



Victims and Survivors Service

**Annual Report and Accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2014**

Victims and Survivors Service

Annual Report and Accounts

For the year ended 31 March 2014

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under the statutory provision for the Victims and Survivors Service, the Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2013,
by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

on

22 December 2014

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Any enquiries related to this publication should be sent to us at the Victims and Survivors Service, First Floor, Millennium House, 25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AQ, or email: enquiries@vssni.org.

This publication is also available for download from our website at www.victimsservice.org.

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Officers and Professional Advisers

Officers and Professional Advisers

Directors

Interim Board Members

Fergus Devitt – Chairman appointed 27 March 2012 resigned 24 December 2013

Marie Mathews – Director appointed 27 March 2012 resigned 24 December 2013

Sinead McCartan – Director appointed 30 September 2013 resigned 28 October 2013

Janine Fullerton – Director appointed 30 September 2013 resigned 28 October 2013

Brenda Burke – Director appointed 30 September 2013 resigned 28 October 2013

Permanent Board Members

Peter Gay – Chairman appointed 5 December 2013, resigned 23 June 2014

Oliver Wilkinson – Director appointed 13 December 2013, appointed as Interim Chair 30 June 2014.

Bertha McDougall – Director appointed 4 December 2013

Richard Solomon – Director appointed 5 December 2013

Auditors

Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Registered Office

Victims and Survivors Service Limited
1st Floor Millennium House
25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ

Principal Bankers

Danske Bank
8/9 Donegall Square North
Belfast
BT1 5GJ

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

The directors are please to present their annual review and financial statements for the year to 31 March 2014.

Principal Activities

Strategic Context

The Victims and Survivors Service is the delivery body named in the ten-year Strategy for Victims and Survivors published by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in 2009. It is responsible for administering funding and support to victims and survivors on behalf of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. "Victims and Survivors" has the meaning ascribed by the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Act 2008.

Formation and Status

Under the direction of The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister the Victims and Survivors Service was established, and consequently the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was incorporated on 27 March 2012 as a private company limited by guarantee.

The current location of the Victims and Survivors Service in Millennium House was initiated by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister due to an existing lease on the building.

VSS organisational structure

At 31 March 2014, the Senior Management Team members were as follows:

Table 1: VSS Senior Management Team

Name	Grade	Post Title	Date Appointed
Anne Dorbie	G6	Chief Executive and Accounting Officer	19 November 2012
Margaret Bateson	G7	Head of Corporate Services	25 February 2013
Katrina Hinfey	G7	Head of Client Services	04 December 2013

Anne Dorbie resigned from the position of Chief Executive on 18 July 2014.

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Margaret Bateson was appointed Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer on 07 August 2014.

The Senior Management Team meets on a monthly basis to review management information for each month end and prepare for reporting to the VSS Board.

At 31 March 2014, the Victims and Survivors Service had 29 employees in post (27.79 Full Time Equivalent). However, due to peaks in activity during the year and the use of agency staff, it should be noted that the average staff numbers were 36 during this period as outlined in Note 3.

The organisation structure at [Appendix 1](#) shows the key teams within the Victims and Survivors Service, i.e. Programmes and Client Services, and their respective functions.

Strategic Priorities

The 2009 Strategy for Victims and Survivors emphasises the strategic focus of the Victims and Survivors Service on the following three priorities:

1. Delivering a needs-based approach to allocating resources and defining services;
2. Ensuring the highest standard of service provision for those in need; and
3. Measuring outcomes associated with the allocation of resources and services.

Aims and Objectives of the Victims and Survivors Service

The aims and objectives of the Victims and Survivors Service make clear the approach that will be adopted in relation to delivering services and support to victims and survivors. This approach focuses on the importance of identifying and responding to the needs of victims and survivors at both individual and group level, with an efficient, coordinated and monitored provision of services.

The Victims and Survivors Service seeks to accomplish the following aims:

1. Achieve better co-ordination of funding.
2. Establish clearer links between support provided and actual needs.
3. Make more efficient use of resources.
4. Achieve sustainability.
5. Make use of and improve upon good practice in the victim/survivor sector.
6. Obtain better information on outputs.
7. Collate information on individual needs.
8. Achieve better evaluation of service provided.

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In pursuing these aims, the key objectives of the Victims and Survivors Service are to ensure that victims and survivors should have:

1. Access to high quality services;
2. Support relevant to their needs;
3. Services delivered in appropriate locations; and
4. A commitment to the long term if required.

Stakeholders and Key Relationships

Partnership-Level Stakeholders

The Victims and Survivors Service is supported in its efforts to deliver on its aims and objectives by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Commission for Victims and Survivors, and the Victims and Survivors Forum. The 2009-19 Strategy for Victims and Survivors clarified the relationship between these four key bodies as follows:

Government is responsible for setting policy for victims and survivors, and is ultimately accountable for resourcing the victim/survivor sector.

The Commission for Victims and Survivors is responsible for the strategic assessment of need and for the oversight of the Forum. On the basis of these functions, it is responsible for ensuring that the correct structures are in place to meet assessed need, and for advising Government on victims' and survivors' issues.

The Victims and Survivors Forum acts as an advisory body to the Commission, focusing on three areas of work: the development of appropriate services to meet needs; dealing with the 'past'; and building for the future.

The Victims and Survivors Service is the delivery vehicle within this arrangement, responsible for providing support to individuals and groups by commissioning appropriate services and distributing funding in response to assessed and agreed need.

Commission for Victims and Survivors: Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service (February 2014)

In December 2013, the Commission for Victims and Survivors appointed independent consultants to carry out a review of the Victims and Survivors Service. The terms of reference of the review included four focus areas:

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

- Governance, Strategy and Policy
- Interactions with clients
- Interactions with funded organisations
- Management of People, Resources and Information

The report was finalised in February 2014 and made the following key recommendations:

- Implement a change management process to ensure an effective transition from an administrative model of delivery to a service model of delivery;
- Develop a gateway approach to ensure access to appropriate goods and services without an in-depth psychological assessment;
- Review of the group funding application assessment process and operating rules to ensure proportionality and access to support in all geographical areas;
- Strengthen the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service to include appointment of an accountant to the Board, proper induction, governance training and mentoring;
- Review by the newly constituted Board of the strategic direction, vision and corporate objectives of the Victims and Survivors Service;
- Ensure Monitoring and Evaluation tools are reasonable, proportionate and record useful and important data to assist development of future services.

The Board and Senior Management Team of the Victims and Survivors Service are committed to implementing all recommendations on a timely basis throughout 2014-15. Current progress is outlined in [Appendix 2](#).

As a result of this review, significant improvements were made in communication and sharing of information between key stakeholders and partner organisations. The Victims and Survivors Service has participated in the following meetings and working groups to improve relationships and deliver better services for victims and survivors:

The Programme Board

The Programme Board was established in October 2013 to facilitate close co-operation and communication between the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Commission for Victims and Survivors, and the Victims and Survivors Service in relation to improving the work of the Victims and Survivors Service and ensuring implementation of any recommendations made within the Commission's review. The Programme Board met initially on a fortnightly basis, then on a monthly basis, before being stood down in April 2014. While the Chief Executive the Victims and Survivors Service attended initial meetings of the Programme Board, the organisation was later represented by the Chair of the Board only.

Table 2: Programme Board Members

Name	Organisation	Position
Denis McMahon	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Director of Equality and Strategy
Dara O'Hagan	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Special Advisor to Ministers
Emma Little	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Special Advisor to Ministers
Kathryn Stone	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Commissioner
Ricky Irwin	Good Relations and Social Investment Division, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Director
Peter Gay	Board of the Victims and Survivors Service	Chair

The Project Board

The Project Board was put in place shortly after the establishment of the Programme Board, to facilitate close co-operation and communication between the Department of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Commission for Victims and Survivors, and the Victims and Survivors Service in relation to monitoring improvements in the Victims and Survivors Service.

Table 3: Project Board Members

Name	Organisation	Position
Anne Dorbie	Victims and Survivors Service	Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
VSS Board Member	Victims and Survivors Service	Board Member
Ricky Irwin	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Director
John Beggs	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Secretary to the Commissioner
Officials	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	N/A
Officers	Commission for Victims and Survivors	N/A

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The Project Board met on a monthly basis before being stood down in April 2014. The Victims and Survivors Service Update Meeting was subsequently established in May 2014, to carry forward the work of the Programme and Project Boards. While the Victims and Survivors Service provides an update report on a monthly basis to the Department to facilitate this, the organisation is not represented at these meetings.

The Monthly Trilateral Meeting

The Monthly Trilateral Meeting was established in 2012-13 to facilitate ongoing communication and information-sharing between the Department of Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Commission for Victims and Survivors, and the Victims and Survivors Service. This meeting convenes on a monthly basis.

Table 4: Monthly Trilateral Meeting Members

Name	Organisation	Position
Anne Dorbie	Victims and Survivors Service	Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
Katrina Hinfey	Victims and Survivors Service	Head of Client Services
Margaret Bateson	Victims and Survivors Service	Head of Corporate Services & Programmes
Adrian McNamee	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Head of Policy
John Beggs	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Secretary to the Commissioner
Peter Mann	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Policy Officer
Linda Mervyn	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Deputy Principal, Equality and Strategy Directorate
Marie Matthews	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Deputy Principal, Equality and Strategy Directorate

The Forum Services Working Group

The Forum Services Working Group is a sub-group of the Victims and Survivors Forum. The Forum is convened by the Commission for Victims and Survivors to enable consultation and discussion with victims and survivors of the Conflict/Troubles. The Forum consists of 22 members, 19 of whom meet the definition of a victim as detailed in the Victims and Survivors Order (NI) 2006. The additional 3 Associate Members are individuals who bring particular knowledge, skills and experience to the Forum and assist with the facilitation of its working groups.

