

NIGALA

NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency

*A voice for Children and Young People
in Family Courts*

ANNUAL REPORT AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2020-21



**The Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency
Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2021**

**Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under section 11(3) (c)
of the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001
by the Department of Health**

On

31st August 2021



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The Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) was established as a Special Agency by virtue of powers contained in the Health and Personal Social Services (Special Agencies) (NI) Order 1990. The Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem (Establishment and Constitution) Order (NI) 1995 was introduced on 1st December 1995 making provision for the constitution of the Agency and appointment of the Agency Board.

Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency - Board Members

Mrs Gemma Loughran (Chair)

Ms Dawn Shaw (Chief Executive) *as from 1st April 2021*

Mr Peter Reynolds (Chief Executive) *retired 31st March 2021*

Mrs Gillian McGaughey (Non-Executive Director)

Mr Fred Smyth (Non-Executive Director)

Mr Lee Wilson (Non-Executive Director)

Ms Veronica Callaghan (Non-Executive Director)

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Introduction by the Chair

As chair of the Board of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) since last year, I am pleased to present our Annual Report and Accounts for the period 1 April 2020 to 31st March 2021. The year covered in this Report has been a year like no other, especially for those working in health and social care who have so selflessly provided a daily front-line service to those in need. It has also been a time of great pain for the many who have lost loved ones due to the Covid virus and a time of suffering for those who contracted the virus and who continue to suffer from its effects.

Of particular concern to NIGALA is the toll that the virus has taken on the daily life of families facing economic worries, the challenge of home schooling, anxiety about examinations, lack of contact with relatives, including those in hospital and care homes, restricted social opportunities both for children and parents.

In this year our guardians have engaged with over 1300 families and have adapted impressively to the challenge of working remotely where necessary, both in engaging with children and in attending court. The prompt roll-out of technology and the support provided by the HSC have been key factors in enabling our staff to maintain the high quality of our services. I am very proud of the success of all our staff in balancing their work, their own well-being and the needs of their own families, including the clinically vulnerable.

I am most grateful to my Non-Executive colleagues on the Board for their dedication and commitment to NIGALA and for their support and advice to me in my role as Chair.

While recognising our achievements in the last year, I cannot ignore the very real problem of delay and its effect on the children we represent. As at 31st March 2021, 330 of those cases have been waiting over 400 days for a legal determination of their welfare. Delay is an enduring problem in family practice; it can, of course, be purposeful but, unless it can be so justified, delay is detrimental to the best interests of children whose futures are to be decided in Court. It has to be recognised that there is not a single solution to the back-log of court cases and all involved acknowledge that a co-ordinated and cross-sectoral approach is required to continue to address this problem.

Delay in the finalisation of current cases is one factor which has created the problem of the timely allocation of a guardian to new cases. During the last year the number of cases in which this problem arose was on average 15 cases every month. While acknowledging the sterling work by the executive team, in cooperation with the guardians, to address this problem, our Board has concluded that without extra resources it does not seem possible to resolve it fully.

At our Conference in 2020 children and young people told us of their concerns about being seen as 'uneducated', 'unwanted' and lacking 'ambition'. That message continues to be articulated and must be responded to in order to give hope and to change lives. Of particular importance to the future of children and young people in care is the enhancement of their educational opportunities. Our guardians monitor carefully the arrangements in care plans for educational provision.

Looking forward to 2021 and beyond, the Agency hopes to work more collaboratively both locally and nationally, to renew constantly its vision, to develop its professionalism, to welcome new staff. The review of our organisational structure to promote the best interests of the children we represent and to support our governance framework and the delivery of business priorities remains a key strategic objective. Building on networks within and across social care and justice is fundamental to our learning, development and improvement.

A key change for NIGALA in 2021 is the appointment of a new Chief Executive, Dawn Shaw, who brings to us a strong record of work on behalf of children, both in the voluntary and in the public sector. The Board is delighted to welcome Dawn and looks forward to supporting her in her new role in which she will continue to serve the best interests of children and young people.

NIGALA has been privileged to have had as Chief Executive since 2015 Peter Reynolds. Peter joined the Agency in September 1998 as a guardian, progressing to the post of Quality Assurance and Training Manager in 2003 and becoming Assistant Director the following year. Peter has led NIGALA with distinction and his outstanding work for children and young people is widely recognised, both locally and nationally. One of the highlights of his last year in post was the very successful Conference in February 2020 with the theme "Are we listening?" which demonstrated the important role played by the Agency in the journey of many children and young people. Peter's commitment to those children and young people was reflected in his selfless decision to delay his planned retirement for a year in order to lead the Agency's response to the pandemic. The Board

wishes Peter every joy as he begins a new chapter in his life.

On behalf of the Board, I also want to express our sincere appreciation of, and gratitude for, the professionalism and dedication of each of our guardians, of every member of our corporate and administration staff and of each person on the senior management team.

In last year's report I said that our society could justifiably be grateful for the high quality of care provided to vulnerable children and their families by social workers and guardians and undertook that NIGALA would continue to work hard with other key stakeholders to achieve the best for the children and young people we serve. I am confident that, despite the challenges of the past year, there has been an impressive and cooperative response to the needs of these children and young people. Our priority for the next year will be to continue to engage with all concerned to seek to promote the welfare of the children and young people who are at the heart of our work.

At a time when front- line services and capacity are stretched significantly with new pressures building on existing ones, I wish to acknowledge publicly our gratitude for the invaluable support we continue to receive from the Department of Health.

I am pleased to commend this Annual Report.



Gemma Loughran
Chair

8th July 2021

SECTION 1 - Performance Report

The Performance Report provides information on the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA), its main objectives and strategies and the principal risks that it faces.

The Performance Report of the NIGALA is presented in two sections:

1. A Performance Overview, setting out the purpose of the NIGALA and the Chief Executive's perspective on its performance against its objectives and the risks to the achievement of those objectives; and
2. A Performance Analysis, providing a balanced and comprehensive analysis of the organisation's performance during the year.

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Our Purpose

The NIGALA is a Special Agency of the Department of Health (DoH) and has been set up under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

The function of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (the 'Agency') is to safeguard and promote the interests of children by providing independent social work advice in public law and adoption court proceedings and to provide effective representation of children's views and interests. Once a child or young person is subject to court proceedings the guardian must work to assist the court in making a fully informed decision about the future life of that child or young person.

The NIGALA's performance framework is determined by the Department of Health in the light of its wider strategic aims and of current Public Service Agreement (PSA) objectives and targets. The priorities and objectives for meeting the NIGALA's overall aim are set out in its annual Business Plan, the key objectives of which are subject to approval by its Sponsor Branch in the Department of Health. In common with all ALBs, on issues of governance and assurance, the NIGALA is directly accountable to the Department of Health.

Chief Executive's Statement & Overview

The Chief Executive for the year ending 31st March 2021 was Mr Peter Reynolds, who retired on that date. Ms Dawn Shaw took up the post of Chief Executive on the 1st April 2021.

The year 2020 into 2021 continues to be defined by the presence of Covid-19 and how our health, social care and justice systems are responding to what has been the single greatest challenge for children, families and front-line workers and practitioners in recent decades. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has been compounded by necessary and associated lock down measures, requiring professionals and courts to adapt to remote and socially distancing working. For children and families, lock-down meant not only additional pressures but disrupted lines of support from social workers, community Nurses, GPs PSNI, schools and the voluntary sector. Notwithstanding the significant challenges faced by the statutory services they have continued to make contact with, and provide support to vulnerable children and young people based on concerns about their welfare. In this year, all professionals and families have had to rapidly adapt to new ways of working, using remote or socially-distanced means. Due to ongoing restrictions, concern about the welfare of very vulnerable children was highlighted by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI);

“However, during these difficult times there are some children who may not be safe from harm at home or who will not get the level of care they need. The greatest worry is that some of these children will be ‘unseen and unheard’. It is for this reason we are asking the public to play a vital role with us, in coming together to help us support and create greater safety for these children. To do this, we are asking the public that if they have any worries about a child not being safe or not receiving the care they need to contact their local Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Services”.

(SBNI, Press Release, January 2021).

Despite ‘lock-down’ and associated measures the clear message to all practitioners operating in the family justice system has been to ‘*maintain and enhance*¹’ good practice with respect to protecting children. That said, the current restraints are likely to be long lasting despite the positive messages about the welcome administration of vaccines.

¹ Message from the Lord Chief Justice, 5 January 2021.

Prior to the pandemic, the backdrop was one where the volume of work in the system was very high and ‘*delay*’ was an ongoing and persistent problem.

Looking more broadly, the ‘Public Law Working Group’² reported that despite best efforts Family Courts were not coping with the pre-COVID workload and radical steps aimed at changing professional culture and working practices about to be launched when the pandemic struck were required and necessary.

The number of public law order cases in Northern Ireland remains high with 83 more care order applications received compared to 2019-20. What is more significant is the reduction in the overall number of cases concluded (229 less) than in 2019-20. There is no doubt, the reasons for the high number of public law (care) applications and regional variations are ‘complex and multiple’³, But, the ability to effectively respond and manage this very challenging area of work, as Mrs Justice Keegan has said;

*‘The far greater volume of cases is, as the President observed, dealt with by the same number of social workers, care professionals, Children’s Guardians, lawyers and judges, if not fewer, given those who have decided to leave their chosen careers because of the incessant and overwhelming demands of the family justice system’.*⁴

The important role played by guardians (and social workers) in assisting courts was best illustrated in a Judgement made Mr Justice O’Hara in May 2020, when he observed;

‘The Agency’s Guardians have the potential to exercise an important influence on the direction in which cases develop. Very often they have something extra to add or different to say compared to what the court had heard from the Trust’.

The interests of the child or young person require that the Court has the best possible information about the present experience of the child or young person and his/her family together with recommendation(s) for the future. The voice of the child or young person is an important source of information about family life. A return to normal face to face communication and engagement remains a challenge at present but is a real and necessary objective. It is also important to ensure that meaningful participation of family members in the court proceedings in order to vindicate the

² Final Report, March 2021

³ Care Crisis Review: Options for Change (June 2018).

⁴ Public Law Working Group (Final Report, March 2021).

right to family life and to a fair hearing.

In 2021-2022 we aim to enhance through the NIGALA Children's Forum the way in which the voice of the child and young person is listened to and promoted.

It is interesting to note that 'delay' in determining cases is viewed as a real source of prejudice to the welfare of the child, where in England and Wales, they are still expected to be completed within 26 weeks. It very worrying therefore and a point for further reflection that public law cases in this jurisdiction are on average taking approximately twelve months with a growing number of cases taking 400 days (57 weeks,) to conclude.

In order to meet our statutory obligations we must endeavour to ensure that the best interests of our children and young people remain the focus of the courts, with outcomes the best that can be achieved. We are very aware that the best interests of the child or young person does not always coincides with his or her wishes and feelings and the former must, of course, always prevail.

The Agency's strategic focus for 2021-22 is on the children we represent supported through improved partnership and collaborative working arrangements with other parts of the social care and justice system. I am delighted to report that cross organisational working is much improved and we will endeavour to develop our channels of communication and information sharing with the HSC and Courts this year and going forward. As part of our increased dialogue with judges and Trusts, I am heartened by the collective desire to work more closely to achieve the best outcomes we can for children and families.

This year more than ever, the Agency has built on the core principles of the HSC values, through '*collaboration*', '*partnership*' and '*relationship based practice*'.

Continuous improvement as a foundation to providing a quality service remains our over-riding objective and moving into 2022 we will build on the work completed to-date; the roll out of a new 'Principal Guardian Practitioner' post, implementing revised 'supervision' arrangements and a 'learning and Improvement' strategy are some of the initiatives to be taken forward this year, while building on the regional initiatives commenced last year;⁵

⁵ Five Nations Gathering.

Mr Reynolds noted: “Last year I was delighted to welcome an our newly appointed Chair, Gemma Loughran, a former County Court Judge with many years’ experience of working in children’s cases and very familiar with the challenges which face the systems of Social Care and Justice. Twelve months in and supported by committed and enthusiastic Board members, much is being achieved and as I retire I want to thank the Department of Health, the NIGALA Board, Executive Team and staff for all their hard work, dedication and support. I welcome Dawn Shaw as the incoming Chief Executive and I wish her the very best for the next stage of her journey in representing children as valuable and at time vulnerable members of our society.”

Staff

The Agency has a small staff complement across its corporate and professional functions, which strives to make a difference for children and young people in a large and complex system. As the Accounting Officer for the NIGALA, I feel immensely proud and privileged to lead an organisation of staff who, through their commitment and professionalism, have responded so positively to the pressures of the past year.

Cultural Assessment

Health and Social Care services in Northern Ireland has introduced a cultural assessment survey in the past twelve months. NIGALA’S response rate was 66% with 41 people participating.

The assessment sought to gauge where NIGALA is in terms of the following dimensions;

- Compassionate leadership
- Collective leadership
- Values
- Vision
- Goals and performance
- Quality and innovation
- Teamwork
- Compassionate care

Overall the scores provided us with a baseline from which we can draw an action plan. The Team Working dimension and Quality and Innovation scored lowest for NIGALA. Interestingly, these two dimensions have scored lowest in other organisations that have taken part. However whilst

NIGALA scored lowest in these dimensions, they are very positive figures.

It is reassuring to see Compassionate Care scored so highly, particularly given the nature of the work that the NIGALA does. Other positives were the Goals & Performance dimension and Values.

Our Buildings

NIGALA holds three office accommodation leases sited strategically in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Armagh. In 2020-21 NIGALA completed a rent review process for Armagh and Derry/Londonderry and renewal leases were agreed for each office. The lease for the office in Belfast has been renewed and extended to November 2022 as part of the Belfast Optimisation project, which will see staff move to James House in the Gasworks site alongside other public sector bodies.

Risk Management

The NIGALA Board receives strategic updates on issues which may impact on the organisation. The Board also maintains a Corporate Risk Register which is routinely considered at all meetings of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and formally reviewed by the Board on a six-monthly basis.

Within the year the Board monitored closely key sectoral risks and issues which it considered for possible impact on achievement of its Business Plan objectives.

Diminishing resources is a challenge facing all public-sector organisations and I would wish to acknowledge the support we have received from the Department of Health and Sponsor Branch. Internally the NIGALA has grown in its efficiency by finding new ways to do its work, particularly in moving to a paper-lite environment.

Covid-19

NIGALA invoked its Business Continuity Plan for Covid-19 on the 13th March 2020. NIGALA has worked with the Courts and also Health Trusts in providing a much refined service, with the use of telephone and video conferencing to the fore. Much court work though has been curtailed since that date.

EU Exit

NIGALA has actively worked with the Department on any potential impact of future outcomes from the UK-EU negotiations on the services it provides. In 2020-21 there was no such impact on its operations, supply chain or its finances, with no additional expenditure incurred.

Complaints about the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency

The NIGALA received four complaints about its services in the course of the year. Complaints are a valuable way to learn how to improve services. The NIGALA takes all feedback very seriously and is constantly reviewing the service it offers to improve the experience of children and young people and those it works with. The Agency also received 19 compliments from those it engaged with.

Finance Summary

The NIGALA receives its main funding from the DoH in the form of a Revenue Resource Limit. The monies fund the work of the NIGALA Business Plan. The Financial Statements for the year-end 31st March 2021 can be found on pages 75 to 112. The NIGALA is required to ensure that it breaks even on an annual basis by containing its surplus within £20,000. The following table summarises the performance against the financial target.

Net Expenditure	£4,634,135
Revenue Resource Limit	£4,646,759
Surplus against Revenue Resource Limit	£12,624

The Board of the NIGALA received regular updates on expenditure and year end forecasting to ensure the organisation met its statutory breakeven requirements in 2020-21.

Going Concern

The NIGALA ended the year in a net liability position due to its holding minimum fixed assets and debtors and income from the Department of Health treated as financing through reserves.

As illustrated in our Statement of Financial Position, the NIGALA operates with a net liability position, largely generated by our trade and other payables liability compared to a small capital

asset base. As a non-departmental public body, the NIGALA is funded through Department of Health. As Department of Health funding will continue for the foreseeable future this ensures that the preparation of our accounts as a going concern is the correct basis.

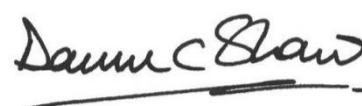
The accounts have been prepared on the going concern basis. Management are not aware of any conditions or events, currently or in the future, that would bring this assumption into question.

Investment Strategy and Plans

The NIGALA receives its funding on an annual basis and has no requirement for an Investment Strategy or Investment Plans.

Accounts

The Accounts have been prepared under a direction issued by the Department of Finance under Circular DAO (DoF) 01/21.



Dawn Shaw
Chief Executive

8th July 2021

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Key Performance Indicators

The Agency has an annual business plan approved by the Department of Health and ratified by the Board. The Board approved several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in September 2018 to monitor performance against the Business Plan. These have been set out against Strategic Themes within the Corporate Plan. This sits alongside the risk register in which risks are also set out against strategic themes. This allows risks to be monitored against their potential impact on KPIs and strategic themes.

The Board reviews performance at each of its meetings against the KPIs. Performance against the Indicators as at the 31st March 2020 is outlined below under a colour coded rating:

- Green:** KPI achieved.
- Orange:** KPI substantially achieved.
- Red:** KPI substantially not achieved.

