intangibles	3 – 4 years

## 1.7 Financial instruments

### *Cash and cash equivalents*

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand.

### *Trade and other receivables*

Trade receivables do not carry any interest and are recognised and carried at the lower of their original invoiced value and recoverable amount. Provision is made when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired. Balances are written off when the probability of recovery is assessed as being remote.

### *Trade and other payables*

Trade payables are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

## 1.8 Pension costs

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland 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 Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payments of future benefits is a charge on the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). In respect of the defined contribution schemes, the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland recognises the contributions payable for the year.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.

## 1.9 Value added tax

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is not registered for VAT.

### **1.10 Operating segments**

The Accounting Officer considers the Commissioner for Children and Young People as one operating unit in making decisions. Management information is generated on a holistic basis for the organisation.

### **1.11 Staff costs**

Under IAS19 Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obliged to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken annual leave and flexible time owed as at the year end.

### **1.12 Leases**

The accounting for an operating lease assumes that the lessor owns the leased asset, and the lessee uses the asset for a fixed period of time.

NICCY, as lessee, is subject to a leasing arrangement for the rental of their offices at Equality House that is classified as an operating lease; NICCY classifies each lease payment as an expense when it becomes payable.

If there may be changes in lease payments that are based on such future events as inflation or the amount of property taxes incurred, these items are to be charged to expense as they become accruable.

IFRS 16 Leases replaces IAS 17 Leases and is effective with EU adoption from 1 January 2019. In line with the requirements of the FReM, IFRS 16 will be implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector, with effect from 1 April 2021. The impact of the initial application of IFRS 16 on NICCY's Annual Accounts is not yet known.

### **1.13 Impending application of newly issued accounting standards not yet effective**

Management has reviewed new accounting standards that have been issued but are not yet effective, nor adopted early for these accounts. Management consider that these are unlikely to have a significant impact on the accounts in the period of initial application.

## 2. Expenditure

	2019-20	2018-19
	£	£
Staff Costs <sup>1</sup> :		
Wages and Salaries	802,432	762,844
Social Security Costs	66,863	67,791
Other Pension Costs	192,033	160,094
Rentals Under Operating Leases	60,189	64,357
Policy & Participation	58,731	54,196
Annual Contracts	51,964	49,682
Corporate Services	37,623	34,480
Rates	25,332	25,856
Communications	11,835	19,304
Electricity	11,628	12,159
Legal & Investigations	25,158	11,972
Travel & Subsistence	7,614	10,392
Audit – External	9,500	7,750
Office Consumables	8,826	6,010
Telephones	6,767	5,648
Staff Training	33,440	5,583
Miscellaneous	9,251	5,182
UNCRC 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	12,311	-
ENOC Event	12,308	-
Repairs	4,589	4,273
Postage	720	3,127
Staff Recruitment	7,290	3,002
Service Charge	2,227	2,241
Hospitality	1,157	8
Non-cash items:		
Depreciation	8,588	4,581
Gain on revaluation		-
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,468,376</b>	<b>1,320,532</b>

<sup>1</sup> Further analysis of staff costs is located in the Staff Report on page 70.

### 3. Property, plant & equipment

2019-20	Information Technology	Office Equipment	Furniture	Fixtures	Total
Cost or valuation	£	£	£	£	£
At 1 April 2019	86,617	4,940	106,587	8,382	206,526
Additions	23,030	-	-	-	23,030
Disposals	(12,258)	-	-	-	(12,258)
Revaluations	1,653	71	2,023	162	3,909
<b>At 31 March 2020</b>	<b>99,042</b>	<b>5,011</b>	<b>108,610</b>	<b>8,544</b>	<b>221,207</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2019	83,838	4,940	106,296	6,706	201,780
Charged in year	7,526	-	207	855	8,588
Disposals	(12,258)	-	-	-	(12,258)
Revaluations	1,345	71	2,021	146	3,583
<b>At 31 March 2020</b>	<b>80,451</b>	<b>5,011</b>	<b>108,524</b>	<b>7,707</b>	<b>201,693</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>18,591</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>19,514</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2019</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>4,746</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>					
Owned	18,591	-	86	837	19,514
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>18,591</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>19,514</b>

During the year ended 31 March 2020, property, plant and equipment were restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end.