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The Services Working Group meets on a regular basis to discuss the provision of services and funding for victims and survivors, and the levels of satisfaction in relation to service delivery. The Victims and Survivors Service is represented at these meetings, for part of the meeting, to update the Working Group on current developments and to take the Working Group's feedback on an ongoing basis.

Table 5: Forum Services Working Group Members

Name	Organisation	Position
Forum Services Working Group	Victims Forum (Commission for Victims and Survivors)	N/A
Tina McCann	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Forum Secretary
Adrian McNamee	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Head of Policy
Anne Dorbie	Victims and Survivors Service	Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
Katrina Hinfey	Victims and Survivors Service	Head of Client Services
VSS Board Member	Victims and Survivors Service	Board Member

The Victims and Survivors Practitioners' Working Group

The Victims and Survivors Service convenes the Victims and Survivors Practitioners' Working Group. Its inaugural meeting took place in September 2013. This Working Group is a forum of practitioners from the statutory and community/voluntary sectors who work in the trauma field, mainly in the Belfast area. The group met 6 times throughout the year.

The aims of the Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group are:

1. To provide community/voluntary/statutory perspectives on working with victims and survivors of the Troubles;
2. To share/improve good practice to benefit service users and service provision improvements;
3. To support collaborative working;
4. To provide the Victims and Survivors Service with evidence of the needs of victims/survivors; and
5. To assist the Victims and Survivors Service develop an understanding of the barriers to participation.

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It is hoped that, informed by the experience of this Working Group to date, the Victims and Survivors Service will develop similar networks throughout the region in the next financial year.

External Stakeholders

In addition to the partnership-level stakeholders discussed above, the Victims and Survivors Service has an array of external stakeholders. Most important among these are victims and survivors themselves, and the organisations that have emerged over the past 15 years to deliver dedicated services and support for them, funded by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Developing relationships with these stakeholders has been and will continue to be a key priority for the Victims and Survivors Service. Over the year 2013-14, the Victims and Survivors Service engaged with a total of 3,056 individuals (through the Individual Needs Programme) and 65 groups (through the Victims Support Programme).

This is outlined further in the review of activities below.

Review of Activities

Principal Activities for the year ending 31 March 2014

The Victims and Survivors Service is responsible for administering funding and resources for victims and survivors. In November 2012 the organisation launched £20million of funding from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister that would be administered over the years 2013-15. This funding is divided into two main Programmes:

1. The Victims Support Programme (2013-15) delivers funding to organisations to enable them to deliver services and support to victims and survivors. This Programme is delivered in two streams: funding for Health and Wellbeing services, and funding for Social Support services.
2. The Individual Needs Programme (2013-14) delivers funding and funded services directly to individuals. This Programme is delivered through six Schemes: Education and Training, Chronic Pain, Disability Support, Care for Carers, Respite Breaks and Financial Assistance.

Victims Support Programme (2013-15)

Funding was delivered to organisations in 2013-14 under the Victims Support Programme in two ways:

1. Grants for above the value of £75,000
2. Small Grants of below the value of £75,000

The aims and objectives of this Programme are detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Aims and Objectives of the Health and Wellbeing and Social Support Programmes

Health and Wellbeing	
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contribute to the wellbeing of victims/survivors by providing treatment and/or care appropriate to the individual
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide packages of treatment or care designed for specific individuals • To provide high quality care for individuals through direct support and referrals to organisations that work to professional best practice standards • To monitor progress made by individuals
Social Support	
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support and maintain the resilience of victims and survivors • To assist victims and survivors to address the legacy of the past • To assist victims and survivors to build a shared and better future
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a two-year funding programme from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2015 (reviewed after year 1) for services and activities aimed at group activity and informal engagement with victims and survivors • To provide services and activities to support the needs of individual victims and survivors for which there is an evidence base and using best practice standards • To monitor and evaluate progress made by individuals

Applications to the Victims Support Programme in 2013-14

This year was the first full year in which the Victims and Survivors Service held responsibility for administering funding schemes to groups providing services to victims and survivors.

The Victims Support Programme opened for applications from November 2012 and began awarding funding in April 2013. Initially 43 groups across Northern Ireland were awarded funding. Funding was awarded for a period of 1 year for Health and Wellbeing services and for 2 years for Social Support services. The scheme remained open throughout 2013-14 for smaller applications with a value of up to £75,000. A further 27 groups were issued with Letters of Offer in relation to these applications in 2013-14.

Access to the Victims Support Programme was by paper application. This application process involved applicant organisations providing evidence as to:

1. How their proposed projects met the aims and objectives of the Victims Support Programme; and
2. How their proposed activities met an evidenced need among victims and survivors who would access the funded services.

The Independent Assessment Panel continued to review, score and approve or reject applications to the Programme in 2013-14.

Monitoring and Evaluation

During 2013-14, the Victims and Survivors Service also implemented a monitoring and evaluation framework to collate information on access to and the impact of funded services in terms of specific outcomes set down by the Department for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. In response to negative feedback from service delivery partners funded through the Victims Support Programme, this framework was suspended by the Programme Board in November 2013.

In its absence, the Victims and Survivors Service continued to collect basic registration details and qualitative information in relation to the implementation of the Victims Support Programme, to inform discussions around future policy between the Commission for Victims and Survivors and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Individual Needs Programme (2013-14)

This strand of activity involved undertaking the management of a programme of support that replaced the schemes previously administered by the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund. The Individual Needs Programme was launched by Ministers on 28 March 2013,

and staff transferred from the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund to the Victims and Survivors Service in April 2013.

New to this process was the introduction of a needs assessment as the specific mechanism for accessing support. Face to face engagement at the application stage was a new step that proved challenging to many clients, and unwelcome to some.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Individual Needs Programme are detailed in Table 7.

Table 7: Aims and Objectives of the Individual Needs Programme

Individual Needs Programme	
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In line with Health and Wellbeing and Social Support, as per the Victims Support Programme
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide services and packages of support in line with recommendations made in the Individual Needs Review(s)• To monitor progress made by individuals

The Individual Needs Programme was made available to victims and survivors who:

- a) Have lost a parent, spouse/partner, or child through bereavement.
- b) Have been physically or psychologically injured, and the injury has had a long term and current effect on their wellbeing or mobility.
- c) Are the registered primary carer for an individual who has been injured.
- d) Are the child or spouse/partner of someone who meets criteria (b).

The Individual Needs Programme was delivered through six Schemes, detailed in Table 8 below.

Table 8: The Six Schemes of the Individual Needs Programme (2013-14)

Scheme	Support available	Eligible individuals
1 Education & Training	Assistance with up to 80% of the cost of certain education and training courses for up to £500.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals living with injuries. • Carers, spouses/partners and children of individuals living with injuries. • Bereaved partners/spouses, bereaved parents, or children who have lost a parent.
2 Chronic Pain	Assistance towards the costs of services that offer relief from chronic pain conditions, or that help individuals to manage chronic pain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals living with injuries (both psychological and physical).
3 Care for Carers	Assistance towards the costs of services that are accessed by individuals who are the primary carer of a person injured as a result of a conflict-related incident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary carers of individuals living with injuries.
4 Disability Support	Assistance towards the costs of services, aids, and adaptations used by people living with a disability as a result of a conflict-related incident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals living with injuries.
5 Respite Breaks	Assistance towards costs associated with respite breaks. Award includes provision for <u>up to</u> £200 per adult, £150 per child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals living with injuries. • Carers of individuals living with injuries. • Bereaved partners/spouses, bereaved parents, or children who have lost a parent
6 Financial Assistance	Direct financial assistance to certain individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals living with injuries. • Carers of individuals living with injuries. • Bereaved partners/spouses, bereaved parents, or children who have lost a parent.

These Schemes combined to create the following four packages of care:

Support Package 1: Support for the Bereaved

Support Package 2: Support for the Injured

Support Package 3: Support for Carers

Support Package 4: Support for Children/Spouses of the Injured

Application Process

Access to the support available through Schemes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Individual Needs Programme was facilitated by the Individual Needs Review and Gateway to Services processes (see below).

Access to Scheme 6 was by application. In keeping with the Financial Assistance scheme administered by the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund, Scheme 6 was the only means-tested measure administered by the Victims and Survivors Service. The sole exception to the means-testing rule was in relation to applicants who could provide evidence that they were in receipt of DLA High Rate Care Component or the equivalent level of benefit. Eligible applicants were awarded £20 per week in four quarterly payments of £260.

The Individual Needs Review and the Gateway to Services

The Individual Needs Review was the agreed mechanism for identifying the needs of victims and survivors in order to improve the services delivered for them, as per the aims and principles of the 2009-19 Strategy for Victims and Survivors.

Process

The Individual Needs Review was a guided conversation structured to reflect the areas of need identified in the Comprehensive Needs Analysis published by the Commission for Victims and Survivors over the period 2010-12. The Individual Needs Review was developed prior to the establishment of the Victims and Survivors Service by the Individual Assessment Working Group, comprising representatives from the Commission for Victims and Survivors, the then Pilot Forum for Victims and Survivors, the Community Relations Council, the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund, the Trauma Advisory Panels, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and victim/survivor support groups and service providers. It was premised on a reflexive approach to identifying and collating information on the needs of the clients of the Victims and Survivors Service.

The Individual Needs Review was delivered by a Victims and Survivors Service Client Assessor, recruited for their expertise in health and social care, who would guide the Client through the conversation, discussing his/her needs under six key areas identified in the *Comprehensive Needs Assessment*. On the basis of these assessed and agreed needs, the Client Assessor would then make recommendations for the Client to be:

1. referred or signposted to services within groups funded under the Victims Support Programme,
2. referred to psychological therapy services that the Victims and Survivors Service could provide directly, or

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3. given access to services and support through the Individual Needs Programme.

The Client Journey that maps the Individual Needs Review process is outlined at [Appendix 3a](#).