Strategic Themes	Current KPIs	Notes
Children at the Centre of NIGALA decision making.	KPI 1: Allocation of Cases For priority cases a Guardian will be allocated within 8 working days following a court request. This includes Secure Accommodation and Emergency Protection Cases.	Secure Accommodation: 90% (29 cases) Emergency Protection: 100% (3 cases)
	KPI 2: Allocation of Care Proceedings Cases* 85% of all Care Type cases will be allocated a Guardian within 14 days of the court request. <i>These figures exclude those cases in KPI 1 and Art 56s</i>	62.% Overall for year (746 cases in total allocated) It should be noted that 54% of care cases were allocated within 5 working days.

Strategic Themes	Current KPIs	Notes
Delivery of a quality service to agreed standards.	KPI 3: Children and Young People's satisfaction 80% of children and young people who provide feedback to NIGALA will rate the service overall as good or better.	Satisfaction rating for the year is: 87% of children rate the service as good or better. (99 responses out of 205 requests – 48% response rate)
Valuing staff and promoting learning.	KPI 4: Supervision All Guardians will complete the annual cycle of supervision session.	100% All supervision sessions completed.
Efficient use of Resources.	KPI 5: Financial Breakeven NIGALA remains within a financial breakeven surplus target of £20,000	Breakeven was achieved with a small surplus of £12,624
	KPI 6 : Attendance Improve or maintain sick absence rates from 2019/20 levels (95.17%)	Attendance rate for 2020-21 was 97.98%

In Care Cases, 62% were appointed a Guardian within the target time. Availability of Guardians for allocating cases was heavily affected by the impact of Covid-19's pandemic on the court system, with case duration increasing to 362 days from 336 days.

Public Sector Payments Policy

The NIGALA has sought to observe the principles of the "CBI Better Payments Practice Code".

The code advocates:

- Explaining payment procedures to suppliers;
- Agreeing payment terms at the outset and sticking to them;
- Paying bills in accordance with agreed terms, or as agreed by law;
- Telling suppliers without delay when an invoice is contested; and
- Settling quickly when a contested invoice gets a satisfactory response.
- The code seeks payment to be made within 30 days of the receipt of goods or valid invoice.

Public Sector Payment Policy - Measure of Compliance

The Department requires that NIGALA pay their non HSC trade creditors in accordance with applicable terms and appropriate Government Accounting guidance. The NIGALA's measure of compliance is:

	2021	2021	2020	2020
	Number	Value	Number	Value
		£		£
Total bills paid	718	1,702,041	868	1,937,245
Total bills paid within 30 day target	717	1,701,691	849	1,895,691
% of bills paid within 30 day target	100%	100%	98%	98%
Total bills paid within 10 day target	691	1,685,036	736	1,719,064
% of bills paid within 10 day target	99%	99%	85%	88%

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002

	£
Amount of compensation paid for payment(s) being late	-
Amount of interest paid for payment(s) being late	-
Total	-

SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN

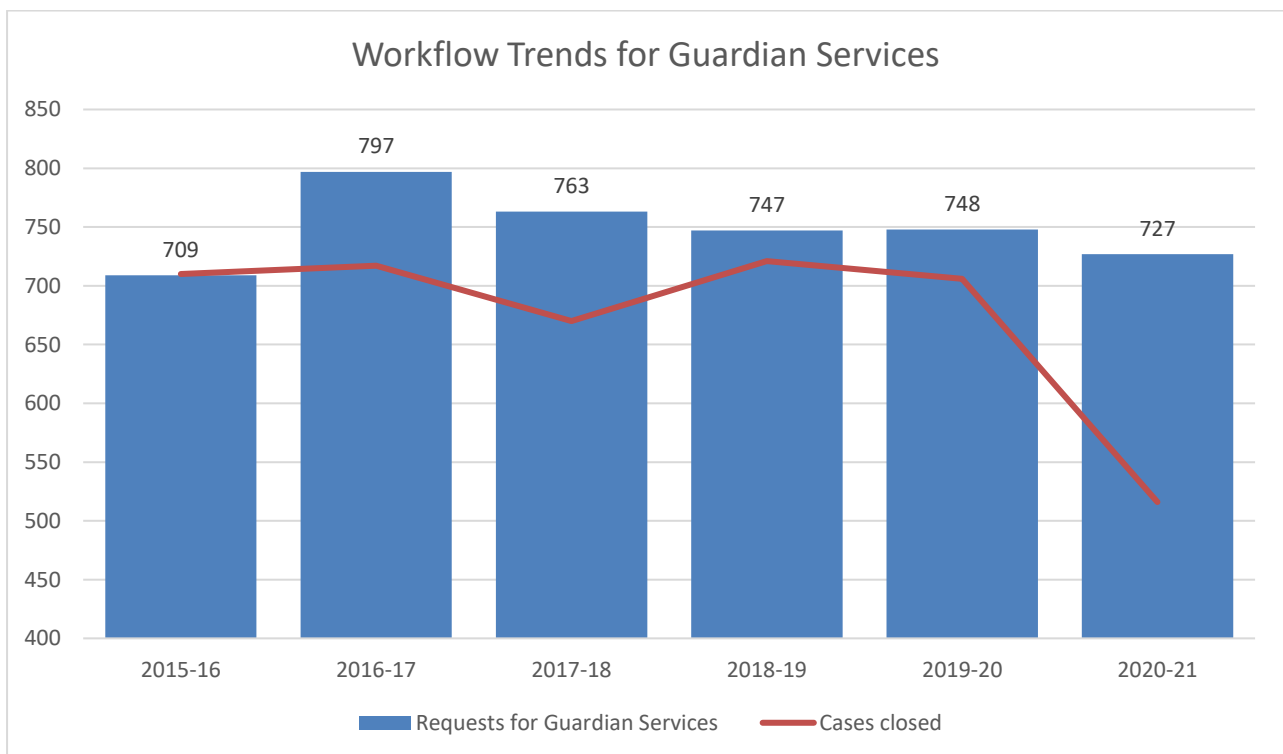
Representing Children

The core purpose of the Agency’s work is to represent the interests of the children and young people in Court and to report to the Court the wishes and feelings of the child regarding their circumstances and preferred outcome to the court proceeding. This is done through the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem by the Court, subsequently allocated to a child or young person by NIGALA.

The Agency received 727 Requests for Guardians in 2020-21. This is comparable to the requests received in the previous year (748 requests). The number of cases closed in year was 524, significantly down from the previous year’s total of 698 cases. This has led to a net increase in the ongoing caseload being managed by the Agency. This trend for an increase in cases being managed has established itself over the past few years but exacerbated by Covid-19.

This can be seen in *Chart 1*, which shows the comparison between more new appointment requests and fewer cases closed in each of the past six years.

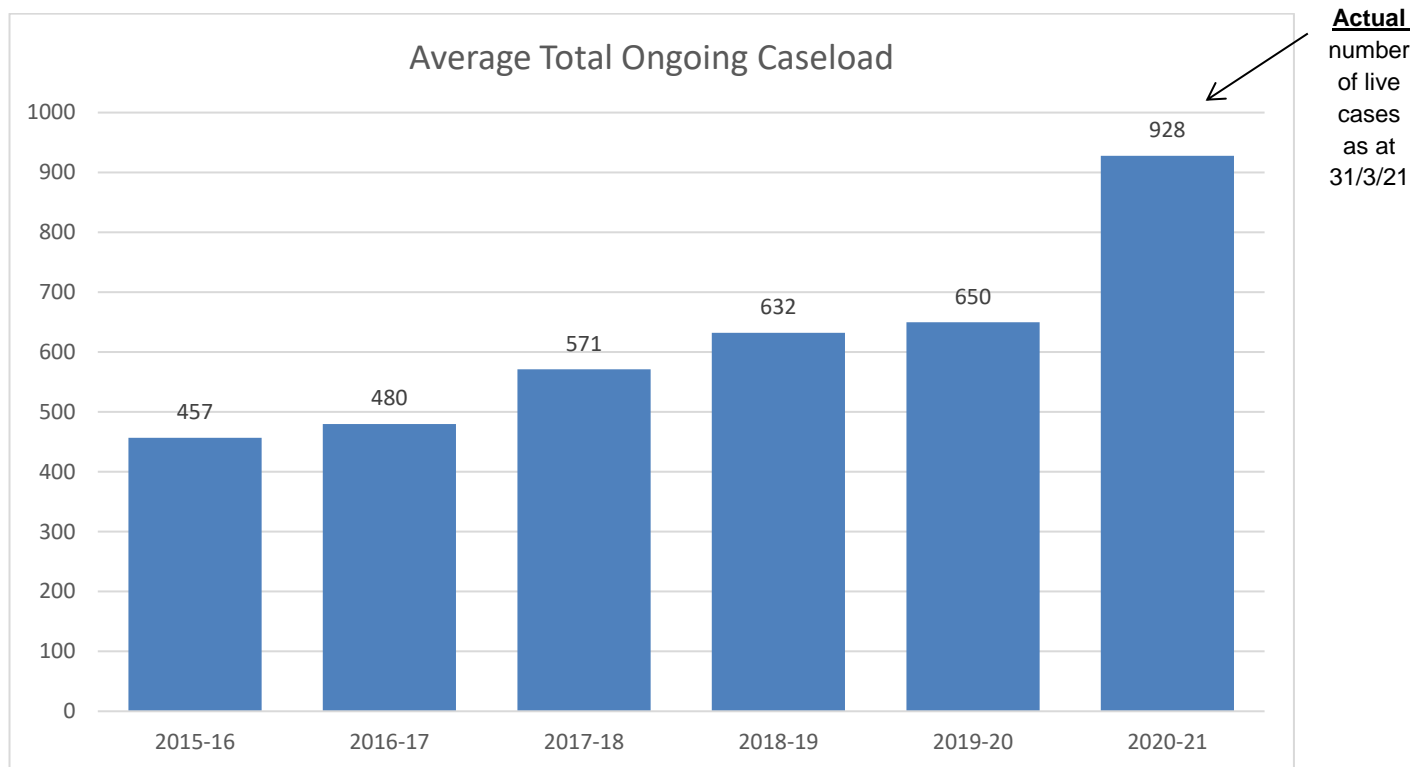
Chart 1



The gap between new requests and cases closed has resulted in a growth in the number of cases, or caseload, being managed at any one time by the Agency. This can be seen in *Chart 2*.

Chart 2

Over the past five years the average number of cases managed has increased. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a significant increase with 928 cases now being managed.

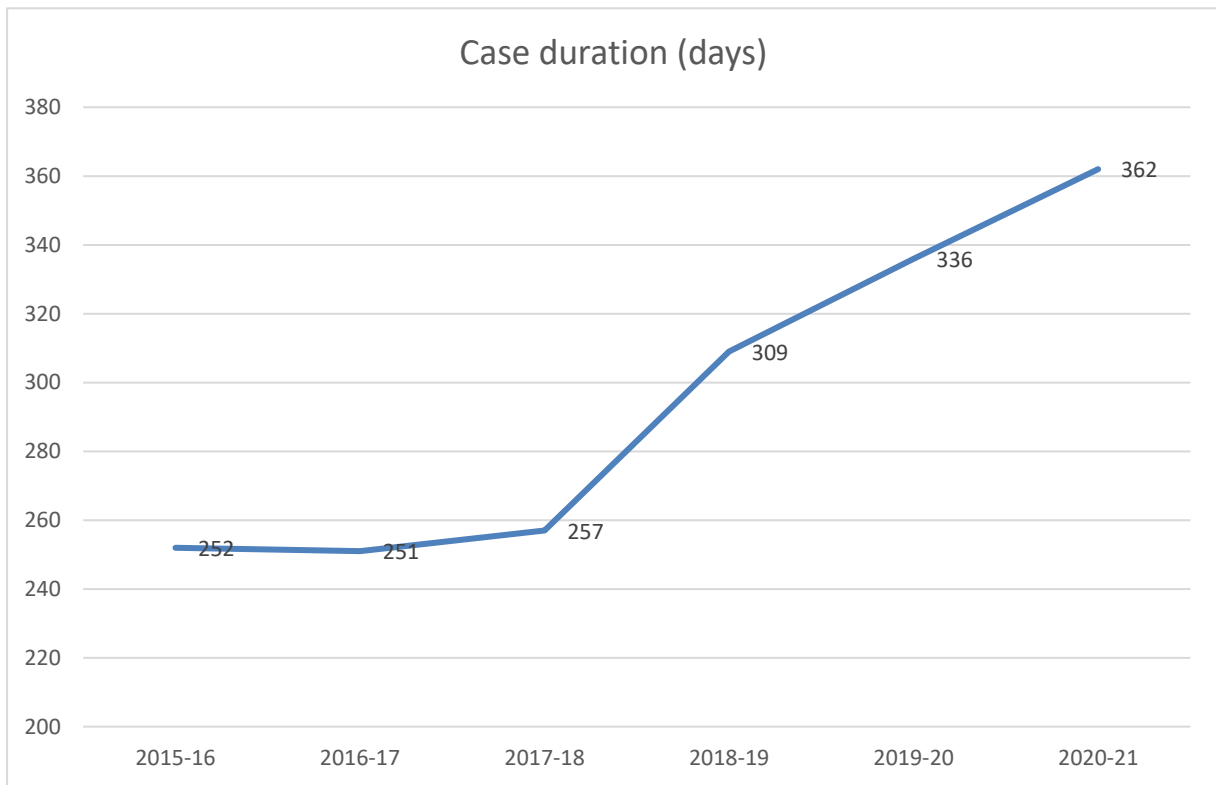


A major factor in this increasing live case load is also the average time a case will now last.

Duration of proceedings

The average duration of a case with the Agency is 362 days compared to 336 days for the year 2019-20. An increasing number of cases is taking over 400 days to complete. As at the 31st March 2021 NIGALA had 868 cases allocated with 330 cases (38% of live cases) running at over 400 days. This compares to 337 such cases in 2019-20. The trend for an increase in the average time taken to close a case is shown in *Chart 3* overleaf.

Chart 3



NIGALA is unique in being able to provide crosscutting data on the children it represents in the court process. NIGALA has shared data on case duration with Health and Social Care Trusts and the Shadow Family Justice Board on the delays which children and young people are experiencing. As a result of our representation the Shadow Family Justice Board set up a “Delay Committee” to look into the reason cases are delayed and to explore how the process can be changed to give more timely outcomes for children and young people. In addition the NIGALA Assistant Directors have implemented regular meetings with their counterparts in the Trusts to share information on cases which are running over 400 days and discussing how these cases can be progressed.

Covid -19 Pandemic Impact

In the first 3 months of the pandemic there was a significant reduction in cases completed by the courts (65 cases compared with 207 cases in the comparable period for 2019). At the time this was balanced with a reduction in court requests (78 cases compared to 197 cases). As at June NIGALA had 5 cases unallocated.

Subsequent to this the Trusts have increased the number of applications to court leading to court appointment of 635 guardians in the period July 2020 to March 2021 compared to 549 for the comparable period in the previous year. This effectively cleared the backlog of cases held by the Trusts.

However, whilst Trusts have returned their applications to court to previous levels, there are continuing delays to the finalisation of cases in court. This in turn has impacted on the Agency's overall case load volumes and case duration, with 928 cases listed for a guardian appointment an increase of 44% on the average number of cases held in the previous year.

Nature of requests

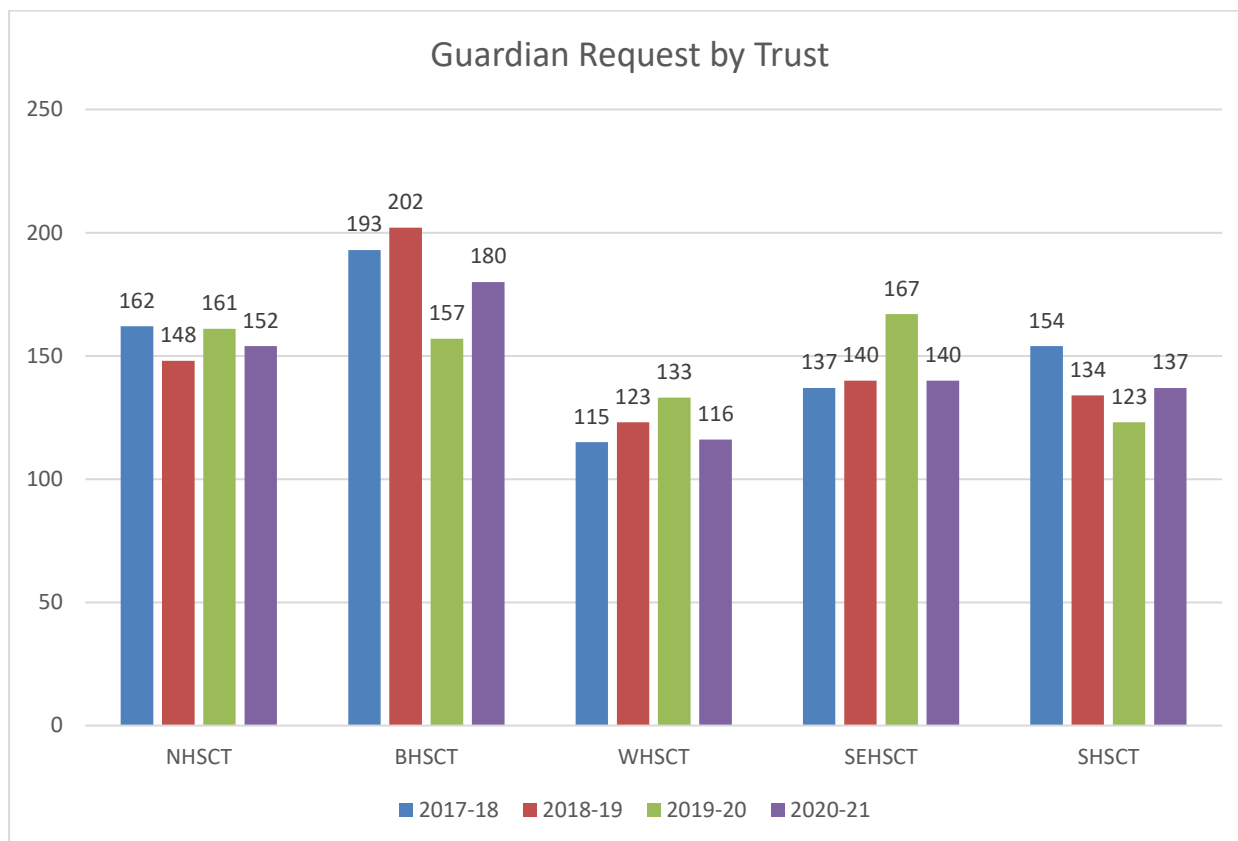
The reasons for the appointment of a Guardian to represent the interests of a child can be varied and complex. For 2020-21 closed cases included NIGALA representing children's interests in:

- Adoption cases, where 70 children were successfully adopted;
- Secure Accommodation cases, with 29 instances where the child was placed in Secure Accommodation;
- Care Applications. The largest number of requests for Guardian input is within Care Applications and this year NIGALA received 427 new requests for such cases with 270 brought to a close. Closure of such cases has decreased from 316 cases in 2019-20, a reduction of 46 cases.