<b>2018-19</b>	<b>Information Technology</b>	<b>Office Equipment</b>	<b>Furniture</b>	<b>Fixtures</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Cost or valuation</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
At 1 April 2018	86,134	4,869	107,296	8,438	206,737
Additions	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	483	71	(709)	(56)	(211)
<b>At 31 March 2019</b>	<b>86,617</b>	<b>4,940</b>	<b>106,587</b>	<b>8,382</b>	<b>206,526</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2018	81,040	4,869	105,594	5,906	197,409
Charged in year	2,343	-	1,399	839	4,581
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	455	71	(697)	(39)	(210)
<b>At 31 March 2019</b>	<b>83,838</b>	<b>4,940</b>	<b>106,296</b>	<b>6,706</b>	<b>201,780</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2019</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>4,746</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2018</b>	<b>5,094</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>2,532</b>	<b>9,328</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>					
Owned	2,779	-	291	1,676	4,746
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2019</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>4,746</b>

#### 4. Intangible assets

2019-2020	Information Technology Software	Software Licences	Total
	£	£	£
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 April 2019	9,355	4,920	14,275
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
Revaluations	144	74	218
<b>At 31 March 2020</b>	<b>9,499</b>	<b>4,994</b>	<b>14,493</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>			
At 1 April 2019	9,355	4,920	14,275
Charged in year	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
Revaluations	144	74	218
<b>At 31 March 2020</b>	<b>9,499</b>	<b>4,994</b>	<b>14,493</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2019</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>			
Owned	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

During the year ended 31 March 2019, intangible assets were restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end.

2018-19	Information Technology Software £	Software Licences £	Total £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 April 2018	9,132	4,803	13,935
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
Revaluations	223	117	340
<b>At 31 March 2019</b>	9,355	4,920	14,275
<b>Amortisation</b>			
At 1 April 2018	9,132	4,803	13,935
Charged in year	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
Revaluations	223	117	340
<b>At 31 March 2019</b>	9,355	4,920	14,275
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2019</b>	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2018</b>	-	-	-
<b>Asset financing:</b>			
Owned	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2019</b>	-	-	-

## 5. Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by Department for Communities, 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 Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's expected purchase and usage requirements and The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

## 6. Cash and cash equivalents

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Balance at 1 April	66,899	23,735
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(21,976)	43,164
Balance at 31 March	<u>44,923</u>	<u>66,899</u>

### The following balances at 31 March were held at:

Commercial banks and cash in hand	<u>44,923</u>	<u>66,899</u>
Balance at 31 March	<u>44,923</u>	<u>66,899</u>

## 7. Trade receivables, financial and other assets

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade receivables	-	-
Other receivables	-	307
Prepayments	11,403	8,705
	<u>11,403</u>	<u>9,012</u>

## 8. Trade payables, financials and other liabilities

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Taxation and social security	18,292	16,746
Trade payables	1,278	16,971
Accruals	72,006	83,625
	<u>91,576</u>	<u>117,342</u>

## 9. Operating leases

£60,189 (£64,357 2019) was included as an expense on rentals under operating leases in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

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

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>Buildings:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Not later than one year	60,030	64,357
Later than one year and not later than five years	20,010	126,459
Later than five years	-	-
	<u>80,040</u>	<u>190,816</u>

Further explanation of NICCY Operating leases may be found under Note 1.12.

## 10. Contingent liabilities disclosed under IAS 37

There were no contingent liabilities in 2019-20.

## 11. Related-party transactions

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Communities. The Department for Communities is regarded as a related party with which The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland has had various material transactions during the year.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland rents its office at Equality House from the Equality Commission who is the main tenant in the building; the annual charge for Rent in 2019-20 was £62,102, with other related occupancy charges of £63,873.

In addition, The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland has had a small number of transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies.

Neither the Commissioner, key manager or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions with The Commissioner for Children and Young People during the year.

## **12. Events after the Reporting Period**

There were no events after the Statement of Financial Position date up to the date of approval of these accounts impacting upon The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland.

The Accounting Officer authorised the issue of these financial statements on 27th October 2020.

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