This process was deferred in January 2014, in the context of a review of the Victims and Survivors Service that was commissioned by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (see pp.8-9 above). The Individual Needs Review was replaced in February 2014 by the Gateway to Services Process, a less complex assessment that could be facilitated by not only the Victims and Survivors Service, but also within all groups funded under the Victims Support Programme. The Client Journey that maps the Gateway to Services process is outlined at [Appendix 3b](#).

These changes were welcomed by both funded groups and individual victims and survivors. This was demonstrated by the large number of 1,231 Gateway processes being completed by organisations funded through the Victims Support Programme over the eight-week period of 3 February to 31 March 2014.

Table 9: Awards and Payments made under the Individual Needs Programme in 2013-14

Scheme	Number of Awards made	Number of Payments made	Value of Payments £'000
1 Education & Training	1,268	559	£226
2 Chronic Pain	884	805	£584
3 Care for Carers	242	223	£174
4 Disability Support	410	358	£433
5 Respite Breaks	2,725	2,320	£1,148
6 Financial Assistance	n/a	1,754	£1,828
TOTALS	5,529	6,019	£4,393

By 31 March 2014 the Victims and Survivors Service had engaged with 3,056 individuals through the Individual Needs Review and Gateway to Services Process, with a further 1,393 individuals either awaiting an appointment, or awaiting the outcome of the processing of their Gateway to Services Process.

Review of Results

Performance against Business Plan Objectives

The principal activities of the Victims and Survivors Services in this year have been outlined above. In addition, the objectives and 93 key performance indicators were agreed with the Officer of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The achievement of these targets was monitored over the year using the following Red / Amber / Green (RAG) status updates:

RAG status	Description
BLUE	Completed
GREEN	Achieved or on track for delivery
GREEN/AMBER	Broadly on track and there is <i>justifiable</i> confidence of getting close to targeted outcomes
AMBER	Progress less than planned. Significant doubt around the achievement of targeted outcomes
RED	Commitments not achieved or not expected to be achieved within the current PfG period

At 31 March 2014, summary progress against all 93 targets was as follows:

Blue	Green	Green/Amber	Amber	Red
84	4	0	5	0

Further details are outlined in [Appendix 4](#).

Key progress in 2013-14 per key objective includes:

Individual Needs Programme

Achievements

- The Victims and Survivors Service engaged directly with individual victims and survivors to discuss their needs and direct them to appropriate services and support. As at 31 March 2014, the Victims and Survivors Service had engaged with 3,056 individuals in this way.

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- The Victims and Survivors Service exceeded its target figures for the delivery of support to individuals under the Individual Needs Programme.
- As at 31 March 2014, 5,529 Award Letters had been issued in relation to support for Education and Training, Respite Breaks, Chronic Pain, Disability Support, and Care for Carers.
- A further 1,754 awards had been issued for Financial Assistance.

Challenges

- In late 2013, in keeping with instructions from the Programme Board, the Victims and Survivors Service ceased to provide psychological assessments and therapies directly to clients presenting with mental health issues. The Victims and Survivors Service established a relationship with the Health and Social Care Board, and agreed a protocol for referring the 70 clients on the waiting list at that time into statutory care.
- The change from the Individual Needs Review to the Gateway to Services Process in February 2014 highlighted the need for a consistent approach to checking eligibility both within the Victims and Survivors Service and within the organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme.

Victims Support Programme

Achievements

- Over the period April 2013 – March 2014, the Victims and Survivors Service delivered funding to a total of 65 groups, the majority of which will continue to receive funding in 2014-15.
- Due to additional funding available later in the year, the Victims and Survivors Service was pleased to open two additional small calls for training and development of staff within funded organisations and for small items of equipment to improve front line service delivery to victims and survivors.

Challenges

- Befriending services for funded groups within this period, was deferred due to resource pressures. However, this training was procured early in 2014/2015.
- The planned monthly training sessions for funded groups also had to be deferred to the next period. Resources for this activity were re-prioritised and allocated to the Individual Needs Programme.
- In November 2013, the Programme Board suspended the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for the Victims Support Programme. This action was taken in the context of the Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service commissioned by the Commission for Victims and

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Survivors. In the absence of this framework, the Victims and Survivors Service continue to monitor on a limited basis during the year which included a year end qualitative report from each funded organisation, financial expenditure reporting and monthly statistical returns.

Corporate Governance

Achievements

- The Victims and Survivors Service's first set of Annual report and Accounts for the period ending 31 March 2013 were certified by the Comptroller and Auditor General and submitted to Companies House.
- Due to budgetary pressures identified early in the year, the Victims and Survivors Service successfully bid for additional funding of £1.1m which was approved on 28th November 2013 for allocation.
- Appointment of Internal Audit service in January 2014.

Challenges

In February 2014 the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy carried out an Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service. The following are a number of the recommendations that were made:

- The Board should review its structures and processes to have a Schedule of Matters Reserved for the Board and a Scheme of Delegation that clearly sets out decisions that must be taken by the Board.
- The Victims and Survivors Service should explore finding an efficient and effective way to monitor outcomes from the funding provided to individuals and groups in partnership with all relevant stakeholders (including representatives of funded organisations) with the aim of finding a workable solution that is acceptable to both parties.
- The Board of the Victims and Survivors Service should oversee the future production of financial statements in line with statutory requirements.
- The Victims and Survivors Service Audit and Risk Assurance Committee should oversee the implementation of the 2013 internal audit recommendations.

Clinical Governance

- The Victims and Survivors Service has established a robust framework of protocols to support its Client Services function. This framework ensures the safety both of individual clients and the Victims and Survivors Service staff in the Client Services Team. It includes training, policies, and protocols in relation to

lone working, engaging with vulnerable adults, and clinical risk monitoring and management.

- From October 2013, the Victims and Survivors Service worked closely with the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Board to ensure that all clients with identified mental health needs would transition safely into statutory care. The relationship established between VSS and the Trust is ongoing, and will be the focus of continued engagement in 2014-15 to develop and maintain appropriate care pathways for vulnerable victims and survivors.
- At present, clients are supported to engage with their General Practitioner. Where feasible and if acceptable to the client, immediate support can be provided through organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme.
- Significant work has commenced in building a comprehensive understanding of the current service provision and skills that exist within organisations funded through the Victims Support Programme. Further work and investment is required to complete gap analysis processes that will ensure adequate and consistent levels of service standards and clinical governance.

Complaints Handling

The Victims and Survivors Service has a complaints procedure in place to ensure that individual clients and funded organisations can express any dissatisfaction that may arise, and make improvements and changes to services based on such feedback.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure has been drafted in consultation with the Commission for Victims and Survivors, and is available in a user-friendly leaflet format as well as on the Victims and Survivors Service website.

The vast majority of interactions with funded groups and direct engagement with individuals over the period 2013-14 were positive. However, a total of 63 formal complaints were recorded over the course of the year. An overview of the complaints recorded shows that key issues identified included:

- The timescales involved in accessing awards and payments;
- Insufficient information or clarity regarding services/support available;
- Means testing of the Individual Needs Programme Schemes (Scheme 6 – Financial Assistance) and therefore cannot be availed of as a gesture of acknowledgement of bereavement or injury; and
- Frustration that Scheme 6 (Financial Assistance) was closed for applications on 30 June 2013 as a result of reaching its budget allocation.

The Victims and Survivors Service takes all complaints and feedback very seriously. Each of the recorded complaints was resolved in conversation with the complainants concerned, with the relevant teams acting quickly to identify the specific issue, rectify it,

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

communicate with the complainant, and strive to improve processes to ensure that the likelihood of a recurrence was minimised.

The exception to this was the closure of Scheme 6. However, the Victims and Survivors Service was not able to allocate any additional funding to this Scheme, and so was not in a position to re-open it for applications within the year.

Sustainability Report

The Victims and Survivors Service is committed to the Executive's Sustainable Development Strategy. Policies and practices have been introduced within the Victims and Survivors Service to encourage efficiency in the use of resources.

These include:

- the 100% use of recycled paper;
- the introduction of multifunction printing/ copying/ scanning devices which are set to duplex printing by default;
- office accommodation located within Belfast City Centre;
- the use of 'hot-desking' in the Client Services function meaning despite increasing its headcount during the past year, the organisation has not increased the size of its office.

The Victims and Survivors Service has also, in order to reduce its carbon footprint, pursued a policy of enabling staff to work with flexibility in their start and finish times allowing staff to travel to and from work at non-peak traffic times.

The Victims and Survivors Service is aware of its responsibility to progress its work associated with sustainable development targets within the Implementation Plan emanating from the first Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy.

As such, the Victims and Survivors Service will set a number of sustainability targets within the 2014-15 financial year, and report on the progress and success of each of these targets.