Regional picture

Health and Social Care services for children in Northern Ireland are provided by five Health and Social Care Trusts. The figures for the past three years have been relatively static in overall volume. Based on this, the higher level of demand over the past three years is forecast to continue. *Chart 4 overleaf* shows the number of applications to courts by Health and Social Care Trusts.

Chart 4

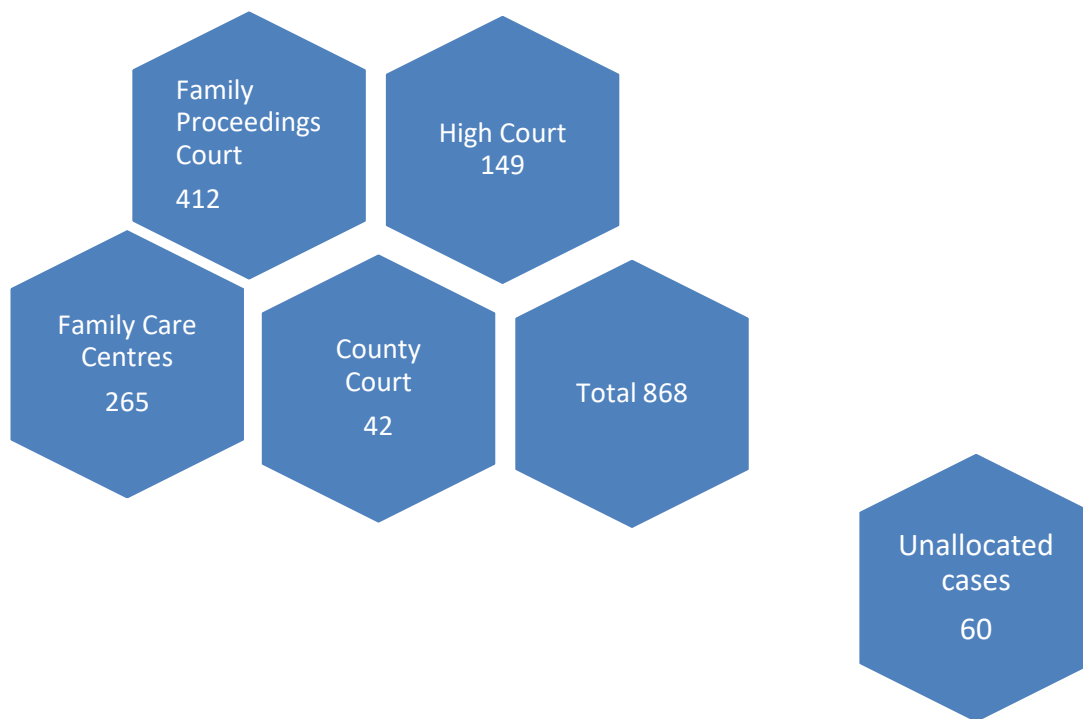


In recording cases NIGALA has four levels of court listed. These are:

- Family Care Centres
- County Courts
- Family Proceedings Courts
- Royal Courts of Justice (High Court)

At the end of the year 868 cases were before the courts; there were 149 before the High Court (an increase of 35) and 412 before the Family Proceedings Courts (an increase of 60). The following chart shows a breakdown of requests by court level with 47% of cases in the Family Proceedings Court, which is the same as the previous year.

Chart 5 Live Cases By Court*



**As at 31/3/21*

Personal and Public Involvement

Listening to the voices of children and young people is a core element of the Agency’s mission and efforts are made to actively seek to hear what they say.

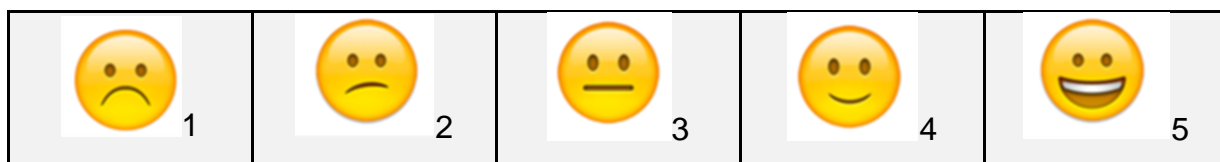
Children’s Feedback

As part of the process to improve service delivery to children and young people, NIGALA provides feedback opportunities to children and young people (aged 7 years and over) at the end of their court proceedings.

During 2020-21, a total of 99 children and young people (out of 205 invitations, a return rate of 48%) took the opportunity to share their views and their experience of our service.

In addition the NIGALA children’s feedback app was made available at the beginning of February 2021. A group of 15 GALs undertook a pilot and 9 children and young people completed the feedback out of 21 invitations.

After engaging with young people NIGALA introduced a more user-friendly method of feedback in 2019-20, with the invitation to rate their experience across 5 categories, as shown below.



Of the young people and children who responded 87% (86 out of 99 responses) thought our service was excellent or good. Six children or young persons were not happy or very unhappy with the service. Three of these responses were from siblings from the same household and all provided feedback that they felt they were not listened to.

In addition to rating our service we also asked three questions. These can be seen below along with some of the comments from the children and young people in their own words.

What was most helpful about having a Guardian?

- I could tell her my worries
- It got a lot of pressure off me.
- She explained the process in detail and was very informative. Looked at things from the child's perspective.
- She expressed my point of view to the court
- Most helpful thing about having a guardian was having someone to count/rely on and talk to.
- I don't know. Maybe just hearing that other families have problems too and that a Judge gets to hear about me to make the best decision for me.

Would you like the Guardian to have done anything differently?

Most answers on this question did not offer many suggestions and comments tended to be positive but the following comments were noted;

- Yes I would of liked to see her more
- No I didn't get to see my Guardian much because of Covid but video calls worked ok.
- Yes because at the start I was finding my life kinda hard but he helped me a lot.
- No she was amazing can you tell her thanks for working with me.

What matters to you during the time you had a Guardian?

- That my thoughts were mentioned in court. Also helped me understand what happened in court
- That she got my voice heard and me and my sibling are happy with her choice
- That I knew what was going on / going to happen and that I could express my feelings
- Telling me stuff I should know
- Did not see her often because of Covid 19
- It took a long time because of covid so I was glad when it was over.

Young People's Forum

In 2017-18 NIGALA set up a young people's forum to better integrate children's feedback into how we improve our service. They named themselves the Northern Ireland Young Associates Board (NIYAB).

In March 2020 and with the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, they have regrouped and welcomed new members. They have met on three occasions via zoom since October 2020. The areas which the group has addressed have been "Top Tips for Guardians Meeting Me," and "Covid Stories." Their advice to the Agency can be seen overleaf:

My COVID-19 Story

This is the Shared Story from the NIGALA NI Youth Associate Board on how Covid is impacting on their lives.

How Covid is Impacting on MY life

There is no downtime.

There is no fun.

There seems so much school work that I have to do and am not meeting friends.



I try and socialise with my friends online.

Friends

I feel like I am stuck in the house.

I have not had the same experience with all my teachers.

Some teachers are giving classes and explaining new information to help us, they are communicating with us.

I feel overwhelmed and not motivated.

I am worried that I am not motivated to do all the work I have to do. I am worried as my predicted grades will suffer.



The message about exams keeps changing, first they are cancelled, then they are not.

School

I managed the first lockdown better. Since Christmas and through January I have been stuck inside, I am finding it harder.

When I go to bed I can't sleep.

I am in my room working and sleeping

Home



My room has become somewhere I wake up, work all day and then sleep.

It is not good when your bedroom is not a place to relax, but a place where you don't want to be.

My subjects are not suited to online classes, my subjects are suited to working with other students. I need to do practical tasks that I need to do as part of a group, where we work together.



TOP TIPS FOR GUARDIANS MEETING ME



Feedback from the Judiciary and Solicitors

The Judges and Solicitors are key stakeholders for NIGALA and we seek feedback on annual basis on their engagement with Guardians.

The Agency also seeks feedback from solicitors on a case to case basis as well as on the service as a whole. In the annual evaluation we received feedback from 56 solicitors out of a total of 92 requests. The overwhelming response was positive on the contribution of Guardians to a case with 91% rating the service as excellent and 9% as good.

Of those who provided feedback 98% (55 out of 56) felt Guardians promoted the best interests of the child at all times with 96% (54 out of 56) felt Guardians reflected their wishes and feelings at all times. Some of the comments made included:

- Judges often comment on how much they value the insights the GAL gives on the children's wishes and feelings and their expert views on their presentation.
- Extremely comprehensive, especially in recent times. The level of extreme care taken by GALs to ensure child's views fully taken into consideration has to be applauded, given the challenges presented.
- Sometimes I believe there is a simple assumption made that the child need not attend.
- GALs often take on very complex facts and provide an insightful explanation which Judges praise and quote in reaching a decision.
- Despite the challenges to working practices during the pandemic, GALs have continued to represent children to a very high level bringing their professionalism and compassion to bear on behalf of these vulnerable individuals.
- GALs have called me outside of working hours to discuss a report. They often go above and beyond for the child, very committed to their work!
- Still concerned GALs cannot meet children even socially distanced.

The Agency also seeks feedback from the judiciary on the service it provides. This is in addition to meetings with judges during the year at which Senior Management share the challenges facing the service.

Three judges took the opportunity to provide feedback from an invitation list of 18. Whilst the feedback is low in terms of number, the value seen by the judiciary in the role of the Guardian and their positive independent contribution is evident. The feedback did though highlight the concerns of the judges on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the service and the timely appointment of a Guardian to a case.

HOW WE WORK

Quality

NIGALA, in line with all Arm's-Length Bodies, provides the Department of Health (DoH) with an annual Quality Report which is lodged each September and published on the NIGALA website on World Quality Day. NIGALA submitted its report in March 2021.

NIGALA is accredited as an Investors in People Silver Award holder (from September 2018) and during 2020-21 continued to work on the three main areas of the Framework - Leadership, Supporting & Improving.

Equality and Human Rights

The Agency has an approved Equality Scheme in place, drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. All policies are screened in accordance with guidance and all staff have received training in equality and diversity. Throughout the year there are awareness days on equality, diversity and disability issues. The Agency is part of the Tapestry HSC Disability Staff Network.

Health and Safety at Work

The Agency has an approved Health and Safety at Work Policy. The Agency complies with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and all other relevant health and safety legislation and codes of practice. The Agency is committed to ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of its employees and of others who may be affected by its operations. The Agency receives expert advice and support on health and safety legislation and codes of practice through a Service Level Agreement with the Business Services Organisation. There have been no reported accidents in year.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee has a responsibility to promote measures which ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff at work and for oversight of the NIGALA Sustainability Development Plan.

The Committee has representation from administration, corporate services, guardians ad litem, and management, and also representation from each NIGALA office. The Committee meets twice yearly.

NIGALA has access to an Occupational Health Service. In addition, the Agency continues to fund and operate a programme of employee assistance and confidential counselling through the Inspire Workplace organisation.

In 2020-21 NIGALA introduced an additional counselling programme for guardians to help with the challenges presented by Covid-19. This group programme was well received in supporting participants and the Agency will build on the learning in 2021-22.

Fraud

The NIGALA has a Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan in place and an appointed Fraud Liaison Officer. There were no reported incidents of Fraud within the year 2020-21. NIGALA participates in the National Fraud Initiative, a data matching exercise that helps prevent and detect fraud.

Whistleblowing

The NIGALA has a Whistleblowing Policy in place. There were no reported incidents under the Whistleblowing Policy within the year 2020-21.

Sustainable Development

The Agency has a Sustainable Development Plan. The plan supports the Northern Ireland Executive' Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Everyone's Involved', May 2010. The Agency has a recycling policy in place and an agile working model which seeks to promote use of IT solutions to make best use of resources and time.

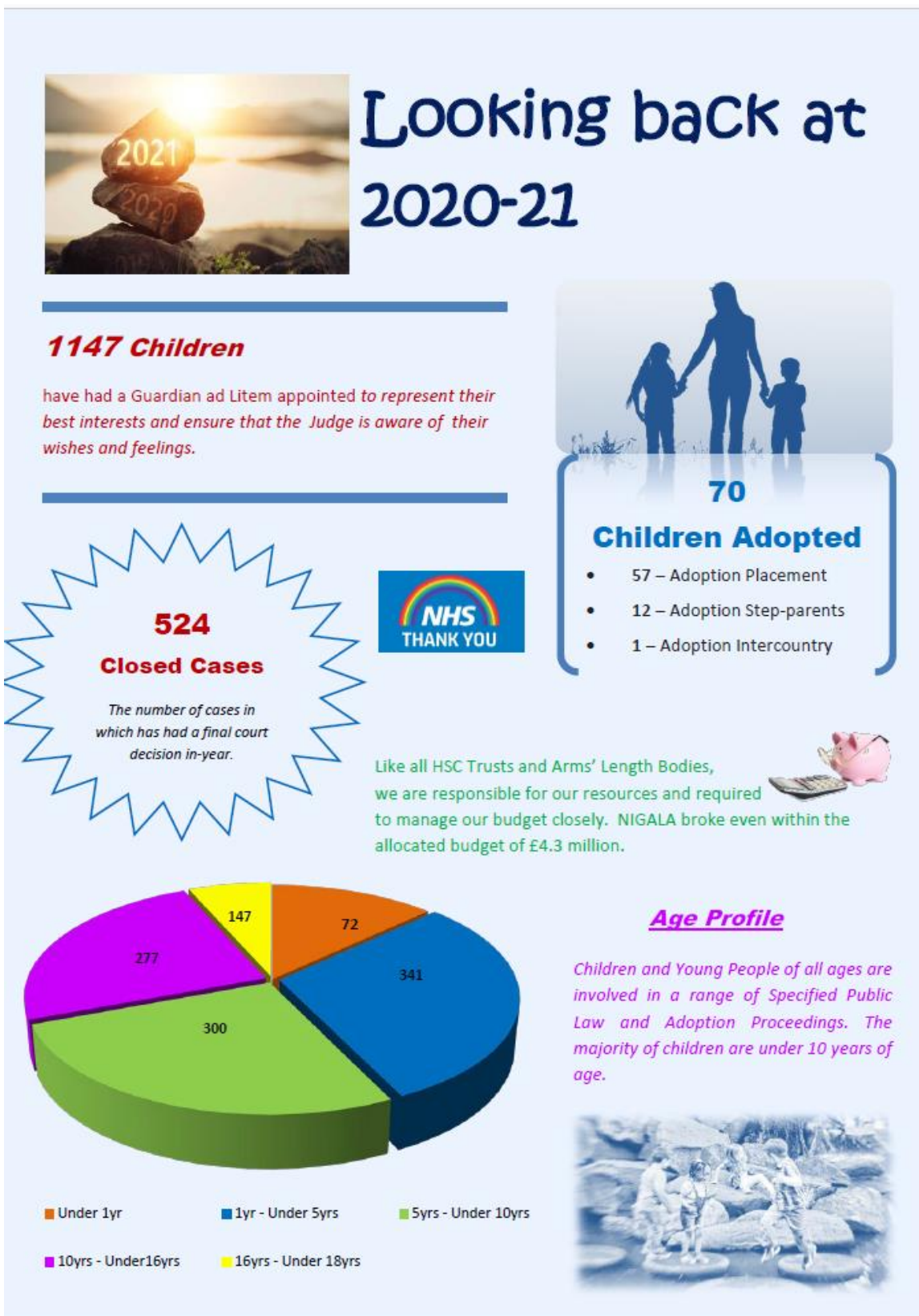


Dawn Shaw
Chief Executive

8th July 2021

Highlights of our Year

In summary NIGALA's contribution to serving children and young people can be summarised in the following celebration.





Every child over 7 years of age is given the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience.

NIGALA recognises the importance of children and young people having a say on the services they receive.

There has been a **17% increase** this year on the number of feedback forms returned from children and young people who have used the service.