Oliver Wilkinson
Interim Chairman



Margaret Bateson
**Interim Chief Executive
and Accounting Officer**

Date: 17th December 2014

Directors Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

Future Developments

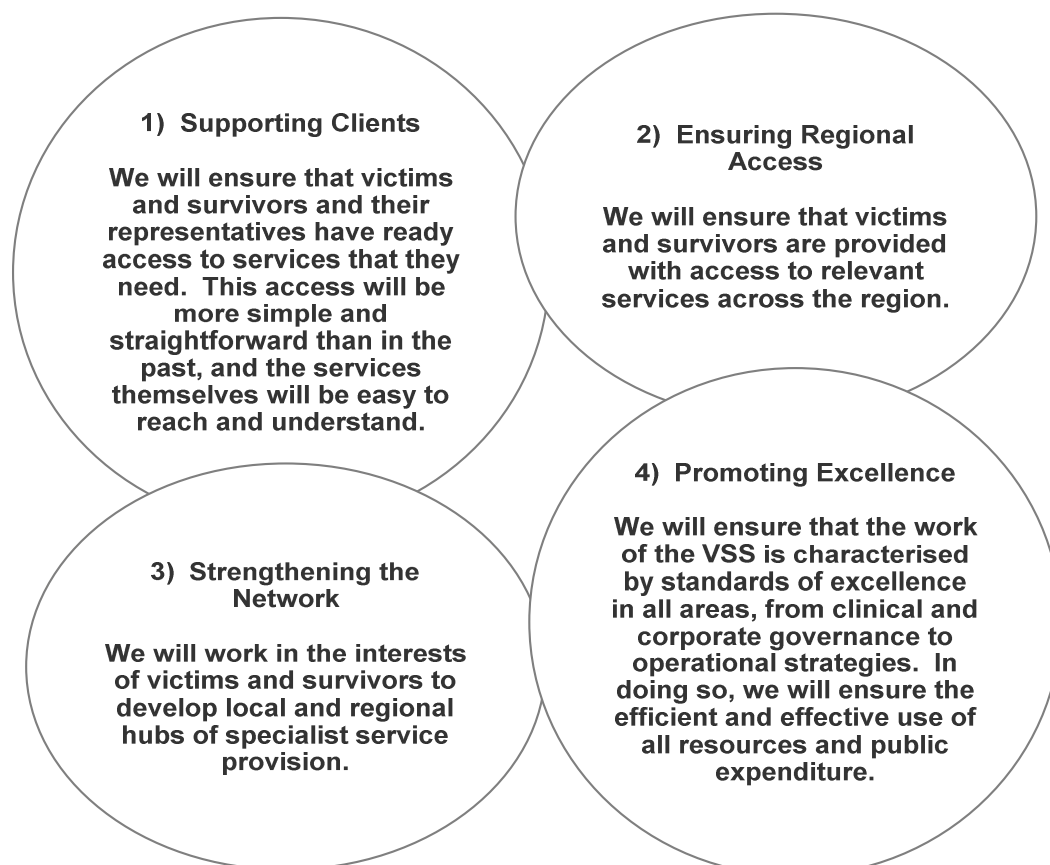
The Victims and Survivors Service submitted a Corporate and Business Plan for 2014-17 to the Department of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in September 2014, which is currently awaiting ministerial approval.

This Plan outlines the following four strategic objectives for the years ahead, namely:

1. Supporting Clients
2. Ensuring Regional Access
3. Strengthening the Network
4. Promoting Excellence

In developing these priorities the Victims and Survivors Service has listened closely to our stakeholders, who have emphasised the need for a client-centred service that is responsive to need, easy to understand and access, and that enables the development of networks of support. These strategic objectives are presented in Diagram 1 below, followed by an outline of key actions that will enable us achieve these goals.

Diagram 1: Strategic Objectives 2014-17



Strategic Objective 1: Supporting Clients

We will ensure that victims and survivors and their representatives have ready access to services that they need. This access will be more simple and straightforward than in the past, and the services themselves will be easy to reach and understand. The underlying goal here will be to deliver a more client-centred service.

In order to deliver a more client-centred service, we will:

- provide streamlined access to the Individual Needs Programme, by reducing paperwork and monitoring payment turnaround times.
- procure a bespoke Management Information System that will enable staff to swiftly and efficiently assist individual clients with full understanding of their particular needs.
- establish clear pathways for signposting and referral into statutory, voluntary and services funded by the Victims and Survivors Service.
- communicate clearly with our stakeholders to ensure that they understand this signposting and referral process.
- develop protocols that enable us to support and follow the client's journey through that referral process, establishing the Victims and Survivors Service as a safe pair of hands for victims and survivors as they negotiate services and day-to-day activities.
- conduct a Client Satisfaction Review towards the end of the year, to invite feedback that will inform our work and help us to improve our service delivery.

Strategic Objective 2: Ensuring Regional Access

We will ensure that victims and survivors are provided with access to relevant services across the region.

We will:

- support and promote the delivery of Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services delivered by organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme.
- review this service provision on an ongoing basis.
- monitor the geographical spread of relevant services.
- identify areas with limited access to support.
- conduct a gap analysis to identify services that should be developed or extended, and work with groups to enable this.
- review and improve the Victims and Survivors Service website.
- engage proactively with stakeholders to increase understanding of our role, the needs of our clients, and the work of our funded organisations.

Strategic Objective 3: Strengthening the Network

We will work in the interests of victims and survivors to develop local and regional hubs of specialist service provision.

We will:

- support the observation and development of Best Practice standards in all relevant services.
- identify a role within the Victims and Survivors Service to begin scoping the standards development and quality assurance routines of funded groups and other partner organisations/stakeholders.
- map development and training plans for all funded organisations.
- roll out the pilot Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group on a permanent, regional basis.
- build upon existing relationships with statutory mental health service providers.
- agree and document referral procedures between funded organisations and the statutory health and mental health services.

Strategic Objective 4: Promoting Excellence

We will ensure the work of the Victims and Survivors Service is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies. In doing so, we will ensure the efficient and effective use of all resources and public expenditure.

We will:

- develop Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks for all services in consultation with organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme.
- reduce the bureaucracy associated with the Victims Support Programme by updating the Programme Manual in light of experience and feedback to date.
- reduce the bureaucracy associated with the Individual Needs Programme while adhering to public accountability rules.
- conduct regular corporate governance, monitoring and evaluation, and other relevant training with all funded organisations.
- strengthen the Victims and Survivors Service's corporate governance through monthly Board meetings, with published minutes on the VSS website.
- finalise the Victims and Survivors Service workplan for 2014/2015, and review the staffing capacity and structure of the organisation to ensure the feasibility of this plan.
- conduct Corporate Planning Days on a quarterly basis to continually review progress and refresh the vision and mission of the organisation.

Directors Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

- develop a programme of staff training and supervision to ensure that all staff are resourced to deliver a service of excellence to victims and survivors.
- observe and adhere to the objectives of the Northern Ireland Executive's Asset Management Strategy, by ensuring effective management of our property assets through involvement in the preparation and monitoring of the Departmental Asset Management Plan.

Share Capital

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital.

Fixed Assets

Details of the movement of fixed assets have been summarised in Note 6 (page 80) to the accounts. The company does not believe that there is any material difference between the market and book value of its fixed assets as at 31 March 2014.

Employee Policy

The Victims and Survivors Service is committed to the development of its staff and to policies that enable them to contribute to the performance and long-term effectiveness of the organisation.

In particular the company:

- Follows the Northern Ireland Civil Service policy that all eligible persons have equal opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their ability, qualification and aptitude for work;
- Gives equality of opportunity when considering applications from disabled persons, in compliance with all existing legislation in regard to disabled employees;
- Recognises the benefit of keeping employees informed of the progress of the business and of involving them in the company's performance through regular Staff Planning days and briefings; and
- Regularly provides employees, through meetings and notices, with information regarding the external factors affecting the performance of the company and other matters of concern to them.

Absence Data

Table 10 below shows the sick absence results for the Victims and Survivors Service for the year ended 31 March 2014.

Table 10: Victims and Survivors Service Employee Sick Absence 2013-14

	Working days lost 2013/2014	Average days lost per WTE member of staff
Including long-term absence	235	8.24*
Excluding long-term absence	140	4.83*

*based on an average WTE of 26 permanent employees over the full year.

This compares to no long term absences in 2012-13, an average of 11 working days lost during that period and an average of 0.21 days per member of staff.

	Working days lost 2012/2013	Average days lost per WTE member of staff
Including long-term absence	11	0.21**
Excluding long-term absence	-	-

** based on an average of 8 permanent employees over the full year

Pensions

The Victims and Survivors Service participates in a pension scheme administered by Civil Service Pensions (Northern Ireland) for all permanent and fixed term staff. Further details are set out in the Remuneration Report on page 36.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The Victims and Survivors Service is required to report on personal data related incidents and accordingly has a control system to meet these responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The control system has been established to ensure the appropriate handling of personal data and information used for operational and reporting purposes through the development of appropriate strategy and policy.

Directors Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

There were no instances of personal data loss during the period under review.

In 2013-14 the Victims and Survivors Service received 5 Freedom of Information requests. These are detailed in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Freedom of Information Requests

Ref. No.	Subject	Response
1314_01	Applicant seeking all documentation relating to a VSS investigation into West Tyrone Voice.	No release
1314_02	Applicant seeking information relation to: (1) The names of all the organisations that applied to the Victim Service grant scheme for applications over £50k under Health and Well Being and Social Support, deadline 17th December 2012, including: the actual amount of financial support the organization originally applied for, the award amount offered by the Service and their outcome in relation to assessment for stage 1 corporate governance and stage 2 activities and services; the VSS support officer assigned to those particular groups; and the independent assessment panels' names and qualifications. (2) Scoring breakdown in relation to stage 1 and stage 2 of the application process in relation to the Group's application, including how these scores were devised and minutes of any meetings regarding the Group. (3) The terms of reference for the independent panel set up to conduct the corporate governance audit, including the tender procedure for these appointments, the successful applicants and their qualifications.	Part release
1314_03	Applicant seeking information and justification in relation to (1) Security questions employed by VSS prior to disclosing client information, and (2) Decision making tools and processes regarding the Individual Needs Review and awards made under the Individual Needs Programme.	Part release
1314_04	Applicant seeking the following information: the total running costs incurred by the VSS in terms of staffing, administration and overhead costs per year in comparison with the Community Relations Council, who previously administered the victims and survivors programme.	Part release
1314_05	Applicant seeking details of the amount of funding awarded by VSS over past 5 years to HURT victims' support group, based at Windsor Avenue, Lurgan.	Full release

Payments to Suppliers

The Victims and Survivors Service is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the British Standard for Achieving Good Payment Performance in Commercial Transactions (BS 7890), and with the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 as amended. The Victims and Survivors Service follows Dear Accounting Officer (Department of Finance and Personnel) (DAO) 12/08 *Supporting Businesses prompt payment of Invoices* which introduced a prompt payment of ten days, with effect from December 2008.

Table 12 below shows the average number of days taken to pay invoices in each month over the whole period 2013-14.

Table 12: Payments

Month	Percentage of invoices paid within 10 days	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	Average Days taken to pay invoices per month
Apr-2013	33%	90%	23
May-2013	36%	94%	13
Jun-2013	44%	95%	18
Jul-2013	14%	78%	25
Aug-2013	24%	76%	19
Sep-2013	42%	91%	15
Oct-2013	19%	92%	17
Nov-2013	32%	99%	13
Dec-2013	22%	100%	15
Jan-2014	62%	100%	10
Feb-2014	75%	99%	9
Mar-2014	30%	100%	11

Overall for 2013-14, 34% of invoices were paid within 10 days, 91% within 30 days and 16 days on average taken to pay invoices. However, by Quarter 4 2014, 100% of invoices were consistently paid within 30 days.

Financial Position and Resources

The Victims and Survivors Service is funded by its sponsor Department, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. This is financed by resources voted annually by the Assembly. It is therefore not exposed to significant liquidity risks. In addition, the Victims and Survivors Service does not access funds from commercial sources and so is not exposed to significant interest rate risks.

The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has indicated that it intends to continue to fund the organisation for the foreseeable future and has provided indicative budgets to the end of the budget year 2014-15. The organisation has the staff resources required to achieve its current business objectives and has a proposed staffing structure with the Department for approval for future business objectives.

In the financial year 2013-14, the Victims and Survivors Service was allocated a budget of £11.3m at the start of the year.

This was insufficient to cover operating costs as outlined in the original business case for the establishment of the Victims and Survivors Service and emerging pressures on the Individual Needs Programme due to higher than anticipated individuals coming forward and with more complex needs than expected.

In October monitoring, the Victims and Survivors Service bid for an additional £1.1m in addition to Departmental under spend of £0.4m being allocated in March 2014. In total, the budget for the Victims and Survivors Service was £12.8m.

In the financial year 2013-14, the Victims and Survivors Service spent 100% of its budget of £12.8m.

Unfortunately the outturn of the October monitoring round was not known until 28 November 2014 and due to these delays, a potential under spend at that time was identified.

The VSS therefore undertook 2 innovative actions in December 2013:

1. A call for training for staff in the organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme; and
2. A call for small capital items for these organisations.

Neither of these activities could be funded at the start of the programming period due to budget pressures. These actions enabled full utilisation of the budget by the year end with a small deficit for the year of £1,223.

Directors Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

The financial results for the period as set out on page 65 indicate that the company had grant in aid income of £12,812,000. This is in addition to £297 other operating income.

The Statement of Financial Position on page 66 shows the company had net assets of £204,818 as at 31 March 2014, and cash at bank of £228,594.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

United Kingdom company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors confirm that they have received assurance that the financial statements have been prepared in line with the requirements above.

The directors confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditor is unaware, and the directors have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Accounting Officer for the Department of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has designated the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer for the Victims and Survivors Service. Her relevant responsibilities as Accounting Officer, including her responsibility for the propriety and regularity of public finances and for the keeping of proper records, are set out in the Accounting Officer Memorandum, in compliance with Chapter 3 of Managing Public Money NI, and Annex 1 FReM 13/14.

Management Board

The permanent head of VSS is the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. This position was carried out during 2013-2014 by Anne Dorbie (appointed November 2012 and resigned July 2014).

The composition of the management board is as follows:

- Katrina Hinfey, Head of Client Services (Appointed: December 2013, resigned November 2014)
- Margaret Bateson, Head of Programmes and Corporate Services (Appointed: February 2013).

In August 2014, Margaret Bateson was appointed Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

Related Parties

Details of the Victims and Survivors Service's related parties are set out in Note 21 to the financial statements and in the Remuneration Report on page 36.

Register of Interests

The Chairman, the Board, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and Senior Management Team are required to register all interests, direct or indirect, which members of the public might reasonably think could influence their judgment.

The register of interests is available for public inspection by contacting the Victims and Survivors Service, 1st Floor, Millennium House, 25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AQ.

Corporate Governance

The company's Corporate Governance framework is set out in the Annual Governance Statement on page 43.

Charitable Donations

The Victims and Survivors Service made no charitable donations during the period.

Going Concern

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis as it is assumed that the parent Department, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister will continue to fund the organisation's activities. The Victims and Survivors Service's 3 year corporate plan 2014-2017 has been re-submitted to the Department in September 2014 and is currently awaiting ministerial approval.

Statement of Disclosure of Information to the Auditors

The Accounting Officer and Directors confirm that, for all Directors in office at the date of this report:

- So far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware. For this purpose, "relevant audit information" comprises the information needed by the company's auditors in connection with preparing their report; and
- Each Director has taken all the steps (such as making enquiries of other directors and the auditors and any other steps required by the directors' duty to exercise due care, skill and diligence) that he ought to have taken in his duty as a director in order to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The Comptroller and Auditor General have the statutory responsibility for the audit of Victims and Survivors Service Ltd under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. There were no payments made to the Northern Ireland Audit Office in the period in respect of non audit work.



Oliver Wilkinson
Interim Chairman



Margaret Bateson
**Interim Chief Executive
and Accounting Officer**

Date: 17th December 2014

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

Remuneration Policy

Remuneration of all staff members, including the Chief Executive (Accounting Officer) and Senior Staff are set out in their contracts of employment and is subject to review under Northern Ireland Civil Service pay remit guidelines. Such a review requires the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel. The Victims and Survivors Service received approval of its 2013-14 pay remit submission in November 2013.

Service Contracts

VSS appointments are made in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, which requires appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition but also includes the circumstances when appointments may otherwise be made. Further information can be found in the Victims and Survivors Service Recruitment and Selection Policy. Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

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

Salary and Pension Entitlements

The following sections provide details of remuneration and pension interests of the Directors and the most senior manager in the Victims and Survivors Service.

Remuneration (including salary) and Pension Entitlements (Audited information)

The following directors and senior staff received emoluments directly from the Victims and Survivors Service Limited during the period:

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

Officials	2013-14					2012-13				
	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (to nearest £1000)	Total £'000	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to the nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (to nearest £1000)	Total £'000
Mrs Anne Dorbie, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer	60-65	-	-	38,000	95-100	55-60	-	-	23,000	80-85
Mr Peter Gay, Board Chair	0-5	-	-		0-5	-	-	-		-
Mrs Bertha McDougal, Board Member	0-5	-	-		0-5	-	-	-		-
Mr Oliver Wilkinson, Board Member	0-5	-	-		0-5	-	-	-		-
Mr Richard Solomon, Board Member	0-5	-	-		0-5	-	-	-		-
Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Remuneration					60-65					55-60
Median Total Remuneration					26,431					27,475
Ratio					2.3					2.2

Note:

The following Civil Servants were members of the Victims and Survivors Service Board during 2013-14. They were not remunerated:

- Fergus Devitt – Chairman appointed 27 March 2012 resigned 24 December 2013.
- Marie Mathews – Director appointed 27 March 2012 resigned 24 December 2013.
- Sinead McCartan – Director appointed 30 September 2013 resigned 28 October 2013.
- Janine Fullerton – Director appointed 30 September 2013 resigned 28 October 2013.
- Brenda Burke – Director appointed 30 September 2013 resigned 28 October 2013.

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; recruitment and retention allowances; and any other relevant allowances to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any gratia payments.

Benefits in Kind

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

No Benefits in Kind were paid during the period.

Bonuses

Bonuses are not payable to Victims and Survivors Service directors or employees. There were no ex-gratia payments made to directors or employees.

Pension Benefits (Audited information)

	Accrued Pension at pension age as at 31/03/14 & related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension & related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31/03/14 £'000	CETV at 31/03/13 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account Nearest £100
A. Dorbie Chief Executive and Accounting Officer	20-25 Plus lump sum of 65-70	0-2.5 Plus lump sum of 5-7.5	377	327	28	-

VSS Pension Arrangements

Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP). Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' defined benefit arrangements (classic, premium, and classic plus). These arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. From April 2011

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

pensions payable under classic, premium, and classic plus are increased annually in line with changes in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). Prior to 2011, pensions were increased in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index (RPI). New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining a good quality 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account). New entrants joining on or after 30 July 2007 are eligible for membership of the nuvos arrangement or they can opt for a partnership pension account. Nuvos is a 'Career Average Revalued Earnings' (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The current rate is 2.3%. CARE pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases in the CPI. For 2014, public service pensions will be increased by 2.7% for pensions which began before 8 April 2013. Pensions which began after 8 April 2013 will be increased proportionately.

Employee contributions are determined by the level of pensionable earnings. The employee contribution rates for the 2014/15 year are as follows:

Members of classic:

Annual pensionable earnings (full-time equivalent basis)	2014 contribution rate before tax relief
Up to £15,000	1.50%
£15,001-£21,000	3.00%
£21,001-£30,000	4.48%
£30,001-£50,000	5.27%
£50,001-£60,000	6.06%
Over £60,000	6.85%

Members of premium, nuvos and classic plus:

Annual pensionable earnings (full-time equivalent basis)	2014 contribution rate before tax relief
Up to £15,000	3.50%
£15,001-£21,000	5.00%
£21,001-£30,000	6.48%
£30,001-£50,000	7.27%
£50,001-£60,000	8.06%
Over £60,000	8.85%

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

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

plus is essentially a variation of premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic.

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 3% and 12.5% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.8% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium, and classic plus and 65 for members of nuvos. Further details about the CSP arrangements can be found at the website www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

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

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2014

or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Compensation for Loss of Office

The Chief Executive left on 18 July 2014 and the exit package is relevant to 2014-15.

Fees to Third Parties

There were no amounts paid, excluding remuneration and expenses, to third parties in respect of directors of the company in 2013-14.