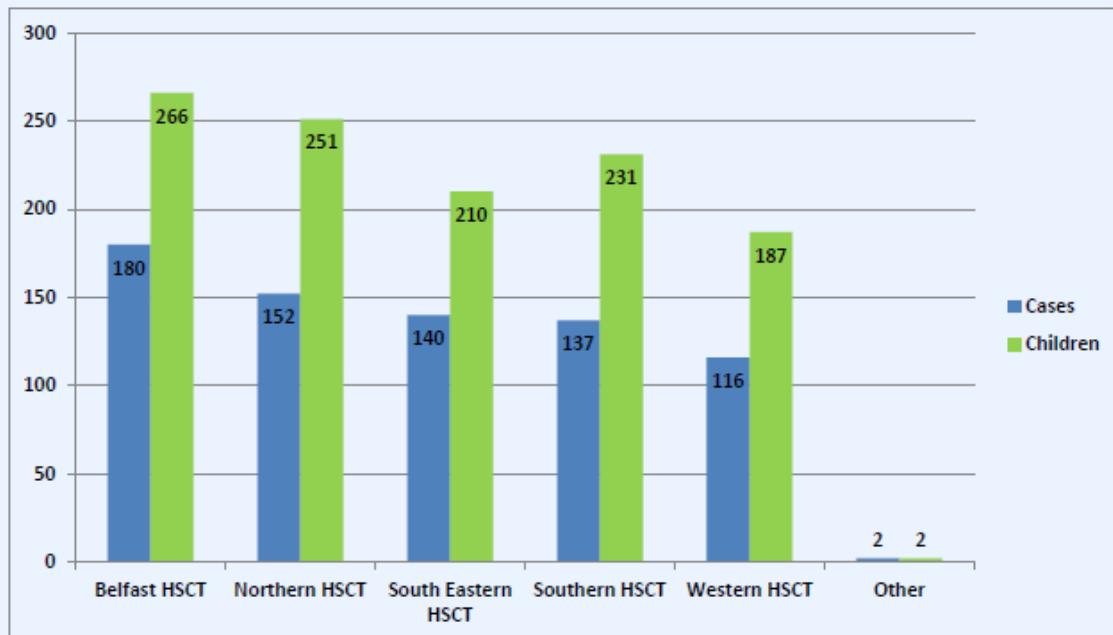
What was the most helpful thing about a Guardian?

Feedback from children and young people who used the service ...

- ✎ I could tell her my worries
- ✎ The way she explained everything that would happen with courts.
- ✎ She helped get done what needed done. She is fair and reasonable as well.
- ✎ Listening to my views
- ✎ To speak for me in court
- ✎ To have someone to listen to me and explain everything
- ✎ My voice was heard in court
- ✎ They explained everything so that I could understand and they listened to me
- ✎ She listened to what I wanted.
- ✎ Telling us about what's going on
- ✎ I could tell her stuff

Case Requests By Trust Area

727 Case Requests for a Guardian ad Litem to be appointed. Detailed by HSC Trust and number of children.



SECTION 2 - Accountability Report

The Accountability Report for NIGALA is presented in three main sections, set out as below:

1. Corporate Governance Report

The purpose of the Corporate Governance Report is to explain the make-up of the NIGALA, its governance structures and how they support the achievement of the NIGALA's objectives. The Corporate Governance Report is comprised of:

- a) Directors' Report;
- b) Statement of Accounting Officer Responsibilities; and
- c) Governance Statement.

2. Remuneration and Staff report

The Remuneration and Staff report describe NIGALA's remuneration policy for its Non- Executive Directors, reports on how that policy has been implemented and the amounts awarded to its Directors and those senior staff key to the organisation's accountability.

3. Accountability and Audit Report Comprising

The Accountability and Audit report brings together key accountability documents on NIGALA funding, expenditure and accountability disclosures as set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland. The Accountability and Audit report is comprised of:

- a) Funding Report; and
- b) Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT

Directors' Report

Statutory Background

The Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem (Establishment and Constitution) Order (NI) 1995 was introduced on 1st December 1995 making provision for the constitution of the Agency and appointment of the Agency Board.

Principal Activities

The overarching objective of the Agency is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in public law and adoption proceedings. Its tasks are to represent independently the best interests of these children and young people and to advise the court of their wishes and feelings.

Chair and Chief Executive

The Chair is responsible to the Minister of the Department of Health (DoH). The Chair is Gemma Loughran.

The Chief Executive is a member of the Board. The Chief Executive is responsible to the Board, through the Chair, for managing the NIGALA. As the designated Accounting Officer the post-holder has specific financial responsibilities and duties for which he or she is accountable to the Permanent Secretary of the DoH in his or her role as the Accounting Officer of the NIGALA's Sponsor Department. The Chief Executive for the period to 31st March 2021 was Peter Reynolds. Dawn Shaw took up the post of Chief Executive on the 1st April 2021, following Peter Reynolds' retirement.

The NIGALA Board, including the Non-Executive Directors' Report

The Board of NIGALA comprises a Non-Executive Chair, four Non-Executive Members and the Chief Executive. Non-Executive Members are appointed through open competition by the Minister of Health. The terms of office for members are found in the NIGALA (Establishment and Constitution) Order (NI) 1995. The Order provides that the Members shall be appointed for a period of four years and for such further period, not exceeding four years, as the Department of

Health may determine.

The membership of the Board of the NIGALA as at 31st March 2021 was:

- Mrs Gemma Loughran (Chair)
- Mrs Veronica Callaghan (Non-Executive Director)
- Mr Fred Smyth (Non-Executive Director)
- Mrs Gillian McGaughey (Non-Executive Director)
- Mr Lee Wilson (Non-Executive Director)
- Mr Peter Reynolds (Chief Executive)

During the year the Board set out the workplan for the Agency in an annual Business Plan and monitored progress at each meeting through a Finance and Performance Report from the Senior Management Team. The latter Report comprised reporting on the work of Guardians, financial performance and horizon scanning, providing an update on key developments across health and social care. The Board also follows the “Intelligent Board” concept receiving updates from staff and key stakeholders on key areas of work and service development at the beginning of each meeting. The Board has put in place a Governance framework with a reporting timetable for it to receive updates on key risks and assurances throughout the year.

Board Committee structure

NIGALA has appointed the following Committees from its number:

- An Audit and Risk Assurance Committee;
- A Remuneration Committee;
- An Information Governance Committee; and
- A Social Care Governance Committee.

Register of Interests

The NIGALA maintains a register of interests which is formally reviewed annually. This register details interests which may conflict with the management responsibilities of Board members and is recorded as necessary. The Register can be viewed at <http://www.nigala.hscni.net/26.htm>.

Each Board meeting includes an agenda item asking Board members to declare any conflicts of interest in the meeting business. There were no conflicts of interest identified by members during the period of this report.

Pension Scheme for All Staff

Details of the pension scheme for staff and the treatment of pension liabilities in the accounts are included in the 'Remuneration Report and Staff Report' section of this document.

The Comptroller and Auditor General has been appointed as auditor for the NIGALA.

The Accounting Officer has taken all the steps that he ought to have taken to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it is made known to the NIGALA auditors. So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the NIGALA auditors have not been advised. The notional cost of the audit of the 2020-21 annual accounts was £15,900.

The Business Services Organisation provides an internal audit service to NIGALA. The cost for 2020-21 was £16,500.

All reports by internal and external audit are considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

There was no remuneration paid to the Auditors for non-audit work during 2020-21.

Personal data related incidents

There were no reported incidents of loss of personal data during the year 2020-21.

Charitable donations

The NIGALA did not receive or make any charitable donations within the year 2020-21.

Post balance sheet events

There are no post balance events.

Resource Revenue Allocation Surplus

The NIGALA recognised a £12,624 surplus in its operations against its Revenue Resource Limit of £4,560,116 for the year 2020-21.

Directors

In the case of each of the persons who were directors at the time this report was approved:

- So far as the Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Agency's auditor is unaware; and
- He/she has taken all the steps that he/she ought to have taken as a director in order to make him/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Agency's auditor is aware of that information
- He/she confirms that the annual report and accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable and that he/she takes personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

Statement of Accounting Officer Responsibilities

Accounts for Year Ended 31 March 2021

Under the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972; the Department of Health has directed the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The financial statements are prepared on an accruals basis and must provide a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency, of its income and expenditure, Financial Position and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department of Health, including 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 FReM have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is appropriate to presume that NIGALA will not continue in operation;
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining it is fair, balanced and understandable

The Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health, as Principal Accounting Officer for Health and Social Care Resources in Northern Ireland has designated Ms Dawn Shaw as the Accounting Officer for the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency. 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 Guardian Ad Litem Agency assets, are set out in the formal letter of appointment of the Accounting Officer issued by the Department of Health, Chapter 3 of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI) and the HM Treasury Handbook: Regularity and Propriety.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

Governance Statement 2020-2021

1. Introduction / Scope of Responsibility

The Accounting Officer for the year ended 31st March 2021 was Mr Peter Reynolds. Ms Dawn Shaw took up the role of Accounting Officer on the 1st April 2021.

The Board of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) is accountable for internal control. As Accounting Officer and Chief Executive of NIGALA, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the

organisation's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am responsible in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me by the Department of Health (DoH).

As Accounting Officer, I represent the Agency's aims and objectives on a number of external groups which include the multi-disciplinary Shadow Family Justice Board chaired by the Family Judge of the Royal Courts of Justice, Northern Ireland, and the Law Society of Northern Ireland Solicitor Accreditation Panel. With the introduction of Shared Services Systems in 2012-13, I have ensured representation of the Agency on the Regional Organisations Partnership Forums managed by the Business Services Organisation (BSO). NIGALA is also represented on the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland and '*Signs of Safety*' steering group, as well as a range of external stakeholder groups.

NIGALA recognises the inter-dependence of partner stakeholder groups aligned to family justice and in this regard works collaboratively with all Family Court Business Committees and engages regularly with NI Courts and Tribunals Service and the Directorate of Legal Services (DLS).

As Accounting Officer, I further our aims and objectives through internal committees of the organisation ie. the Agency Board, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Remuneration Committee, Information Governance Committee and Social Care Governance Committee. The aims and objectives of NIGALA are also progressed through the formal sponsorship arrangements with the DoH Family and Children's Policy Directorate.

NIGALA has a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum in place, revised in 2017-18, which sets out the strategic control framework within which NIGALA is required to operate and the conditions under which Government funds are provided as detailed in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland. The Accounting Officer and the Chair of NIGALA engage with the DoH at the highest level through twice yearly Accountability Meetings. However due to the Covid Pandemic these formal meetings have not taken place, although meetings with Sponsor Branch have been ongoing. NIGALA also works in partnership with the DoH Sponsor Branch to ensure operational and strategic issues are raised appropriately throughout the year.

2. Compliance with Corporate Governance Best Practice

NIGALA applies the principles of good practice in Corporate Governance and continues to further strengthen its governance arrangements. The NIGALA Board does this by undertaking

continuous assessment of its compliance with corporate governance best practice by;

- The regular review by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee of governance documents including standing financial instructions, standing orders, the standards of business conduct for all staff and the review of this Governance Statement;
- The existence in Standing Orders of a schedule of matters reserved solely for Board decisions;
- The existence in Standing Orders of a scheme of delegation, which delegates decision making authority within set parameters to the Chief Executive and other officers;
- The consideration of regular reports which come before the Board for approval;
- A robust system for the approval of relevant Agency policies;
- The production of a Mid-Year Assurance Statement and end of year Governance Statement;
- A Board approved accountability structure of Board sub-committees as outlined in Figure 2;
- A Governance Framework; and
- A completion of a self-assessment tool for all Board committees.

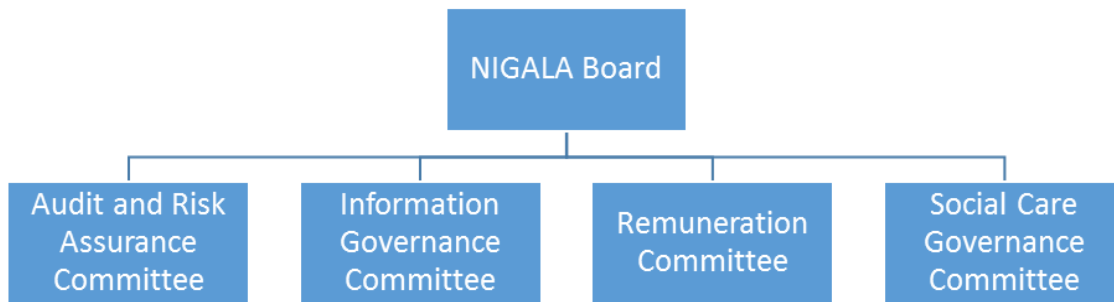
The Board completed an annual Board self-assessment in year. The summary Board assessment for NIGALA was RAG rated Green and this includes the section on data quality and information received by the Board. There were no RAG rated Red compliance areas.

3. Governance Framework

Role and Performance of Committees

The Board's committee structure is outlined in Figure 2 overleaf.

Figure 2: NIGALA Board's Committee Structure



The NIGALA Board has corporate responsibility to ensure the achievement of all aims and objectives set by the Minister/Department, and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective deployment of staff and use of resources. At full complement the Board comprises a Chair, four Non-Executive Directors and the Chief Executive. The Board has delivered the following key functions:

1. Established the overall strategic direction of the organisation within the policy and resources framework determined by the Minister/Department;
2. Overseen the delivery of planned results by monitoring performance against objectives and ensuring corrective action is taken when necessary;
3. Implemented effective financial stewardship through value for money, financial control and financial planning and strategy;
4. Ensured high standards of corporate governance;
5. Appraised and remunerated the Chief Executive;
6. Made well-informed and high-quality decisions based on a clear line of sight into the business;
7. Ensured that there is effective dialogue between NIGALA and its stakeholders on its plans and performance and that these are responsive to stakeholder needs;
8. Ensured that NIGALA has robust and effective arrangements in place for social care governance and risk management;
9. Provided Terms of Reference for the Board sub-committees
10. Overseen the Board sub-committee work and action plans

The NIGALA Board met on 6 occasions during 2020-21. Attendance of members at Board meetings is set out in the table below:

Name	% Attendance	Meetings attended / possible meetings
Mrs Gemma Loughran (Chair)	100%	6/6
Mr Peter Reynolds	100%	6/6
Mrs Gillian McGaughey	83%	5/6
Veronica Callaghan	100%	6/6
Mr Fred Smyth	83%	5/6
Lee Wilson	100%	6/6

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee advises the Board and Accounting Officer with regard to their responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance and the reliability of associated assurances provided by the External and Internal auditor; through a process of constructive challenge. The Committee is chaired by a member of the Board and reports to the Board after every meeting. This Committee met on four occasions during 2020-21 and provided an annual written report to the Board on its work.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee used the National Audit Office Audit Committee Self-assessment Checklist to review its good practice. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee self-assessed that it met the five Good Practice Principles of the checklist.

The Remuneration Committee makes recommendations to the Board on all aspects of remuneration and terms and conditions of employment for the Chief Executive and the contract for services and fee structure for self-employed Guardians ad Litem.

The Social Care Governance Committee supports the Board in all aspects of social care governance by providing an independent and objective review of the adequacy and effectiveness of control systems and processes in place to support the delivery of the Guardian ad Litem service to children and young people. The Committee met on four occasions during 2020-21. The Committee is chaired by a member of the Board and reports to the Board after each meeting.

The Information Governance Committee has primary responsibility for advising the Board on relevant processes and assurances which are required to manage all personal and corporate information handled by the Agency. This Committee has met on two occasions during 2020-21.

4. Business Planning and Risk Management

Business Planning and Risk Management are at the heart of NIGALA governance arrangements to ensure that statutory obligations and ministerial priorities are properly reflected in the management of business at all levels within the organisation.

The NIGALA has produced a Corporate Plan for the period 2017-21. The plan sets out the high level goals as agreed by the Board which will deliver on the statutory functions and obligations of the organisation. The Corporate Plan, which was subject to NIGALA Board and DoH approval, was issued for formal consultation and input was sought from key stakeholders. The Corporate Plan is presented to the Board on an annual basis for noting as part of the business planning cycle. The corporate planning process is led by the Head of Corporate Services. Delivery of the Corporate Plan is the responsibility of the Chief Executive, supported by the Senior Management Team.

Business Planning

Each year a set of objectives are set out in a Business Plan which details how the achievement of the Corporate Plan goals will be demonstrated. The objectives are clearly set out under each of the organisation's corporate goals.

The system of business planning is designed to take account of strategic and operational priorities and ensure feedback from NIGALA staff, stakeholders and the DoH Sponsoring Branch. The system of business planning involves the following:

- Taking cognisance of independent assurance reports and recommendations on the NIGALA internal control framework;
- Including DoH priorities as discussed with NIGALA in the Business Plan;
- Reviewing of prior year objectives and whether continued progress needs to be identified in the current business planning cycle;
- Identifying objectives through regular business planning preparation meetings between the Senior Management Team, Board Members and Staff; and
- Taking cognisance of the external environment and potential risks impacting on the Guardian ad Litem service delivery and identifying key actions to be included in the business planning process.

Objectives in the Business Plan are monitored by the Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis using a RAG rating approach, and are monitored by the Board on a bi-annual basis with progress updates submitted to DoH Sponsor Branch bi-annually in accordance with the Business Plan monitoring arrangements.

Risk Management

The Risk Management Strategy and the system of risk management and internal control at NIGALA are based on the mitigation of risk to a reasonable level and seek to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives where possible. The system is based on an on-going process designed to:

- Identify and prioritise risks to the achievement of organisational policies, aims and objectives; and
- Evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically; and
- Assess Risk Appetite on the basis that where NIGALA is willing to accept an amount of risk to meet greater reward it will identify the risk appetite as 'Risk Open'. Where NIGALA is not willing to tolerate increased risks it will identify that risk as "Risk Averse".

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility to the Board for risk management. The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for implementation of the Risk Management Strategy. The Risk Management Strategy forms the basis for systematic review of risk by the Senior Management Team.

The embedding of risk management within the Agency is carried out in the following ways:

- Undertaking assessments to identify the principal risks to the NIGALA and reporting these to the Board and an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee through a Corporate Risk Register;
- Identifying the officers responsible for ensuring that the risk management actions are completed is detailed in the Corporate Risk Register;
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Assurance Framework;
- Ensuring that risk management policies are developed to define risk management

responsibilities and to embed an ethos of learning and improvement following adverse incidents;

- Integrating risk management into the annual planning process, ensuring that risks inform the planning process;
- Completing and annually reporting on compliance with DoH risk management requirements;
- Reviewing its operations and controls under areas previously contained within Controls Assurance Standards so as to provide evidence that the NIGALA is doing its “reasonable best” to manage itself in order to meet objectives and protect service users, staff and other stakeholders against risks of all kinds.
- Empowering staff at all levels in the organisation to identify, assess and notify risks;
- Developing and maintaining a “no blame” culture. In such a culture, staff are accountable for their actions, but it is recognised that individuals can and do make mistakes. The NIGALA Board is committed to having an open and honest approach in all matters and to be a supportive, open and learning organisation; and
- Ensuring an appropriate business continuity plan is in place and reviewed to maintain the organisation’s key business activities.

Leadership for risk management is provided through the Senior Management Team which adheres to Board approved Guidance and Policy on the management of the Risk Register, actions to mitigate risk and learning lessons from reports on incident management and complaints. The strategy was reviewed and updated in year to reflect alignment with the regional Risk Management approach. The system of internal control has been in place in the Agency for the year ended 31st March 2021, and, up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, accords with DoH Guidance. A Mid-Year Assurance Statement was signed on the 27th October 2020 and submitted to Sponsor Branch, updating progress on the continuing effectiveness of the system of internal control to the Permanent Secretary of the DoH.

5. Fraud

The NIGALA takes a zero tolerance approach to fraud in order to protect and support our key

public services. We have put in place a Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan to outline our approach to tackling fraud, define staff responsibilities and the actions to be taken in the event of suspected or perpetrated fraud, whether originating internally or externally to the organisation. Our Head of Corporate Services and Fraud Liaison Officer (FLO) promote fraud awareness, coordinate investigations in conjunction with the BSO counter Fraud and Probity Services team and provide advice to personnel on fraud reporting arrangements. All staff are provided with mandatory fraud awareness training in support of the Fraud Policy and Fraud Response plan, which are kept under review and updated as appropriate every five years. NIGALA participates in the National Fraud Initiative.

6. Information Risk

In terms of Information Risk, the Agency deals directly with sensitive personal client information.

The Agency has implemented a range of actions to ensure the security of personal client information and to mitigate any risk of personal data loss within the Agency as follows:

- Implementation and training of key staff in their roles as Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Information Asset Owner (IAO);
- Completion of the Security of Information – HSC e-learning module by all NIGALA staff;
- Continued oversight of a Data Sharing Agreement with the NIGALA Panel of Solicitors;
- Review of information governance arrangements within the Agency by the Information Governance Committee;
- Regular information governance awareness campaigns throughout NIGALA.
- Attendance at the Regional Information Governance Advisory Committee, chaired by the DoH.
- Full implementation the General Data Protection Regulation in May 2018, including a full review of all policies, training for all staff, development of a Privacy Notice and the appointment of a Data Protection Officer.
 - All information for operational purposes is in digital format and held securely on the HSC network which has robust cyber security, with accredited anti- virus identification and protection measures in place.

- All personal data shared with third parties is done so through Data Access Agreements which clearly state the scope of the use of the data. This includes any sharing with any other part of Health and Social Care.

The Chief Executive has completed the annual Information Governance Assurance Statement as set out by the DoH. The statement provided satisfactory assurance on the system of internal control.

7. Public Stakeholder Involvement

The Agency has a Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Strategy which includes a user and stakeholder map and action plan to inform and promote effective engagement with our users and stakeholders.

The Agency has established a Youth Forum to appropriately engage with young people. The Agency is a participant in the Regional Personal and Public Involvement Forum.

8. Assurance

The Board receives regular assurance from a range of sources which include internal and external audit, sub-committee reports, minutes and a schedule of assurance reports from the Senior Management Team. This is set out in a Governance Framework. The Chair appraises the quality of the information and performance of the committees in the annual appraisal of each of the Non-Executive Directors.

9. Sources of Independent Assurance

NIGALA obtains independent assurance from the following sources:

Internal Audit

NIGALA has a Service Level Agreement with the Business Services Organisation for the provision of an internal audit function, which operates to defined standards and whose work is informed by an analysis of risks to which the organisation is exposed. Annual audit plans are based on this

analysis. In 2020-21, the Internal Auditor reviewed the following systems and provided satisfactory assurance on the system of internal control:

- Financial Review
- Information Governance;
- Retention of Board and Committee papers;
- Governance during Covid-19 pandemic; and
- Board Effectiveness

The Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report stated: "Overall for the year ended 31 March 2021, I can provide **satisfactory** assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and control."

In 2018-19 Internal Audit undertook a high-level review of the processes established within NIGALA to monitor compliance with the required standards, policies, legislation etc. previously contained within the Controls Assurance Standards and the process for providing assurance on this to the Chief Executive and the Board (and onwards to DoH in the tailored format they have requested). Internal Audit concluded that the processes adopted by NIGALA should be adequate to provide appropriate assurances internally in the areas previously covered by the former Control Assurance Standards.

It should be noted that the Agency has a Service Level Agreement with the Business Services Organisation (BSO) for, Human Resources, Procurement, Equality, Shared Services Financial Payments, Payroll and Travel and the review of these systems by the Internal Auditor is reported as part of the BSO Annual Assurance Report. These reports have been presented to the BSO and NIGALA Audit Committees.

External Audit

The NI Audit Office conduct an external audit of NIGALA's financial statements and provide assurance, through the audit opinion report, that the accounts are 'True and Fair' and that the income and expenditure have been used for the purposes intended. This report is addressed to the Northern Ireland Assembly rather than NIGALA. The results of the audit and any issues that NIAO identify during the course of conducting their audit are communicated to the NIGALA Audit Committee and Management in the Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG). A

representative from the Northern Ireland Audit Office is invited to attend the NIGALA Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Meetings.

10. Review of Effectiveness of the System of Internal Governance

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for the review of effectiveness of the system of internal governance. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors, by Assurance Reports from the Senior Management Team within the Agency who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Internal Control Framework and comments made by the External Auditors in their management letter and other reports. I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Board, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Social Care Governance Committee and Information Governance Committee and plans to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement to the system are in place.

11. Internal Governance Divergences

NIGALA does not have any significant Internal Control divergences identified in 2020-2021.

Update on prior year control issues which continue to be considered control issues

Workload Pressures

The most challenging risk facing NIGALA is how best to manage work load pressures in the context of budgetary constraints. This poses the question, whether NIGALA could be in breach of its statutory obligations under the Children (NI) Order 1995 (the Order). The failure to allocate a guardian promptly after notification of the appointment by the court will inevitably lead to delay in the progress of cases thereby compromising the statutory 'no delay' principle. In addition the Agency will attract considerable criticism from the judiciary if unable to allocate guardians within the timetable prescribed by the Court. In accordance with a duty to '*safeguard the interests of the child*' a delay in the appointment of a guardian may well prejudice the interests of the child thereby having an adverse impact. The impact of Covid- 19 on this work has heightened the challenge. NIGALA has worked positively in partnership with the DoH in seeking to secure sufficient resources to deliver its services to children and young people in a timely way, keeping waiting times to a minimum during 2020-21.

Financial Challenges - Budget Position and Authority

The Assembly passed the Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 in March 2021 which authorised the cash and use of resources for all departments and their Arms' Length Bodies for the 2020-21 year, based on the Executive's final expenditure plans for the year. The Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 also authorised a Vote on Account to authorise departments and their Arms' Length Bodies' access to cash and use of resources for the early months of the 2021-22 financial year. This will be followed by the 2021-22 Main Estimates and the associated Budget (No. 2) Bill before the summer recess which will authorise the cash and resource balance to complete for the remainder of 2021-22 based on the Executive's 2021-22 Final Budget.

NIGALA continued to monitor its control in areas of identified risk; notably the Agency is anticipating a continued high level of demand in adoption and public law applications in the next financial year. Within its goods and services budget NIGALA has reviewed its commitments and in particular its discretionary spending to ensure value for money.

EU Exit

On 29 March 2017, the UK Government submitted its notification to leave the EU in accordance with Article 50. On 31 January 2020, the Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU became legally binding and the UK left the EU. NIGALA actively worked with the Department on any potential impact of future outcomes from the UK-EU negotiations on the services it provided through to the transition period ending 31 December 2020.

Covid-19

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. Following this the Department and its ALBs immediately enacted emergency response plans across the NI Health sector.

On 13th March 2020 NIGALA implemented its Business Continuity arrangements in response to the outbreak of Covid-19. The Agency has worked in tandem with the wider HSC in safeguarding staff and seeking to maintain its role in respect of its role in its statutory function. The Agency will continue its partnership working in addressing any challenges which emerge from the impact on public services.

Alongside the ongoing and changing needs of response to COVID-19 there is an urgent need to

seek to rebuild wider healthcare services and confidence in the community. On 9 June 2020 a new Strategic Framework was launched aimed at rebuilding health and social care services. The key aim will be to incrementally increase HSC service capacity as quickly as possible across all programmes of care, within the prevailing COVID-19 conditions. A new Management Board for Rebuilding HSC Services has also been created chaired by the Permanent Secretary.

12. Conclusion

The NIGALA has a rigorous system of accountability which I can rely on as Accounting Officer to form an opinion on the probity and use of public funds, as detailed in Managing Public Money NI.

Further to considering the accountability framework within the NIGALA and in conjunction with assurances given to me by the Head of Internal Audit, I am content that the NIGALA has operated a sound system of internal governance during the period 2020-21.



Dawn Shaw
Chief Executive

8th July 2021

REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT

Remuneration Report for Year Ended 31st March 2021

Scope of the Report

The Remuneration Report summarises the Remuneration Policy of NIGALA and particularly its application in respect of senior executives. The Report also describes how NIGALA applies the principles of good corporate governance in relation to senior executives' remuneration in accordance with HSS(SM) 3/2001 and subsequent supplements issued by the DoH.

Remuneration Committee

NIGALA, as set out in its Standing Orders, has delegated certain functions to the Remuneration Committee. The Remuneration Committee; a subcommittee of the NIGALA Board, exists to advise the full Board on:

- a) The performance, development, succession planning and appropriate remuneration and terms of service for the Chief Executive.
- b) The setting of robust objectives, performance measures and evaluation processes for the Chief Executive.
- c) The oversight of appropriate contractual arrangements for the Chief Executive including the proper calculation and scrutiny of termination payments taking account of such national guidance as is appropriate.
- d) The contractual arrangements and level of fees and expenses to be paid to the self- employed contracted members who have been appointed to the Agency's Panel for the purposes of undertaking guardian ad litem work.

A Remuneration Committee is also usually responsible for the determination of the remuneration of senior managers. However since the introduction of Agenda for Change, guidance on remuneration for Senior Managers is issued by the DoH and the terms and conditions of service for staff are centrally determined. The only role for the NIGALA Remuneration Committee is therefor in respect of the Chief Executive.

Assessment of performance of the Chief Executive is carried out annually by the Board Chair, who makes a full report including a recommendation to the Remuneration Committee on the application of the relevant pay circular and associated performance banding which relates to the actual pay award. The assessment of performance is carried out following annual appraisal and the review of performance against Chief Executive objectives set at the beginning of the financial year. This is submitted to the Board for approval.

Remuneration Committee Membership

The Remuneration Committee membership at the 31st March 2021 is as follows:

- Mrs Gemma Loughran – Committee Chair (Board Chair)
- Mr Fred Smyth

The Human Resource Director of the Business Services Organisation, with which NIGALA has a service level agreement for personnel services, attends upon invitation.

The NIGALA Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Services attend upon invitation.

The committee met on 23rd April 2020 to assure itself for 2019-20 year, and then met again on 20th October 2020.

Policy Statement on Remuneration of the Chief Executive

The overall objective of the senior manager remuneration arrangements is to achieve a fair, transparent, affordable and defensible pay and grading system for all Senior Executives employed across the HSC.

Executive Pay Arrangement

The main components of the arrangements are:

- pay and terms and conditions of service for the Chief Executive are determined by the DoH;
- the Chief Executive post is subject to evaluation by the DoH Evaluation Panel which is responsible for the management, maintenance and integrity of the evaluation process;
- pay ranges will be reviewed annually and the effective date for any extension of the pay ranges following review of the ranges by the Minister will be 1st April in the year of the review;
- there will be progression through the pay range subject to fully acceptable performance;

Contracts

HSC appointments are made on the basis of the merit principle in fair and open competition and in accordance with all relevant legislation and Circular HSS (SM) 3/2001. Unless otherwise stated, the employee/s covered by this Report are appointed on a permanent basis, subject to satisfactory performance.

The date of appointment for the NIGALA Executive and Non-Executive Directors, and the Chair are set out below in Table 3:

Table 3: Date of Appointment for the NIGALA Executive & Non-Executive Directors as at 31st March 2021

Name	Position	Date of Appointment
<i>Chair</i>		
Gemma Loughran	Chair	23 rd March 2020
<i>Non-Executive Directors</i>		
Name	Position	Date of Appointment
Gillian McGaughey	Non-Executive Director	13 th January 2014 <i>(re-appointed 1st February 2021)</i>
Fred Smyth	Non-Executive Director	13 th January 2014 <i>(re-appointed 1st February 2021)</i>
Lee Wilson	Non-Executive Director	8 th April 2019
Veronica Callaghan	Non-Executive Director	23 rd March 2020
<i>Executive Director</i>		
Mr Peter Reynolds*	Chief Executive	1st December 2016

*retired 31/3/21

Notice Periods

3 months' notice is to be provided by either party except in the event of summary dismissal. There is nothing to prevent either party waiving the right to notice or accepting payment in lieu of notice.

Retirement Age

Currently, employees are required to retire at age 65 years and occupational pensions are normally effective from age 60 years. With effect from 1st October 2006, with the introduction of the Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, employees are able to request to work beyond age 65 years.

Compensation for Premature Retirement

In accordance with DHSSPSNI circular HSS (S) 11/83 and subsequent supplements, there is provision within the HSC Superannuation Scheme for premature retirement with immediate payment of superannuation benefits and compensation for eligible employees on the grounds of:-

- Efficiency of the service
- Redundancy
- Organisational change

Section 16 of the Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions Handbook (issued on 14 February 2007 under cover of the Department's Guidance Circular HSS (AfC) (4) 2007) sets out the arrangements for early retirement on the grounds of redundancy and in the interest of the service. Further Circulars were issued by the Department HSS (AfC) (6) 2007 and HSS (AfC) (5) 2008 setting out changes to the timescale for the operation of the transitional protection under these arrangements.

Under the terms of Section 16 of the Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions Handbook individuals who were members of the HSC Superannuation Scheme prior to 1 October 2006, are over 50 years of age and have at least 5 years membership of the HSC Superannuation Scheme qualify for transitional protection. Staff who qualify for transitional protection are entitled to receive what they would have received by way of pension and redundancy payment had they taken redundancy retirement on 30 September 2006. This includes enhancement of up to 10 years additional service (reduced by the number of years between September 2006 and the actual date of retirement) and a lump sum redundancy payment of up to 30 weeks' pay (reduced by 30% for each year of additional service over 6 2/3 years).

Alternatively, staff made redundant who are members of the HSC Pension Scheme, have at least two years "continuous service" and two years "qualifying membership" and have reached the minimum pension age currently 50 years can opt to retire early without a reduction in their pension as an alternative to a lump sum redundancy payment of up to 24 months. In this case the cost of the early payment of the pension is paid from the lump sum redundancy payment. However if the

redundancy payment is not sufficient to meet the early payment of pension cost, the employer is required to meet the additional cost.

Redundancy and other departure costs are paid in accordance with the provisions of the HSC Pension Scheme Regulations and the Compensation for Premature Retirement Regulations, statutory provisions made under the Superannuation Act 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year in which the exit package is approved and agreed and are included as operating expenses at note 4. Where early retirements have been agreed, the additional costs are met by the employing authority and not by the HSC pension scheme. Ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table overleaf.

Early Retirement and Other Compensation Scheme Exit Packages (Audited)

There were no Early Retirement and Other Compensation Scheme Exit Packages paid in the years 2019-20 or 2018-19.

Reporting of early retirement and other compensation scheme – exit packages

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of packages by cost band	
	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019
<£10,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£10,000-£25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£25,000-£50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£50,000-£100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£100,000-£150,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£150,000-£200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
>£200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total number of exit packages by type	-	-	-	-	-	-
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Total resource cost	-	-	-	-	-	-

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the HSC Pension Scheme Regulations and the Compensation for Premature Retirement Regulations, statutory provisions made under the Superannuation (Northern Ireland) Order 1972.

The table above shows the total exit cost of exit packages agreed and accounted for in 2020-21 and 2019-20. £nil exit costs were paid in 2020-21, the year of departure (2019-20 £nil). Where the NIGALA has agreed early retirements, the additional costs are met by the NIGALA and not by the HSC pension scheme. Ill health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table overleaf.