The Board of Directors has received the following remuneration, reflected in the 2013-14 Financial Statements:

	Remuneration Rate (£)	Year end 31 March 2014 (£)	Year end 31 March 2013 (£)
P. Gay, Board Chair	5,600 p.a	1,867	-
B. McDougal, Board Member	125 per day	1,576	-
O. Wilkinson, Board Member	125 per day	1,480	-
R. Solomon, Board Member	125 per day	438	-
		5,361	-

Expenses reimbursed to/incurred in respect of non-executive directors were as follows:

	Year end 31 March 2014 (£)	Period end 31 March 2013 (£)
P. Gay, Board Chair	27	-
B. McDougal, Board Member	172	-
O. Wilkinson, Board Member	173	-
R. Solomon, Board Member	-	-
	372	-

No further remuneration or expenses were paid to non-executive directors in 2013-14.



Margaret Bateson
Interim Chief Executive
and Accounting Officer

Date: 17th December 2014

Statement of Accounting Officer's and Director's Responsibilities

Statement of Accounting Officer's and Director's Responsibilities

Under the Companies Act 2006, the Directors are required to prepare for each financial period, a statement of accounts detailing the resources acquired, held or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by the Service during the year. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the VSS and of its Net Comprehensive Expenditure, application of resources, changes in taxpayer's equity and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing those financial statements, the Accounting Officer and Directors are required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- Observe the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer and Directors are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Accounting Officer and Directors have a general responsibility for taking steps as are reasonably available to safeguard the assets of the company and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

OFMDFM has appointed the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer of the Victims and Survivors Service. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including the 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 Victims and Survivors Service assets are set out in the company's financial memorandum.

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

Introduction

The Victims and Survivors Service is a company limited by guarantee, owned by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and functioning as an Arm's Length Body. It is financed by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's Departmental Expenditure Limit. The Board of the Victims and Survivors Service reports directly to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

This statement is given in respect of the Victims and Survivors Service's accounts for 2013-14. The Governance Statement comprises two broad elements. First, the Statement describes the Victims and Survivors Service's governance framework; identifying responsibilities and explaining the functions of its constituent elements. Second, the Statement reports my assessment as Accounting Officer of the effectiveness of the framework during the reporting period. The report identifies any significant governance issues and concludes with a review of the Victims and Survivors Service's conformance with the Code of Conduct 2013.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The purpose of the Governance Statement is to report publicly on the extent to which the Victims and Survivors Service complies with the Code of Governance. The process of preparing the Governance Statement itself adds value to the effectiveness of the corporate governance and internal control framework.

Overview of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Victims and Survivors Service is directed and controlled.

The system of internal control is a significant part of this framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve the Victims and Survivors Service's aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The governance framework within which the Victims and Survivors Service operated for the period ended 31 March 2014 comprises:

- The Accounting Officer.
- The Board;
- The Audit and Risk Committee;
- The Internal Audit function;
- The External Audit function.

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

These structures, together with an overview of their responsibilities and performance in year, are set out in the relevant sections below.

The governance framework also includes a number of additional elements that contribute to the effective governance of the organisation. These comprise:

- The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (signed January 2013);
- Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Oversight Arrangements;
- Commission for Victims and Survivors Review (February 2014);
- The Corporate and Business Plans (agreed November 2012);
- The Performance Management Framework (signed November 2012);
- The Risk Management Framework (signed July 2013);
- Financial Policies and Procedures (signed July 2013);
- Whistle-blowing Arrangements (signed July 2013); and
- The Fraud Prevention Strategy and Response Plan (signed July 2013).

These elements, together with an assessment of their effectiveness in the period, are described in the relevant sections below.

Review of Effectiveness

The Accounting Officer

As Interim Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Victims and Survivors Service. I also have responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances allocated to the Victims and Survivors Service and for safeguarding public funds and assets, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in the Corporate Governance Code and Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

In my role as Accounting Officer, I function with the support of the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service (“the Board”). This includes highlighting to the Board specific business risks and, where appropriate, the measures that could be employed to manage these risks.

The Board

The Board is chaired by a non-executive Director. It supports the delivery of effective Corporate Governance in keeping with the Code of Good Practice (NI).

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

The Board takes an objective long-term view of the business of the organisation, leading its strategic planning process and assisting the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in setting and meeting its corporate aims and objectives.

Under the general guidance and direction of the Ministers of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the key aspects of the Board's role include:

- Setting the strategic direction for the organisation, including its vision, values and strategic objectives;
- Overseeing the implementation of its corporate and business plans, monitoring performance against objectives and supervising its budget;
- Leading and overseeing the process of change and encouraging innovation, to enhance the organisation's capability to deliver;
- Overseeing the strategic management of staff, finance, information and physical resources, including setting training and health and safety priorities;
- Establishing and overseeing the implementation of the corporate governance arrangements of the Victims and Survivors Service, including risk management;
- Overseeing and monitoring progress against all of its equality of opportunity and good relations obligations.

The Board met nine times in 2013-14. Table 13 details the attendance of Board members at the meetings.

Table 13: Board Meeting Attendance

Meeting Date	Fergus Devitt	Marie Matthews	Peter Gay	Bertha McDougall	Oliver Wilkinson	Richard Solomon
29 Apr 2013	✓	✓				
7 Jun 2013	✓	✓				
8 Aug 2013	✓	✓				
23 Sept 2013	✓	✓				
27 Jan 2014			✓	✓	✓	✓
5 Feb 2014			✓	✓	✓	✓
3 Mar 2014			✓	✓	✓	
14 Apr 2014			✓	✓	✓	✓
12 May 2014			✓	✓	✓	✓

In addition the Board considered the following standing agenda items:

- Minutes of Previous Meeting;
- Accounting Officer Update;

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

- Budget Report;
- Progress against work plan and risks in achieving stated objectives;
- Progress reports on Programmes, Client Services and Communications.

During the initial 4 meetings in 2013-14, the original Board Members were civil servants, one responsible for policy and the other for governance and sponsorship in the Office of the First and deputy First Minister. Although this is not in compliance with HM Treasury's *Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (2013)*, this has been recognised in this transitional period and has been managed by declarations of interest at Board meetings.

Permanent members to the Board were appointed in December 2013 and carried out a self-assessment in 2014 in addition to taking forward recommendations made by the Commission for Victims and Survivors as outlined on pp.8-9. The Board currently has a membership of three Directors. A quorum of three Directors is required for each Board meeting. Therefore if a Director cannot attend, a quorum is not attained and decisions are not ratified. In addition this is contrary to a Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Review recommending a minimum of six Board members. This will be addressed in 2014-15 through the recruitment and Ministerial appointment of additional Board members.

The Permanent Board met for the first time on 27 January 2014 and the members are as follows:

Table 14: Permanent Victims and Survivors Service Board Membership

Name	Position
Peter Gay	Chairman appointed 5 December 2013 Resigned 23 June 2014
Oliver Wilkinson	Director appointed 13 December 2013 Appointed as Interim Chair 30 June 2014
Bertha McDougall	Director appointed 4 December 2013
Richard Solomon	Director appointed 5 December 2013

The Board operates as a collegiate forum under the leadership of the Chair. It ensures that the appropriate strategic planning processes are in place and that there is effective operational management of their implementation. Day-to-day operational matters are my responsibility and that of senior staff.

Each Non-Executive Board Member participates in the high-level corporate decision-making process as a member of the Board, contributes to the operation of corporate governance arrangements within the organisation, and supports me in my roles of Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

As Chief Executive, I am responsible for organising the agenda for monthly Board meetings and ensuring the Chair and Board members are provided with timely information to support full discussion at each meeting.

The Board receives written reports from me on key areas: Programmes, Client Services, and Communications.

I provide reports on the status of delivery against business plan objectives; expenditure against plan; requests made under the Freedom of Information Act; press reporting of the Victims and Survivors Service; usage of the Victims and Survivors Service website; Assembly Questions relevant to the Victims and Survivors Service; and absence management.

The quality and timeliness of the information and reports has been acceptable to the Board.

The Board maintains a Register of Interests. This lists, for each Director, all commercial and other relevant interests. A similar register is maintained by all Victims and Survivors Service Staff. Directors and staff are required to report any significant changes as they occur.

Each Board and committee meeting begins with those present declaring any conflicts of interest that may arise from agenda items. In the event of a conflict of interest arising, the Director or committee member concerned is required to withdraw from any discussion of the relevant matter and to abstain from any associated vote.

Given the new VSS Board was established in December 2013, the Board has not yet reviewed its own effectiveness. This will be carried out in 2014-15.

The Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee and its Chair are appointed by the Board. The Chair is independent and is not a member of the Victims and Survivors Service Board.

The Audit and Risk Committee's terms of reference set out its purpose as being to support me as Accounting Officer in monitoring risk, control and governance systems (including financial reporting). Additionally the Committee will advise the Board and the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of audit arrangements (internal and external) and on the implications of assurances provided in respect of risk and control. The Audit Committee does not have executive powers.

Table 15 below lists the Committee members.

Table 15: Audit and Risk Committee Membership

Name	Position
Fergus Devitt	Chair, resigned 24 December 2013
Colm Doran	Committee Member – Chair
Mary Ann Smith	Committee Member, resigned 10 September 2014
Marie Matthews	Committee Member, resigned 24 December 2013
Peter Gay	Committee Member, resigned 23 June 2014
Oliver Wilkinson	Committee Member from 13 December 2013
Bertha McDougall	Committee Member from 13 December 2013
Richard Solomon	Committee Member from 13 December 2013

In addition to its members, the following officers normally attend the Committee:

- The Accounting Officer of the Victims and Survivors Service;
- Head of Corporate Services and Programmes of the Victims and Survivors Service;
- Representative(s) from the Northern Ireland Audit Office as observer(s);
- Observers from the Victims Unit in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister;
- Internal Audit (appointed January 2014 and in attendance from March 2014).

The Audit and Risk Committee met three times in 2013-14. Table 16 below shows dates of and attendance at each of these meetings.

Table 16: Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Dates and Attendance

	3 June 2013	21 October 2013	24 March 2014*
Fergus Devitt	✓ (Chair)	✓	N/A
Colm Doran	✓	✓ (Chair)	x
Mary Ann Smith	✓	✓	x
Marie Matthews	✓	✓	N/A
Peter Gay	N/A	N/A	✓
Oliver Wilkinson	N/A	N/A	✓
Bertha McDougall	N/A	N/A	✓
Richard Solomon	N/A	N/A	x

*First meeting of ARC following constitution of new Board.