Staff Costs (Audited)

	2021		2020	
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
	£s	£s	£s	£s
Staff costs comprise:				
Wages and salaries	2,817,007	25,539	2,840,546	2,727,221
Social security costs	286,511	0	286,511	285,829
Other pension costs	577,311	0	577,311	564,598
Sub-Total	3,680,829	23,539	3,704,368	3,577,648
Capitalised staff costs	-	-	-	-
Total staff costs reported in Statement of Comprehensive Expenditure	3,680,829	23,539	3,704,368	3,577,648
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments				
Total net costs			3,704,368	3,577,648

The NIGALA participates in the HSC Superannuation Scheme. Under this multi-employer defined benefit scheme both NIGALA and employees pay specified percentages of pay into the scheme and the liability to pay benefit falls to the DoH. NIGALA is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities in the scheme on a consistent and reliable basis.

As per the requirements of IAS 19, full actuarial valuations by a professionally qualified actuary are required at intervals not exceeding four years. The actuary reviews the most recent actuarial valuation at the Statement of Financial Position date and updates it to reflect current conditions. The 2016 valuation for the HSC Pension scheme updated to reflect current financial conditions (and a change in financial assumption methodology) will be used in 2020-21 accounts.

Average Number of persons employed (WTE) (Audited)

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

	Permanently employed staff	Others	2020 Total	2019 Total
	No.	No.	No.	No.
Administrative and Clerical	18	0	18	23
Social Services	40	1	41	41
	58	1	59	64
Less average staff number relating to capitalised staff costs			0	0
Less average staff number in respect of outward secondments			0	0
Total net average number of persons employed			59	64

The staff numbers disclosed as Others relates to temporary members of staff.

*FY20/21 staff numbers exclude 5 Non-Executive Board Members (5 Non Executive Board Members included in FY19/20 numbers)

Senior Employees' Remuneration (Audited)

The salary, pension entitlements and the value of any taxable benefits in kind of the most senior members of the NIGALA were as follows:

Name	Salary £000s		Benefits in kind (rounded to nearest £100)		Pension Benefits (rounded to nearest £1,000)		Total £000s	
	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20
Non-Executive Members								
Bernard Mitchell*	0-5	5-10	-	-	-	-	0-5	5-10
Gillian McCaughey	0-5	0-5	-	-	-	-	0-5	0-5
Fredrick Smith	0-5	0-5	-	-	-	-	0-5	0-5
Lee Wilson	0-5	0-5	-	-	-	-	0-5	-
Karen Winter**	-	0-5	-	-	-	-	-	0-5
Gemma Loughran***	5-10	0-5	-	-	-	-	5-10	0-5
Veronica Callaghan***	0-5	0-5	-	-	-	-	0-5	0-5
Executive Members								
Peter Reynolds	60-65	60-65	-	3	(2)	2	60-65	60-65

* Bernard Mitchell completed his term on 22/3/20

** Karen Winter completed her term 08/04/2019

*** Gemma Loughran & Veronica Callaghan started their term on 23/03/20

Pensions of Senior Management

As Non-Executive members do not receive pensionable remuneration, there will be no entries in respect of pensions for Non-Executive members.

Audited

Name	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/21 and related lump sum £000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000	CETV at 31/03/21 £000	CETV at 31/03/20 £000	Real increase in CETV £000s
Executive Members					
Peter Reynolds *	30-35 plus lump sum of 90-95	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0-2.5	728	725	4

* Peter Reynolds has reached retirement age.

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capital 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 the disclosure applies. The CETV figures and the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefits in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the HPSS pension scheme. 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 within the guidelines prescribed by the institute and Faculty of Actuaries. Real Increase in CETV - This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It takes account of 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.

Fair Pay Statement

The Hutton Fair Pay Review recommended that, from 2011-12, all public service organisations publish their top to median pay multiples each year. The DoH issued Circular HSC (F) 23/2012 and subsequently issued Circular (F) 23/2013, setting out a requirement to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the most highly paid director in the organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce. Following application of the guidance contained in, the following can be reported:

Audited	2020-21	2019-20
Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Remuneration:	60-65	60-65
Median Total Remuneration	£51,668	£50,819
Ratio	1.2	1.2

Further details about the Health Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.hscpensions.hscni.net

Staff Report for Year Ended 31st March 2020

The average number of Whole Time Equivalent persons employed by NIGALA during 2020-21 is 59.

Staff Composition

The following table gives an outline of permanently employed staff and Board composition based on gender at the year ended 31st March 2020.

Pay Band	Male	Female
Non Executives	2	3
Senior Management Team	3	2
Admin and Clerical	1	16
Social Services	5	39
Total	11	60

Equality and Diversity

NIGALA has in place an approved Equality Scheme as set out by the Northern Ireland Equality Commission. The Scheme sets out how NIGALA promotes equality of opportunity and good relations. NIGALA provides an annual progress report to the Northern Ireland Equality Commission on its progress in this agenda.

Training and Development

The NIGALA values its staff and is committed to enhancing their skills and improving their contribution to the organisation's goals. Individuals are encouraged to complete a Personal Development Plan (PDP) as part of the appraisal process. Overall, needs are very much focused on service delivery with outcomes that relate to performance against business plan goals and the NIGALA objectives.

Every staff member receives a formal induction to the Agency upon commencing employment. The induction provides the new start with a comprehensive introduction to the Agency, including governance and management structure, the Agency's mission statement, values and principles as well as the strategic objectives for the future. For guardians the induction also covers all professional standards which relate to the post in line with *NISCC Induction Standards 2007*. Continuous Professional Development is a requirement for all staff with the responsibility placed firmly with the individual to identify their own learning requirements throughout the year.

Staff Benefits

There were no Staff Benefits in this year.

Sickness absence data

The NIGALA sickness absence rate over the year was 2.02% against a target of 4.04%.

Staff Turnover

NIGALA had a staff turnover rate of 0.00%

Retirements due to ill-health

During 2020-21 and 2019-20 there were no early retirements from the NIGALA on the grounds of ill-health.

Consultancy

The NIGALA has not engaged any consultants over the period.

Off Payroll engagements

There were no off payroll engagements during the year 2020-21.

Exit Packages

There were no Exit Packages during the year 2020-21.

Disability

The NIGALA has an approved Disability Action Plan setting out its commitment to promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and encouraging participation by disabled people in public life.



Dawn Shaw
Chief Executive

8th July 2021

ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT

a) Funding Report

Funding

The NIGALA is funded by the DoH through an annual Revenue Resource Limit.

Regularity of Expenditure (Audited)

The NIGALA has a delegated Scheme of Authority which sets out who are authorised to place non-pay expenditure. The Scheme sets out who are authorised to place requisitions for the supply of goods and services and the maximum level of each requisition.

The NIGALA has a Service Level Agreement with the Business Services Organisation, including provision of professional advice regarding the supply of goods and services to ensure proper stewardship of public funds and assets. Under that Service Level Agreement, the Procurement and Logistics Service is a Centre of Procurement Excellence to provide assurance that the systems and processes used in procurement ensure appropriate probity and propriety.

The Head of Development and Corporate Services ensures that expenditure is in accordance with regulations and all necessary authorisations have been obtained.

As far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Agency's auditors are unaware, and the Accounting Officer has taken all steps that he ought to have taken to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Agency's auditors are made aware of that information.

In line with Circular DAO (DoF) 01/2021 the Accounting Officer confirms that the annual report and accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable and that he takes personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining that they are fair, balanced and reasonable.

Other Payments and Estimates

There were no other payments made during the year.

Losses and Special Payments over £250,000

The NIGALA had no losses and did not make any special payments over £250,000.

Long Term Expenditure

The NIGALA receives its funding on an annual basis and has no requirement for long term Investment Strategy or Investment Plans.

Losses and Special Payments (Audited)

i. Losses and Special Payments Losses Statement

Losses statement	2020-21		2019-20
	Number of Cases	£000	£000
Total number of losses	-	-	-
Total value of losses	-	-	-

Individual losses over £250,000	2020-21		2019-20
	Number of Cases	£	£
Cash losses	-	-	-
Claims abandoned	-	-	-
Administrative write-offs	-	-	-
Fruitless payments	-	-	-
Stores losses	-	-	-

Special payments	2020-21		2019-20
	Number of Cases	£000	£000
Total number of special payments	-	-	-
Total value of special payments	-	-	-

Special Payments over £250,000	2020-21		2019-20
	Number of Cases	£	£
Compensation payments			
- Clinical Negligence	-	-	-
- Public Liability	-	-	-
- Employers Liability	-	-	-
- Other	-	-	-
Ex-gratia payments	-	-	-
Extra contractual	-	-	-
Special severance payments	-	-	-
Total special payments	-	-	-

Other Payments

There were no other special payments or gifts made during the year.

ii Fees and Charges

There were no other fees and charges during the year.

iii Remote Contingent Liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of IAS37, the NIGALA also reports liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability. The NIGALA has a remote contingent liability in respect of a pay issue.



Dawn Shaw
Chief Executive

July 8th 2021

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

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

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, as amended. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes including significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union and interpreted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

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

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency's net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, as amended and Department of Health directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

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

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements 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 Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Northern Ireland

Guardian Ad Litem Agency's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Board and the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

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

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

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

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

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Health directions made under the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, as amended; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made; or

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Board and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer Responsibilities, the Board and the Accounting Officer are responsible for

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- such internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, as amended.

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

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

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, as amended and the Department of Health directions issued thereunder;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led

engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, we identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals;

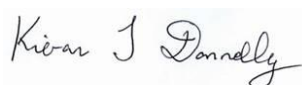
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate;
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
 - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
 - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
 - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
 - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

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

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

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



KJ Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
1 Bradford Court
Galwally
BELFAST , BT8 6RB
18 August 2021

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

STATEMENT of COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE for the year ended 31 March 2021

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

	NOTE	2021 £	2020 £
Income			
Income from activities	4.1	-	-
Other Income (Excluding interest)	4.2	19,513	56,412
Deferred income	4.3	-	-
Total operating income		19,513	56,412
Expenditure			
Staff costs	3	(3,704,368)	(3,577,648)
Purchase of goods and services	3	(12,398)	(15,657)
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment charges	3	(70,143)	(69,321)
Provision expense	3	-	-
Other expenditure	3	(866,739)	(1,037,990)
Total operating expenditure		(4,653,648)	(4,700,616)
Net Expenditure		(4,634,135)	(4,644,204)
Finance income		-	-
Finance expense		-	-
Net expenditure for the year		(4,634,135)	(4,644,204)
Revenue Resource Limit (RRL) received from DoH	22.1	4,646,759	4,651,254
Surplus against RRL		12,624	7,050
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant & equipment	5.1/8/5.2	11	189
Net (loss)/gain on revaluation of intangibles	6.1/8/6.2	(159)	116
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of financial instruments	7/9	-	-
Items that may be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of investments		-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE EXPENDITURE for the year ended 31 March		(4,634,283)	(4,643,899)


The notes on pages 81 to 112 form part of these accounts.


NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY
STATEMENT of FINANCIAL POSITION as at 31 March 2021

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

	NOTE	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
Non Current Assets					
Property, plant and equipment	5.1/5.2	32,069		63,091	
Intangible assets	6.1/6.2	82,525		121,794	
Financial assets	7	-		-	
Trade and other receivables	13	-		-	
Other current assets	13	-		-	
Total Non Current Assets			114,594		184,885
Current Assets					
Assets classified as held for sale	10	-		-	
Inventories	11	500		500	
Trade and other receivables	13	52,818		54,464	
Other current assets	13	34,757		34,759	
Intangible current assets	13	-		-	
Financial assets	7	-		-	
Cash and cash equivalents	12	28,354		38,044	
Total Current Assets			116,429		127,767
Total Assets			231,023		312,652
Current Liabilities					
Trade and other payables	14	(489,489)		(455,953)	
Other liabilities	14	-		-	
Intangible current liabilities		-		-	
Financial liabilities	7	-		-	
Provisions	15	-		-	
Total Current Liabilities			(489,489)		(455,953)
Total assets less current liabilities			(258,466)		(143,301)
Non Current Liabilities					
Provisions	15	-		-	
Other payables > 1 yr	14	-		-	
Financial liabilities	7	-		-	
Total Non Current Liabilities			-		-
Total assets less total liabilities			(258,466)		(143,301)
Taxpayers' Equity and other reserves					
Revaluation reserve		30,099		30,247	
SoCNE Reserve		(288,565)		(173,548)	
Total equity			(258,466)		(143,301)

The financial statements on pages 77 to 80 approved by the Board on 8th July 2021 and were signed on its behalf;

Signed  (Chairman) Date 8th July 2021

Signed  (Chief Executive) Date 8th July 2021

The notes on pages 81 to 112 form part of these accounts.

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY
STATEMENT of CASH FLOWS for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Statement of Cash Flows shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the NIGALA during the reporting period. The statement shows how the NIGALA 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 the recipients of services provided by the NIGALA. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash inflows and outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the NIGALA's future public service delivery.

	NOTE	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net deficit after interest/Net operating expenditure		(4,634,135)	(4,644,204)
Adjustments for non cash costs	3	86,643	85,221
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other receivables		1,648	(27,037)
<i>Less movements in receivables relating to items not passing through the NEA</i>			
Movements in receivables relating to the sale of property, plant & equipment		-	-
Movements in receivables relating to the sale of intangibles		-	-
Movements in receivables relating to finance leases		-	-
Movements in receivables relating to PFI and other service concession arrangement contracts		-	-
(Increase)/decrease in inventories		-	-
Increase in trade payables		33,536	81,011
<i>Less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the NEA</i>			
Movements in payables relating to the purchase of property, plant & equipment		-	-
Movements in payables relating to the purchase of intangibles		-	-
Movements in payables relating to finance leases		-	-
Movements on payables relating to PFI and other service concession arrangement contracts		-	-
Use of provisions	15	-	-
Net cash outflow from operating activities		<u>(4,512,308)</u>	<u>(4,505,009)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant & equipment	5.1, 5.2	-	-
Purchase of intangible assets	6.1, 6.2	-	(56,000)
Proceeds of disposal of property, plant & equipment		-	-
Proceeds on disposal of intangibles		-	-
Proceeds on disposal of assets held for resale		-	-
Net cash outflow from investing activities		<u>-</u>	<u>(56,000)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Grant in aid		4,502,618	4,576,513
Cap element of payments - finance leases and on balance sheet (SoFP) PFI and other service concession arrangements		-	-
Net financing		<u>4,502,618</u>	<u>4,576,513</u>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash & cash equivalents in the period		(9,690)	15,504
Cash & cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	12	38,044	22,540
Cash & cash equivalents at the end of the period	12	<u>28,354</u>	<u>38,044</u>

The notes on pages 81 to 112 form part of these accounts.

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

STATEMENT OF CHANGES in TAXPAYERS EQUITY for the year ended 31 March 2021

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by NIGALA, analysed into 'Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure Reserve' (i.e. those reserves that reflect a contribution from the Department of Health). The Revaluation Reserve reflects the change in asset values that have not been recognised as income or expenditure. The SoCNE Reserve represents the total assets less liabilities of the NIGALA, to the extent that the total is not represented by other reserves and financing items.

	NOTE	SoCNE Reserve £	Revaluation Reserve £	Total £
Balance at 1 April 2019		(121,757)	29,942	(91,815)
Changes in Taxpayers Equity 2019-20				
Grant from DoH		4,576,513	-	4,576,513
Other reserves movements including transfers		-	-	-
Total Comprehensive expenditure for the year		(4,644,204)	305	(4,643,899)
Transfer of asset ownership		-	-	-
Non cash charges – auditors' remuneration	3	15,900	-	15,900
Balance at 31 March 2020		(173,548)	30,247	(143,301)
Changes in Taxpayers Equity 2020-21				
Grant from DoH		4,502,618	-	4,502,618
Other reserves movements including transfers		-	-	-
Total Comprehensive expenditure for the year		(4,634,135)	(148)	(4,634,283)
Transfer of asset ownership		-	-	-
Non cash charges – auditors' remuneration	3	16,500	-	16,500
Balance at 31 March 2021		(288,565)	30,099	(258,466)

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. Authority

These accounts have been prepared in a form determined by the Department of Health based on guidance from the Department of Finance's Financial Reporting manual (FReM) and in accordance with the requirements of Article 90(2) (a) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 No 1265 (NI 14) as amended by Article 6 of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

The accounting policies follow IFRS to the extent that it is meaningful and appropriate to the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (the "NIGALA"). Where a choice of accounting policy is permitted, the accounting policy which has been judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the NIGALA for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The NIGALA's accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts, unless otherwise stated.

In addition, due to the manner in which the NIGALA is funded, the Statement of Financial Position will show a negative position. In line with the FReM, sponsored entities such as the NIGALA which show total net liabilities, should prepare financial statements on a going concern basis. The cash required to discharge these net liabilities will be requested from the Department when they fall due, and is shown in the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity.

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, intangible assets, inventories and certain financial assets and liabilities.

1.2 Currency

These accounts are presented in £ sterling and rounded in thousands.

1.3 Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, plant and equipment assets comprise Land, Buildings, Dwellings, Transport Equipment, Plant & Machinery, Information Technology, Furniture & Fittings, and Assets under construction.

Recognition

Property, plant and equipment must be capitalised if:

- it is held for use in delivering services or for administrative purposes;
- it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to, or service potential will be supplied to, the entity;
- it is expected to be used for more than one financial year;
- the cost of the item can be measured reliably; and
- the item has cost of at least £5,000; or
- Collectively, a number of items have a cost of at least £5,000 and individually have a cost of more than £1,000, where the assets are functionally interdependent, they had broadly simultaneous purchase dates, are anticipated to have simultaneous disposal dates and are under single managerial control; or
- Items form part of the initial equipping and setting-up cost of a new building, ward or unit, irrespective of their individual or collective cost.

On initial recognition property, plant and equipment are measured at cost including any expenditure such as installation, directly attributable to bringing them into working condition. Items classified as “under construction” are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position to the extent that money has been paid or a liability has been incurred.

Valuation of Land and Buildings

The NIGALA did not own any Land and Buildings in the current 2020-21 financial year, or in the 2019-20 financial year.

Fair values are determined as follows:

- Land and non-specialised buildings – open market value for existing use;
- Specialised buildings – depreciated replacement cost; and
- Properties surplus to requirements – the lower of open market value less any material directly attributable selling costs, or book value at date of moving to non-current assets.

Modern Equivalent Asset

DoF has adopted a standard approach to depreciated replacement cost valuations based on modern equivalent assets and, where it would meet the location requirements of the service being provided, an alternative site can be valued. Land and Property Services (LPS) have included this requirement within the latest valuation.

Assets Under Construction (AUC)

Properties in the course of construction for service or administration purposes are carried at cost, less any impairment loss. Assets are revalued and depreciation commences when they are brought into use.

Short Life Assets

Short life assets are not indexed. Short life is defined as a useful life of up to and including 5 years. Short life assets are carried at depreciated historic cost as this is not considered to be materially different from fair value and are depreciated over their useful life.

Where estimated life of fixtures and equipment exceed 5 years, suitable indices will be applied each year and depreciation will be based on indexed amount.

Revaluation Reserve

An increase arising on revaluation is taken to the revaluation reserve except when it reverses an impairment for the same asset previously recognised in expenditure, in which case it is credited to expenditure to the extent of the decrease previously charged there. A revaluation decrease is recognised as an impairment charged to the revaluation reserve to the extent that there is a balance on the reserve for the asset and, thereafter, to expenditure.

1.4 Depreciation

No depreciation is provided on freehold land since land has unlimited or a very long established useful life. Items under construction are not depreciated until they are commissioned. Properties that are surplus to requirements and which meet the definition of “non-current assets held for sale” are also not depreciated.

Otherwise, depreciation is charged to write off the costs or valuation of property, plant and equipment and similarly, amortisation is applied to intangible non-current assets, less any residual value, over their estimated useful lives, in a manner that reflects the consumption of economic benefits or service potential of the assets. Assets held under finance leases are also depreciated over the lower of their estimated useful lives and the terms of the lease. The estimated useful life of an asset is the period over which the NIGALA expects to obtain economic benefits or service potential from the asset. Estimated useful lives and residual values are reviewed each year end, with the effect of any changes recognised on a prospective basis. The following asset lives have been used.

Asset Type	Asset Life
Freehold Buildings	25 – 60 years
Leasehold property	Remaining period of lease
IT Assets	3 – 10 years
Intangible assets	3 – 10 years
Other Equipment	3 – 15 years

1.5 Impairment loss

If there has been an impairment loss due to a general change in prices, the asset is written down to its recoverable amount, with the loss charged to the revaluation reserve to the extent that there is a balance on the reserve for the asset and, thereafter, to expenditure within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. If the impairment is due to the consumption of economic benefits the full amount of the impairment is charged to the Statement of

Comprehensive Net Expenditure and an amount up to the value of the impairment in the revaluation reserve is transferred to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure Reserve. Where an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of the recoverable amount but capped at the amount that would have been determined had there been no initial impairment loss. The reversal of the impairment loss is credited firstly to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent of the decrease previously charged there and thereafter to the revaluation reserve.

1.6 Subsequent expenditure

Where subsequent expenditure enhances an asset beyond its original specification, the directly attributable cost is capitalised. Where subsequent expenditure which meets the definition of capital restores the asset to its original specification, the expenditure is capitalised and any existing carrying value of the item replaced is written-out and charged to operating expenses.

The overall useful life of the NIGALA's buildings takes account of the fact that different components of those buildings have different useful lives. This ensures that depreciation is charged on those assets at the same rate as if separate components had been identified and depreciated at different rates.

1.7 Intangible assets

Intangible assets includes any of the following held - software, licences, trademarks, websites, development expenditure, Patents, Goodwill and intangible Assets under Construction. Software that is integral to the operating of hardware, for example an operating system is capitalised as part of the relevant item of property, plant and equipment. Software that is not integral to the operation of hardware, for example application software, is capitalised as an intangible asset. Expenditure on research is not capitalised: it is recognised as an operating expense in the period in which it is incurred. Internally-generated assets are recognised if, and only if, all of the following have been demonstrated:

- the technical feasibility of completing the intangible asset so that it will be available for use;
- the intention to complete the intangible asset and use it;
- the ability to sell or use the intangible asset;
- how the intangible asset will generate probable future economic benefits or service potential;
- the availability of adequate technical, financial and other resources to complete the intangible asset and sell or use it; and
- the ability to measure reliably the expenditure attributable to the intangible asset during its development.

Recognition

Intangible assets are non-monetary assets without physical substance, which are capable of sale separately from the rest of the NIGALA's business or which arise from contractual or

other legal rights. Intangible assets are considered to have a finite life. They are recognised only when it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to, or service potential be provided to, the NIGALA; where the cost of the asset can be measured reliably. All single items over £5,000 in value must be capitalised while intangible assets which fall within the grouped asset definition must be capitalised if their individual value is at least £1,000 each and the group is at least £5,000 in value. The amount recognised for internally-generated intangible assets is the sum of the expenditure incurred from the date of commencement of the intangible asset, until it is complete and ready for use.

Intangible assets acquired separately are initially recognised at fair value.

Following initial recognition, intangible assets are carried at fair value by reference to an active market, and as no active market currently exists depreciated replacement cost has been used as fair value.

1.8 Non-current assets held for sale

Non-current assets are classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through continuing use. In order to meet this definition IFRS 5 requires that the asset must be immediately available for sale in its current condition and that the sale is highly probable. A sale is regarded as highly probable where an active plan is in place to find a buyer for the asset and the sale is considered likely to be concluded within one year. Non-current assets held for sale are measured at the lower of their previous carrying amount and fair value, less any material directly attributable selling costs. Fair value is open market value, where one is available, including alternative uses. Assets classified as held for sale are not depreciated.

The profit or loss arising on disposal of an asset is the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying amount. The profit from sale of land which is a non depreciating asset is recognised within income. The profit from sale of a depreciating asset is shown as a reduced expense. The loss from sale of land or from any depreciating assets is shown within operating expenses. On disposal, the balance for the asset on the revaluation reserve is transferred to the Statement of Comprehensive net Expenditure reserve.

Property, plant or equipment that is to be scrapped or demolished does not qualify for recognition as held for sale. Instead, it is retained as an operational asset and its economic life is adjusted. The asset is de-recognised when it is scrapped or demolished.

1.9 Inventories

Inventories are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. This is considered to be a reasonable approximation to fair value due to the high turnover of stocks.

1.10 Income

Income is classified between Revenue from Contracts and Other Operating Income as assessed necessary in line with organisational activity, under the requirements of IFRS 15 and as applicable to the public sector. Judgement is exercised in order to determine whether

the 5 essential criteria within the scope of IFRS 15 are met in order to define income as a contract. Income relates directly to the activities of the NIGALA and is recognised when, and to the extent that a performance obligation is satisfied in a manner that depicts the transfer to the customer of the goods or services promised. Where the criteria to determine whether a contract is in existence is not met, income is classified as Other Operating Income within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and is recognised when the right to receive payment is established.

Income is stated net of VAT.

Grant in aid

Funding received from other entities, including the Department and the Health and Social Care Board are accounted for as grant in aid and are reflected through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure Reserve.

1.11 Investments

The NIGALA does not have any investments.

1.12 Research and Development expenditure and the impact of implementation of ESA 2010

NIGALA had no research and development expenditure under ESA 2010 at 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

1.13 Other expenses

Other operating expenses for goods or services are recognised when, and to the extent that, they have been received. They are measured at the fair value of the consideration payable.

1.14 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is cash in hand and deposits with any financial institution repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in 3 months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

1.15 Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases when substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are transferred to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

The NIGALA as lessee

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases are initially recognised, at the

inception of the lease, at fair value or, if lower, at the present value of the minimum lease payments, with a matching liability for the lease obligation to the lessor. Lease payments are apportioned between finance charges and reduction of the lease obligation so as to achieve a constant rate on interest on the remaining balance of the liability. Finance charges are recognised in calculating the NIGALA's surplus/deficit.

Operating lease payments are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term. Lease incentives are recognised initially as a liability and subsequently as a reduction of rentals on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Contingent rentals are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.

Where a lease is for land and buildings, the land and building components are separated. Leased land may be either an operating lease or a finance lease depending on the conditions in the lease agreement and following the general guidance set out in IAS 17. Leased buildings are assessed as to whether they are operating or finance leases.

The NIGALA as lessor

Amounts due from lessees under finance leases are recorded as receivables at the amount of the NIGALA's net investment in the leases. Finance lease income is allocated to accounting periods so as to reflect a constant periodic rate of return on the NIGALA's net investment outstanding in respect of the leases.

Rental income from operating leases is recognised on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease. Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging an operating lease are added to the carrying amount of the leased asset and recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

1.16 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) transactions

The NIGALA has had no PFI transactions during the year.

1.17 Financial instruments

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

NIGALA has financial instruments in the form of trade receivables and payables and cash and cash equivalents

- Financial assets

Financial assets are recognised on the balance sheet when the NIGALA becomes party to the financial instrument contract or, in the case of trade receivables, when the goods or services have been delivered. Financial assets are derecognised when the contractual rights have expired or the asset has been transferred.

Financial assets are initially recognised at fair value. IFRS 9 requires consideration of the

expected credit loss model on financial assets. The measurement of the loss allowance depends upon PCC's assessment at the end of each reporting period as to whether the financial instrument's credit risk has increased significantly since initial recognition, based on reasonable and supportable information that is available, without undue cost or effort to obtain. The amount of expected credit loss recognised is measured on the basis of the probability weighted present value of anticipated cash shortfalls over the life of the instrument, where judged necessary.

Financial assets are classified into the following categories:

- Financial assets at fair value through Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure;
- held to maturity investments;
- Available for sale financial assets; and
- Loans and receivables.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition.

- Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the balance sheet when the NIGALA becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument or, in the case of trade payables, when the goods or services have been received. Financial liabilities are de-recognised when the liability has been discharged, that is, the liability has been paid or has expired.

Financial liabilities are initially recognised at fair value.

- Financial risk management

IFRS 7 requires disclosure of the role that financial instruments have had during the period in creating or changing the risks a body faces in undertaking its activities. Because of the relationships with HSC Commissioners, and the manner in which they are funded, financial instruments play a more limited role within the NIGALA in creating risk than would apply to a non-public sector body of a similar size, therefore the NIGALA is not exposed to the degree of financial risk faced by business entities.

NIGALA have limited powers to borrow or invest surplus funds and financial assets and liabilities are generated by day to day operational activities rather than being held to change the risks facing the NIGALA in undertaking activities. Therefore the NIGALA is exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

- Currency risk

The NIGALA is principally a domestic organisation with the great majority of transactions, assets and liabilities being in the UK and Sterling based. The NIGALA has no overseas operations. The NIGALA therefore has low exposure to currency rate fluctuations.

- Interest rate risk

The NIGALA has limited powers to borrow or invest and therefore has low exposure to

interest rate fluctuations.

- Credit risk

Because the majority of the NIGALA's income comes from contracts with other public sector bodies, the NIGALA has low exposure to credit risk.

- Liquidity risk

Since the NIGALA receives the majority of its funding through its principal Commissioner which is voted through the Assembly, it is therefore not exposed to significant liquidity risks.

1.18 Provisions

The NIGALA had no provisions in 2020-21 or 2019-20.

1.19 Contingent liabilities/assets

The Court of Appeal (CoA) judgment from 17 June 2019 (PSNI v Agnew) determined that claims for Holiday Pay shortfall can be taken back to 1998. However, the PSNI has appealed the CoA judgment to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court hearing was scheduled for the 23rd and 24th June 2021 but this has subsequently been adjourned. Based on the position in the NHS in England, Scotland and Wales, an accrual at 31 March 2021 has been calculated by HSC management for the liability and is included in these accounts. However, the extent to which the liability may exceed this amount remains uncertain as the calculation has not been agreed with Trade Unions. The potential additional financial effect of this is unquantifiable at present.

A discount rate is applied by courts to a lump-sum award of damages for future financial loss in a personal injury case, to take account of the return that can be earned from investment. Currently the rate in Northern Ireland has to be set in accordance with principles set out by the House of Lords in *Wells v Wells*. The Department of Justice made a statutory rule on 29 April 2021 changing the rate, under the *Wells v Wells* framework, (from 2.5%) to -1.75%, with effect from 31 May 2021. The Department has also brought forward a Bill to change how the rate is set. The Damages (Return on Investment) Bill was introduced to the Assembly on 1 March 2021 and is currently at Committee Stage. Subject to the legislative process, it is anticipated that the Bill will be enacted early next year and the rate would then be reviewed under the new framework.

There were no cases settled under a periodic payment order where the estimated impact of the change in discount rate has been included in the clinical negligence provisions figure. However, for cases not yet settled, it was not possible to quantify the additional financial liability at this stage as this is a significant task given the number of claims involved. As such, a review will be undertaken in 2021/22 to establish the increase in liability that has arisen from the decrease in discount factor as personal injury compensation will be inflated for existing future loss.

The NIGALA had no contingent assets or liabilities at either 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

1.20 Employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits

Under the requirements of IAS 19: Employee Benefits, staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken leave that has been earned at the year end. This cost has been determined using individual's salary costs applied to their unused leave balances determined from a report of the unused annual leave balance as at 31 March 2021.

However during the 2020/21 financial year the unused annual leave balances and therefore the cost of unused leave accounted for increased materially due to Covid-19 pressures resulting in staff being unable to take planned leave. To ensure staff didn't lose annual leave during the 2020/21 year, key workers were granted permission to carry over additional unused leave above the usual 5 days, to be taken within the next 2 financial years. The NIGALA staff have key worker status and thus were able to avail of this. Untaken flexi leave is estimated to be immaterial to the NIGALA and has not been included.

Retirement benefit costs

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the HSC Superannuation Scheme.

The NIGALA participates in the HSC Superannuation Scheme. Under this multi-employer defined benefit scheme both the NIGALA and employees pay specified percentages of pay into the scheme and the liability to pay benefit falls to the DoH. The NIGALA is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities in the scheme on a consistent and reliable basis.

The costs of early retirements are met by the NIGALA and charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure at the time the NIGALA commits itself to the retirement.

As per the requirements of IAS 19, full actuarial valuations by a professionally qualified actuary are required at intervals not exceeding four years. The actuary reviews the most recent actuarial valuation at the Statement of Financial Position date and updates it to reflect current conditions. The 2017 valuation for the HSC Pension scheme updated to reflect current financial conditions (and a change in financial assumption methodology) will be used in 2020-21 accounts.

1.21 Reserves

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure Reserve

Accumulated surpluses are accounted for in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure Reserve.

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve reflects the unrealised balance of cumulative indexation and revaluation adjustments to assets other than donated assets.

1.22 Value Added Tax

Where output VAT is charged or input VAT is recoverable, the amounts are stated net of VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the relevant expenditure category or included in the capitalised purchase cost of fixed assets.

1.23 Third party assets

Assets belonging to third parties (such as money held on behalf of patients) are not recognised in the accounts since the NIGALA has no beneficial interest in them. Details of third party assets are given in Note 21 to the accounts.

1.24 Government Grants

The note to the financial statements distinguishes between grants from UK government entities and grants from European Union.

1.25 Losses and Special Payments

Losses and special payments are items that the Assembly would not have contemplated when it agreed funds for the health service or passed legislation. By their nature they are items that ideally should not arise. They are therefore subject to special control procedures compared with the generality of payments. They are divided into different categories, which govern the way that individual cases are handled.

Losses and special payments are charged to the relevant functional headings in expenditure on an accruals basis, including losses which would have been made good through insurance cover had HSC bodies not been bearing their own risks (with insurance premiums then being included as normal revenue expenditure). However, the note on losses and special payments is compiled directly from the losses and compensations register which reports amounts on an accruals basis with the exception of provisions for future losses.

1.26 Charitable Trust Account Consolidation

The NIGALA had no charitable trusts at either 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

1.27 Accounting Standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted

Under IAS 8 there is a requirement to disclose those standards issued but not yet adopted. The suggested wording (to be updated as necessary once 2020-21 standard wording received from DoF) is as follows;

The International Accounting Standards Board have issued the following new standards but which are either not yet effective or adopted. Under IAS 8 there is a requirement to disclose these standards together with an assessment of their initial impact on application.

IFRS10 Consolidated Financial Statements, IFRS 11 Joint Arrangements, IFRS 12 Disclosure of interests in Other Entities:

The IASB have issued new and amended standards (IFRS 10, IFRS 11 & IFRS 12) that affect the consolidation and reporting of subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures. These standards were effective with EU adoption from 1 January 2014.

Accounting boundary IFRS' are currently adapted in the FReM so that the Westminster departmental accounting boundary is based on Office of National Statistics (ONS) control criteria, as designated by Treasury.