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

Table 17 below outlines the key purpose of each meeting.

Table 17: Purpose of Audit and Risk Committee Meetings

Date of Meeting	Purpose
3 June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Plan Review.• Presentation of Victims and Survivors Service risk register, risk management, fraud and whistle-blowing policies.• Update on annual accounts/Report, Direct Award Contracts and Conflicts of interest.
21 October 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Plan Review.• Presentation of Victims and Survivors Service risk register, risk management, fraud and whistle-blowing policies.• Update on annual accounts/Report, Direct Award Contracts and Conflicts of interest VSS Procurement Register.
24 March 2014 <i>Note: this meeting relates to the newly-constituted Audit and Risk Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation Annual accounts for sign off/ draft report to those charged with Governance.• Agree Strategic internal audit plan note actions on irregularities.

In line with best practice set out in the Her Majesty's Treasury Audit Committee Handbook, the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee approves an agreed agenda of work for its meetings, which will include:

- The review of the corporate risk register;
- Scrutiny of the annual accounts;
- Consideration of internal and external audit strategy;
- Review of internal and external audit findings;
- Consideration of fraud;
- Consideration of any Directly Awarded Contracts; and
- The monitoring of residual audit recommendations.

Given the new Audit and Risk Committee was established in March 2014, the Audit and Risk Committee has not yet reviewed its own effectiveness. The Committee Chair will review the effectiveness of its members and report on this to the Chair of the Board by March 2015.

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Going forward, the Committee Chair will also report after each meeting to the Board on any significant issues that have arisen. The Committee Chair, on behalf of the Committee, will report in writing to the Accounting Officer and the Board on the findings and conclusions of the Committee by March 2015.

Risk Management Strategy

The Victims and Survivors Service Risk Management Strategy was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in March 2013 and adopted formally in the financial year 2013-14. This sets out the process whereby the Victims and Survivors Service methodically identifies, assesses and responds to the risks attaching to its activities. It assigns responsibility and accountability for risk management; defines the processes for risk review and reporting; describes a format for the organisation's corporate risk register; and explains the organisation's approach to training in risk management.

A risk register has been in operation on a monthly basis throughout 2013-14 and new risks identified and managed during the reporting period included:

- Political and Stakeholder user confidence in the Victims and Survivors Service providing an efficient, user-friendly gateway to accessible and quality services to meet the diverse range of client needs.
- Managing the transition to a more streamlined general needs assessment process (Gateway to Services) while ensuring continuity of service and quality of client experience.
- Managing the safe transition of services for the psychologically injured while ensuring a guided pathway through funded organisations and statutory care co-ordinated regional and local teams.
- Delay in the procurement process for an end to end online management information system and contingency system in the short term.
- Utilisation of 99.5% of budget allocation due to the late allocation of an additional £1.1m in December 2013.
- Insufficient staff resource and headcount to meet business plan targets in 2013-14 and in the future 2014-15.
- Low staff morale and impact on health and welling being of staff and productivity.

In 2013-14 there were no instances where the committee determined that risk(s) lay outside the organisation's risk appetite and were thus unacceptable. The Board will continue to keep this matter under review in 2014-15.

It should be further noted that no 'ministerial directions' have been issued to the Victims and Survivors Service and there have been no reported lapses of protective security.

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed all instances of suspected fraud and irregularities. Further details are outlined in the Fraud and Counter-Fraud Section on page 58. Standing agenda items include all Direct Award Contracts (DAC) and a procurement register.

Internal Audit

The primary role of Internal Audit is to provide the Accounting Officer and the Board with an independent and objective opinion on risk management, control and governance by measuring and evaluating their effectiveness in achieving the organisation's agreed objectives.

In 2012-13 the Department of Finance and Personnel Internal Audit conducted an audit assignment within the Victims and Survivors Service on behalf of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the final report issued in November 2013. Within the confines of the audit testing, an overall limited opinion on the internal control environment operating within the Victims and Survivors Service has been provided.

A follow up review took place in March 2014 by the Department of Finance and Personnel Internal Audit and determined all key recommendations had been implemented.

The Victims and Survivors Service appointed an independent Internal Audit Service, Capita Consulting in January 2014 and a strategic audit plan has been agreed for a three year period.

The following internal audit programme was carried out relating to 2013-14:

Table 18: Internal Audit 2013/2014

Date	Scope	Audit Rating	Status
July 2014	VSP – Verification	Satisfactory	Final Report
Sept 2014	Procurement	Satisfactory	Final Report
Sept 2014	Creditors Payments	Substantial	Final Report
Sept 2014	Payroll	Satisfactory	Final Report
Sept 2014	Budgetary Control	Satisfactory	Final Report
Oct 2014	Client Services – Individual Needs Programme	Limited	Final Report
Oct 2014	VSP – Applications, Assessments and Monitoring	Satisfactory	Final Report

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

The internal auditor's overall assurance rating for 2013-14 was satisfactory.

Of the seven areas audited in 2013-14, one was rated as substantial, five as satisfactory and one as limited, with this limited assurance in the Client Services - Individual Needs Programme.

A substantial assurance level denotes that there is a robust system of risk management, control and governance which should ensure that objectives are fully achieved.

A satisfactory assurance level denotes that there is some risk that objectives may not be fully achieved. Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and / or effectiveness of risk management, control and governance.

A limited assurance level denotes that there is considerable risk that the system will fail to meet its objectives. Prompt action is required to improve the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance.

32 recommendations were made across the seven areas, three were identified as priority 1, 17 were identified as priority 2, and 12 as priority 3.

Key recommendations from Internal Audit include:

Victims Support Programme

- Strengthening the monitoring of expenditure by requesting and documenting explanations from funded organisations on a quarterly basis when the full quarterly cash allocation is not drawn down;
- Ensuring quarterly monitoring and evaluation returns are provided by funded organisations on a timely basis and reasons for deadlines missed recorded;
- Board approval documented prior to issue of any letters of offer following assessment by the independent assessment panel.

Verification

- Consolidation and documentation of manuals, desk instructions and checklists into one manual;
- Verification of physical existence of capital expenditure to ensure it is being used for the designated purpose;
- Consideration of a more risk-based approach to verification and a move away from 100% vouching and verification to streamline existing processes;
- Verification visits strengthened to include the non-financial aspects of activity to include documentary evidence of the services and support carried out by the funded organisation;
- More awareness within funded organisations of procurement rules.

Corporate Finance Functions

- Updating of procurement manual to include PPE and variations to contract;
- Consideration of delegated budget management and decentralisation of accountability to budget holders.

Client Services - Individual Need Programme

- Comprehensive review of the operating manual to provide clear guidelines on obtaining value for money;
- Checks to ensure adherence to terms and conditions of award letters.

Significant progress has been made in relation to the limited assurance rating in the area of Client Services – Individual Needs Programme. This has included:

- Review of all operating processes and procedures and simplified application processes for individuals to access services and support;
- Documentation of all eligibility criteria prior to opening each scheme and publishing on the VSS website, communicating with the CVS, Department and VSP funded organisations;
- Integration of the Programmes team with the Client Services team in November 2014 and weekly monitoring of key performance indicators across each area;
- Planned consolidation of programmes and client services management information systems in Q4 2014-15.

External Audit

The Victims and Survivors Service is also subject to independent scrutiny from the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The Northern Ireland Audit Office is independent of Government and is tasked by the Assembly to hold the Northern Ireland Departments and their Agencies to account for their use of public money.

The Comptroller and Auditor General works closely with the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee which can require Accounting Officers and senior officials to account for their actions in relation to the management of public funds.

A representative from the Northern Ireland Audit Office attends as an observer at Victims and Survivors Service Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

During the audit for 2013-14, external audit identified a number of areas for improvement in relation to the verification function as a result of findings relating to ineligible expenditure across the Victims Support Programme and the Individual Needs Programme. An action plan has been put in place by VSS management in line with the internal audit recommendations on these areas.

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Oversight Arrangements

Within the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Victims and Survivors Unit is the sponsoring Division for the Victims and Survivors Service. The Victims and Survivors Unit, in consultation as necessary with the Accounting Officer of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, is the primary source of advice to Ministers on the discharge of their responsibilities in respect of the Victims and Survivors Service, and the primary point of contact for the Victims and Survivors Service in dealing with the Department.

In order to discharge its duties on behalf of the sponsor Department, the Victims and Survivors Unit administers the following oversight controls:

- Monthly Meetings between the Commission for Victims and Survivors, the Department and the Victims and Survivors Service (attended by the Chief Executive and senior Victims and Survivors Service staff); see Table 4 above.
- Accountability and Oversight Meetings (attended by the Chief Executive and senior Victims and Survivors Service staff); see Table 18 below.
- Quarterly Stewardship Statements; see Table 19 below.
- Management Statement and Financial Memorandum updated September 2014;
- Performance Monitoring against Business Plan and preparation of Corporate Plan submitted to the Department in June 2013;
- Financial Monitoring Reports (in a standard format since August 2012 and updated again in September 2013).

Accountability Meetings and Monthly Oversight Meetings

The Accounting Officer and senior staff attended seven Accountability Meetings during the year with the Accounting Officer of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister or his deputy and senior staff from the Department. The dates of each of these meetings are provided in Table 19 below:

Table 19: Accountability Meetings 2013/2014

Meeting	Date
1	18/04/13
2	28/06/13
3	15/10/13
4	21/11/13
5	15/01/14
6	26/02/14
7	27/03/14

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A review of the items discussed including the stewardship statement, performance management, financial monitoring and progress against business plan targets are outlined in detail below.

In addition, the Accounting Officer of the Victims and Survivors Service attended monthly Meetings with senior officials from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister at the Project Board and Trilateral meetings outlined in Tables 2, 3, and 4 above.