A similar review in NI, which will bring NI departments under the same adaptation, has been carried out and the resulting recommendations were agreed by the Executive in December 2016. With effect from 2022-23, the accounting boundary for departments will change and there will also be an impact on departments around the disclosure requirements under IFRS 12. ALBs apply IFRS in full and their consolidation boundary may change as a result of the new Standards.

IFRS 16 Leases:

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 2022.

Each DoH body should consider and disclose relevant figures in respect of measurement of the impact as judged necessary by each entity.

IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts:

IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts will replace IFRS 4 Insurance Contracts and is effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023. In line with the requirements of the FReM, IFRS 17 will be implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector, with effect from 1 April 2023.

Management consider that any other new accounting policies issued but not yet adopted are unlikely to have a significant impact on the accounts in the period of the initial application.

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 2 ANALYSIS OF NET EXPENDITURE BY SEGMENT

The core business and strategic direction of the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency is to act as a 'voice' for children who are subjects of public law and adoption proceedings before the courts in Northern Ireland.

The Agency Board acts as the Chief Operating Decision Maker and receives financial information on the Agency as a whole and makes decisions on this basis. Hence, it is appropriate that the Agency reports on a single operational segment basis.

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 3 OPERATING EXPENSES

Operating Expenses are as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Staff costs ¹ :		
Wages and Salaries	2,840,546	2,727,221
Social security costs	286,511	285,829
Other pension costs	577,311	564,598
Supplies and services- General	12,398	15,657
Establishment	89,672	249,283
Premises	199,244	209,461
Miscellaneous expenditure	3,275	7,048
Fees- Self Employed Guardians	401,726	409,664
Recharges from other HSC organisations	156,322	146,634
Total Operating Expenses	4,567,005	4,615,395
Non cash items		
Depreciation	31,033	34,743
Amortisation	39,110	34,578
Loss on disposal of property, plant & equipment (including land)	-	-
Auditors' remuneration	16,500	15,900
Total non cash items	86,643	85,221
Total	4,653,648	4,700,616

¹ Further detailed analysis of staff costs is located in the Staff Report on page 60 within the Accountability Report.

During the year the NIGALA purchased no non audit services from its external auditors' (NIAO) (2019/20: £Nil).

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 4 INCOME

4.1 Income from Activities

The NIGALA had no income from activities in 2020-21 and 2019-20.

4.2 Other Income (Excluding interest)

	2021	2020
	£	£
Other income from non-patient services	19,513	56,412
Seconded staff	-	-
TOTAL INCOME	<u>19,513</u>	<u>56,412</u>

4.3 Deferred income

The NIGALA had no income released from conditional grants in 2020-21 and 2019-20.

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 5.1 Property, plant and equipment - year ended 31 March 2021

	Land £	Buildings (excluding dwellings) £	Dwellings £	Assets under Construction £	Plant and Machinery (Equipment) £	Transport Equipment £	Information Technology (IT) £	Furniture and Fittings £	Total £
Cost or Valuation									
At 1 April 2020	-	136,507	-	-	-	-	110,932	8,571	256,010
Indexation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	289	289
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donations / Government grant / Lottery Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the SoCNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reversal of impairments (indexn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	(123,863)	-	-	-	-	(8,626)	(8,860)	(141,349)
At 31 March 2021	-	12,644	-	-	-	-	102,306	0	114,950
Accumulated Depreciation									
At 1 April 2020	-	133,499	-	-	-	-	52,073	7,347	192,919
Indexation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	278	278
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the SoCNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reversal of impairments (indexn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	(123,863)	-	-	-	-	(8,626)	(8,860)	(141,349)
Provided during the year	-	1,810	-	-	-	-	27,988	1,235	31,033
At 31 March 2021	-	11,446	-	-	-	-	71,435	0	82,881

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 5.1 (continued) Property, plant and equipment- year ended 31 March 2021

	Land £	Buildings (excluding dwellings) £	Dwellings £	Assets under Construction £	Plant and Machinery (Equipment) £	Transport Equipment £	Information Technology (IT) £	Furniture and Fittings £	Total £
Carrying Amount At 31 March 2021	-	1,198	-	-	-	-	30,871	0	32,069
At 31 March 2020	-	3,008	-	-	-	-	58,859	1,224	63,091

Asset financing

Owned	-	1,198	-	-	-	-	30,871	-	32,069
Finance leased	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
On B/S (SoFP) PFI and other service concession arrangements contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying Amount At 31 March 2021	-	1,198	-	-	-	-	30,871	-	32,069

Any fall in value through negative indexation or revaluation is shown as impairment.

The total amount of depreciation charged in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure Account in respect of assets held under finance leases and hire purchase contracts is £Nil (2020: £Nil).

The fair value of assets funded from the following sources during the year was:

	2021 £	2020 £
Donations	-	-
Government Grant	-	-
Lottery funding	-	-

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 5.2 Property, plant and equipment - year ended 31 March 2020

	Land £	Buildings (excluding dwellings) £	Dwellings £	Assets under Construction £	Plant and Machinery (Equipment) £	Transport Equipment £	Information Technology (IT) £	Furniture and Fittings £	Total £
Cost or Valuation									
At 1 April 2019	-	130,768	-	-	-	-	174,034	8,555	313,357
Indexation	-	5,739	-	-	-	-	-	16	5,755
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donations / Government grant / Lottery Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the SoCNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reversal of impairments (indexn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	(63,102)	-	(63,102)
At 31 March 2020	-	136,507	-	-	-	-	110,932	8,571	256,010
Accumulated Depreciation									
At 1 April 2019	-	122,415	-	-	-	-	87,186	6,111	215,712
Indexation	-	5,553	-	-	-	-	-	13	5,566
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the SoCNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reversal of impairments (indexn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	(63,102)	-	(63,102)
Provided during the year	-	5,531	-	-	-	-	27,989	1,223	34,743
At 31 March 2020	-	133,499	-	-	-	-	52,073	7,347	192,919

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 5.2 (continued) Property, plant and equipment- year ended 31 March 2020

	Land £	Buildings (excluding dwellings) £	Dwellings £	Assets under Construction £	Plant and Machinery (Equipment) £	Transport Equipment £	Information Technology (IT) £	Furniture and Fittings £	Total £
Carrying Amount At 31 March 2020	-	3,008	-	-	-	-	58,859	1,224	63,091
At 31 March 2019	-	8,353	-	-	-	-	86,848	2,444	92,299

Asset financing

Owned

Finance leased

On B/S (SoFP) PFI and other
service concession
arrangements contracts

-	3,008	-	-	-	-	-	58,859	1,224	63,091
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying Amount At 31 March 2020	-	3,008	-	-	-	-	58,859	1,224	63,091

Asset financing

Owned

Finance leased

On SOFP PFI and other service
concession arrangements
contracts

-	8,353	-	-	-	-	-	86,848	2,444	97,645
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying Amount At 1 April 2019	-	8,353	-	-	-	-	86,848	2,444	97,645

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 6.1 Intangible assets - year ended 31 March 2021

	Software Licenses £	Information Technology £	Websites £	Development Expenditure £	Licences, Trademarks & Artistic Originals £	Patents £	Goodwill £	Payments on Account & Assets under Construction £	Total £
Cost or Valuation									
At 1 April 2020	-	283,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	283,000
Indexation	-	(474)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(474)
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donations / Government grant / Lottery Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the SoCNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	(130,766)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(130,766)
At 31 March 2021	-	151,760	-	-	-	-	-	-	151,760

Accumulated Amortisation

At 1 April 2020	-	161,206	-	-	-	-	-	-	161,206
Indexation	-	(315)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(315)
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the SoCNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	(130,766)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(130,766)
Provided during the year	-	39,110	-	-	-	-	-	-	39,110
At 31 March 2021	-	69,235	-	-	-	-	-	-	69,235

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 6.1 (continued) Intangible assets - year ended 31 March 2021

	Software Licenses £	Information Technology £	Websites £	Development Expenditure £	Licences, Trademarks & Artistic Originals £	Patents £	Goodwill £	Payments on Account & Assets under Construction £	Total £
Carrying Amount									
At 31 March 2021	-	82,525	-	-	-	-	-	-	82,525
At 31 March 2020	-	35,794	-	-	-	-	-	86,000	121,794
Asset financing									
Owned	-	82,525	-	-	-	-	-	-	82,525
Finance leased	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
On B/S (SoFP) PFI and other service concession arrangements contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying Amount									
At 31 March 2021	-	82,525	-	-	-	-	-	-	82,525

Any fall in value through negative indexation or revaluation is shown as impairment.

The fair value of assets funded from the following sources during the year was:

	2021 £	2020 £
Donations	-	-
Government Grant	-	-
Lottery funding	-	-

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 6.2 Intangible assets - year ended 31 March 2020

	Software Licenses £	Information Technology £	Websites £	Development Expenditure £	Licences, Trademarks & Artistic Originals £	Patents £	Goodwill £	Payments on Account & Assets under Construction £	Total £
Cost or Valuation									
At 1 April 2019	-	197,614	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	227,614
Indexation	-	525	-	-	-	-	-	-	525
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56,000	56,000
Donations / Government grant / Lottery Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	86,000	-	-	-	-	-	(86,000)	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the SoCNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	(1,139)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,139)
At 31 March 2020	-	283,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	283,000
Accumulated Amortisation									
At 1 April 2019	-	127,358	-	-	-	-	-	-	127,358
Indexation	-	409	-	-	-	-	-	-	409
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the SoCNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment charged to the revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	(1,139)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,139)
Provided during the year	-	34,578	-	-	-	-	-	-	34,578
At 31 March 2020	-	161,206	-	-	-	-	-	-	161,206

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 6.2 (continued) Intangible assets - year ended 31 March 2020

	Software Licenses £	Information Technology £	Websites £	Development Expenditure £	Licences, Trademarks & Artistic Originals £	Patents £	Goodwill £	Payments on Account & Assets under Construction £	Total £
Carrying Amount									
At 31 March 2020	-	35,794	-	-	-	-	-	86,000	121,794
At 1 April 2019	-	70,256	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	100,256

Asset financing

Owned	-	35,794	-	-	-	-	-	86,000	121,794
Finance leased	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
On B/S (SoFP) PFI and other service concession arrangements contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying Amount									
At 31 March 2020	-	121,794	-	-	-	-	-	-	121,794

Asset financing

Owned	-	70,256	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	100,256
Finance leased	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
On B/S (SoFP) PFI and other service concession arrangements contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying Amount									
At 1 April 2019	-	70,256	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	100,256

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 7 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

As the cash requirements of NIGALA are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by the Department of Health, 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 NIGALA's expected purchase and usage requirements and the NIGALA is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

NOTE 8 INVESTMENTS AND LOANS

The NIGALA had no investments or loans at either 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

NOTE 9 IMPAIRMENTS

The NIGALA had no impairments in 2020-21 or 2019-20.

NOTE 10 ASSETS CLASSIFIED AS HELD FOR SALE

The NIGALA did not hold any assets classified as held for sale at 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

NOTE 11 INVENTORIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Office supplies	500	500
Total	500	500

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 12 CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Balance at opening balance sheet date	38,044	22,540
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	(9,690)	15,504
Balance at end balance sheet date	28,354	38,044

The following balances at 31 March were held at

	2021	2020
	£	£
Commercial Banks and cash in hand	28,354	38,044
Balance at 31st March	28,354	38,044

The bank account is operated by Business Services Organisation (BSO) on behalf of the NIGALA.
The account is in the legal name of the BSO.

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 13 TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES, INTANGIBLE CURRENT ASSETS AND OTHER CURRENT ASSETS

	2021 £	2020 £
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade receivables	41,441	22,324
Deposits and advances	-	-
VAT receivable	3,126	13,610
Other receivables – not relating to fixed assets	8,251	18,530
Other receivables – relating to property, plant and equipment	-	-
Other receivables – relating to intangibles	-	-
Trade and other receivables	<u>52,818</u>	<u>54,464</u>
Prepayments	34,757	34,759
Accrued income	-	-
Current part of PFI and other service concession arrangements prepayment	-	-
Other current assets	<u>34,757</u>	<u>34,759</u>
Amounts falling due after more than one year		
Trade receivables	-	-
Deposits and advances	-	-
Other receivables	-	-
Trade and other receivables	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Prepayments and accrued income	-	-
Other current assets falling due after more than one year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES	<u><u>52,818</u></u>	<u><u>54,464</u></u>
TOTAL OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	<u><u>34,757</u></u>	<u><u>34,759</u></u>
TOTAL INTANGIBLE CURRENT ASSETS	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES, INTANGIBLE CURRENT ASSETS AND OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	<u><u>87,575</u></u>	<u><u>89,223</u></u>

The balances are net of a provision for bad debts of £Nil (2019/20: £Nil).

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 14 TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES, OTHER LIABILITIES AND OTHER PAYABLES > 1YR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year		
Other taxation and social security	147,844	200,590
VAT payable	-	-
Bank overdraft	-	-
Trade capital payables – property, plant and equipment	-	-
Trade capital payables – intangibles	-	-
Trade revenue payables	5,003	164
Payroll payables	622	633
Clinical Negligence payables	-	-
RPA payables	-	-
BSO payables	17	171
Other payables	-	26,362
Accruals	336,003	228,033
Accruals– relating to property, plant and equipment	-	-
Accruals – relating to intangibles	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-
Trade and other payables	489,489	455,953
Current part of finance leases	-	-
Current part of long term loans	-	-
Current part of imputed finance lease element of PFI and other service concession arrangements contracts	-	-
Other current liabilities	-	-
Total payables falling due within one year	489,489	455,953
Amounts falling due after more than one year		
Other payables, accruals and deferred income	-	-
Trade and other payables	-	-
Imputed finance lease element of PFI and other service concession arrangements contracts	-	-
Long term loans	-	-
Total non current other payables	-	-
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES AND OTHER CURRENT LIABILITIES	489,489	455,953

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 15 PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES

The NIGALA had no provisions for liabilities and charges at either 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

NOTE 16 CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

The NIGALA had no capital commitments at either 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

NOTE 17 COMMITMENTS UNDER LEASES

17.1 Operating Leases

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

	2021	2020
	£	£
Obligations under operating leases comprise		
Buildings		
Not later than one year	117,450	104,683
Later than one year but not later than five years	102,750	140,250
Later than five years	-	-
	<u>220,200</u>	<u>244,933</u>

17.2 Finance Leases

The NIGALA had no finance leases at 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

17.3 Operating Leases

The NIGALA did not issue any operating leases in 2020-21 or 2019-20.

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 18 COMMITMENTS UNDER PFI AND OTHER SERVICE CONCESSION ARRANGEMENT CONTRACTS

18.1 Off balance sheet PFI and other service concession arrangement schemes.

The NIGALA had no commitments under PFI and other concession arrangement contracts at 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

18.2 On balance sheet (SoFP) PFI Schemes

The NIGALA has no on balance sheet (SoFP) PFI and other service concession arrangements schemes at 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

NOTE 19 OTHER FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

The NIGALA did not have any other financial commitments at 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

NOTE 20 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

NIGALA did not have any contingent liabilities at 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

20.1 Financial guarantees, Indemnities and letters of comfort

NIGALA did not have any financial guarantees, indemnities and letters of comfort at 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020.

NOTE 21 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The NIGALA is an arms length body of the Department of Health, and as such the Department is a related party with which the NIGALA has had various material transactions during the year.

In addition there were material transactions throughout the year with the Business Services Organisation who are a related party by virtue of being an arms length body with the Department of Health.

During the year, none of the Board members, members of the key management staff or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions with the NIGALA.

NOTE 22 THIRD PARTY ASSETS

The NIGALA held no assets at either 31 March 2021 or 31 March 2020 belonging to third parties.

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 22 Financial Performance Targets

22.1 Revenue Resource Limit (RRL) received from DoH

The NIGALA is given a Revenue Resource Limit which it is not permitted to overspend.

The Revenue Resource Limit for NIGALA is calculated as follows:

	2021	2020
	Total	Total
	£	£
DoH (excludes non cash)	4,560,116	4,566,033
Other Government Department	-	-
Non cash RRL (from DoH)	86,643	85,221
Total agreed RRL	4,646,759	4,651,254
Adjustment for income received re Donations / Government grant / Lottery funding for non current assets	-	-
Total Revenue Resource Limit to Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	4,646,759	4,651,254

22.2 Capital Resource Limit

The NIGALA is given a Capital Resource Limit (CRL) which it is not permitted to overspend.

	2021	2020
	£	£
Gross Capital Expenditure	-	56,000
(Receipts from sales of fixed assets)	-	-
Net capital expenditure	-	56,000
Capital Resource Limit	-	56,000
Overspend/(Underspend) against CRL	-	-

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

22.3 Financial Performance Targets

The NIGALA is required to ensure that it breaks even on an annual basis by containing its surplus to within 0.25% of RRL or £20,000, whichever is greater.

	2020-21	2019-20
	£	£
Net Expenditure	(4,634,135)	(4,644,204)
RRL	4,646,759	4,651,254
Surplus against RRL	12,624	7,050
Break Even cumulative position (opening)	70,172	63,122
Break Even Cumulative position (closing)	<u>82,796</u>	<u>70,172</u>

Materiality Test:

	2020-21	2019-20
	%	%
Break Even in year position as % of RRL	<u>0.27%</u>	<u>0.15%</u>
Break Even cumulative position as % of RRL	<u>1.78%</u>	<u>1.51%</u>

NORTHERN IRELAND GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

NOTE 24 EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There are no post balance sheet events having material effect on the accounts.

DATE OF AUTHORISATION FOR ISSUE

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 18th August 2021.



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