Senior Victims and Survivors Service staff and the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer have operated a 'no surprises' policy in respect of ensuring that officials in the Department are aware of all material events, transactions and other issues that could be considered contentious or attract public comment, whether positive or negative.

Stewardship Statements

The Quarterly Stewardship statement, prepared under the direction of and signed by the Chief Executive, provides information and assurance in the following areas:

- Business Planning;
- Business Cases (including Economic Appraisal and Post Project Evaluation);
- Consultancy;
- Forecasting and Monitoring of Expenditure;
- Procurement;
- Information Assurance;
- Business Continuity Plans;
- Staff (including attendance, gifts and hospitality);
- Third Party Organisations;
- Internal and External Audit Reports; and
- Other significant issues.

The Accounting Officer has submitted four Stewardship Statements to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister as requested by the Department, as shown in Table 20 below.

Table 20: Stewardship Statements

Effective Date	Duration
1 st April 2013 – 30 th June 2013	3 months
1 st July 2013 – 30 th September 2013	3 months
1 st October 2013 – 31 st December 2013	3 months
1 st January 2014 – 31 st March 2014	3 months

The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum is a key control document setting out the broad framework within which the Victims and Survivors Service will operate. This was drafted and in operation from November 2012 and formally adopted in January 2013. This document defines:

- The Victims and Survivors Service's overall aims, objectives and targets;
- The rules and guidelines relevant to the exercise of the Victims and Survivors Service's functions, duties and powers;
- The conditions under which any public funds are paid to the Victims and Survivors Service;
- How the organisation is to be held to account for its performance.

In March 2014, it was identified that the document needed to be updated in line with:

- Current procurement guidance;
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy recommendations from the review commissioned by the Commission for Victims and Survivors;
- Current month end management information and reporting systems.

These changes were approved by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in September 2014 and considered by the Victims and Survivors Service Board in November 2014.

Business Plan 2013-14 and Corporate Plan 2013-16

The Chief Executive and Accounting Officer has monitored the Victims and Survivors Service's performance against the targets set out in its 2013-14 business plan in [Appendix 4](#). This was agreed with the Department in June 2013 and subsequent reports have included status of internal work streams; delivery of business plan objectives; expenditure against plan; resource inputs by project; requests made under the Freedom of Information Act; Assembly Questions relevant to the Victims and Survivors Service; absence management; recruitment and communications.

Key achievements and emerging activities carried out in 2013-14 are further outlined under Performance against Objectives on pages 20-23.

The Board is satisfied as to the quality of data and information provided by the Accounting Officer and Chief Executive who gained assurance through reports provided by senior staff.

In addition, during the year, work was undertaken between the Victims and Survivors Service and the Department on updating the Corporate Plan for 2013-16 which sets out

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

the medium term objectives for the Victims and Survivors Service and describes the corporate strategy it will follow to achieve them. This update took into account recommendations from the Commission for Victims and Survivors review, Programme and Project Boards in addition to staff feedback from staff planning days. An updated Corporate Plan was submitted to the Department for ministerial approval in September 2014.

Financial Monitoring

During the year, the Victims and Survivors Service has provided the Department with a financial analysis of budget versus expenditure and cash on a month end basis, to identify any significant variances and take management action to address.

General Financial Management arrangements in addition to those outlined as part of the Departmental oversight are outlined in further detail below.

Financial Management

Responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated rests with the Accounting Officer. The systems of internal financial control provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or will be detected within a timely period. Internal financial control is based on a framework of management information, financial regulations and administrative procedures, which include the segregation of duties, management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability.

The implementation of the Victims and Survivors Service financial management process in 2013-14 included:

- The setting of annual Grant in Aid;
- Financial Procedures Manual signed off by the Accounting Officer in July 2013;
- Monitoring of actual income and expenditure against the annual budget;
- Setting and management of expenditure profiles;
- Monthly reporting of the Victims and Survivors Service's financial position to the Board;
- A clearly defined system of expenditure authority delegations;
- Clear processes for the authorisation of expenditure and the payment of invoices;
- Two in-year monitoring reviews reported to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

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The Victims and Survivors Service has established Financial Policies and Procedures that address areas of risk as well as operational efficiency and effectiveness. These documents act as a reference point detailing all Financial Policies and Procedures that have been approved by the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service.

The Victims and Survivors Service has developed, in consultation with its sponsor Department, a suite of other policies, processes and procedures that cover the full range of its activities. All staff are briefed on these policies during their induction and at regular staff meetings. Any needs identified are addressed through the Victims and Survivors Service's annual training and development plan.

Fraud and Counter-Fraud

The Victims and Survivors Service Policy and Procedures on Fraud sets out the responsibilities of staff with regard to fraud prevention, what staff should do if they suspect fraud, and the action that will be taken by management in such circumstances (the Victims and Survivors Service Fraud Response Plan). The Victims and Survivors Service operated under a draft policy since June 2012 until June 2013 when the Audit and Risk Committee signed off the finalised policy.

All Victims and Survivors Service staff received further fraud awareness training on 28 March 2014.

The Victims and Survivors Service has identified and investigated thirteen instances of suspected fraud in 2013-14. Ten of these cases have been resolved. Of these cases, no cases of proven fraud were determined. However, no payments were made on these by the VSS due to issues in relation to breaches of terms and conditions of award and insufficient supporting evidence and documentation. The investigation of the remaining three cases is ongoing.

In addition, two cases transferred from the Community Relations Council in 2012-13 are both still with the PSNI.

The VSS undertook a review of all suspected fraud cases to date September to December 2014 and has strengthened monitoring and reporting processes to include a monthly review and update of a compliance register by SMT and an updated Anti-Fraud policy and response plan approved by the Audit and Risk Committee in December 2014.

Whistle-blowing

The Victims and Survivors Service Whistle-blowing Policy provides staff with a procedure for reporting concerns about unlawful conduct, fraud, dangers to the public or the environment, or other malpractice. The aim of this policy is to reassure them that they can feel confident in exposing wrongdoing without any risk to themselves.

The Victims and Survivors Service operated under a draft policy until June 2013 when the Audit and Risk Committee signed off the finalised policy.

There was one instance of whistle-blowing within the Victims and Survivors Service in the year to 31 March 2014. This case was investigated and resolved.

Training

The 2013-14 Training Plan was finalised and approved by the Chief Executive Officer in May 2013. In this period, particular attention was paid to ensuring the Victims and Survivors Service was equipped to meet mandatory requirements, including health and safety and first aid training. With staff numbers increasing throughout the year, each newly recruited employee received induction training along with Freedom of Information and Data Protection training. A primary focus was the delivery of bespoke training to staff members in client-facing roles, this included managing difficult and distressed clients and personal resilience. All staff were required to familiarise themselves with key policies and procedures of the Victims and Survivors Service.

Table 21: Staff Training 2013/2014*

Training
Health & Safety
First Aid
Personal Resilience
Disability Awareness
Safeguarding Children
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
ASIST (Suicide Awareness)
Motivational Interviewing
Mental Health First Aid

* This table does not provide details of all of the training undergone as part of individual staff members' Personal and Professional Development plans.

Significant Governance Issues

Significant improvements were made in 2013-14 in relation to embedding documented processes and procedures, demonstrated in the progress made operationally in the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations.

A review by CIPFA on behalf of the Commission for Victims and Survivors and reported upon in January 2014, made recommendations in relation to a number of strategic governance issues, namely:

The new VSS Board should:

- revisit its purpose and future strategy, and update its Business and Corporate Plan accordingly;
- review its structures and processes to include a Schedule of Matters and Scheme of Delegation clearly setting out the decision making process;
- identify its key strategic risks, priorities and ensure clear plans are in place;
- oversee the future production of financial statements and implementation of internal audit recommendations;

VSS Management should:

- review the staffing structure and re-submit proposals to OFMDFM with a view to reducing temporary agency staff;
- consider a staff survey to capture the mood of VSS staff;
- review its funding requirements and seek to reduce bureaucracy and ensure the VSS does not stray into a management role for the organisations it funds.

These recommendations have been accepted by the VSS Board and significant progress has been made in their implementation to date, with a full implementation and monitoring plan outlined in [Appendix 2](#).

Other significant governance issues relating to the Client Services – Individual Needs Programme have been outlined in the section on Internal Audit above.

Conformance with Code of Conduct

The Victims and Survivors Service, like other public bodies, has a duty to conduct affairs in a responsible and transparent way, and to take into account the standards in public life set out by the Nolan Committee and HM Treasury's *Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (2013)*. Where appropriate, the Victims and Survivors Service has taken account of additional good practice documented in the 2013 edition of the Code.

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014

The Victims and Survivors Service is not a Central Government Department and cannot, therefore, comply with those parts of the code that are only applicable to such Departments. However, the corporate governance arrangements of the Victims and Survivors Service have been established in such a way as to conform broadly to these standards. In doing so, these arrangements reflect the Code's recommendation that for bodies such as the Victims and Survivors Service "the code should be applied with adjustments to suit their scale, responsibilities and accountability chains".

Throughout the year to 31 March 2014, the Victims and Survivors Service has complied with all relevant 2013 Code provisions with the following exceptions:

1. The acknowledged conflict of interest outlined on p.47 in relation to the composition of interim Board members and the actions taken by the Board to address this.
2. Policies and procedures operating were formalised during the year to 31 March 2014.

CERTIFICATION

Certification

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors and senior staff within the organisation who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

I also consider the comments made by the Northern Ireland Audit Office in its management letter and other reports.

I understand the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance.

The system of accountability on which I rely as Accounting Officer to form an opinion on the probity and use of public funds as detailed in *Managing Public Money NI* has continued to develop throughout 2013-14.

The Victims and Survivors Service has had a significant number of reviews this year. Any weaknesses identified internally by management, the Board, the Audit and Risk Committee, and Internal and External Audit have been considered with immediate action undertaken on priority findings and an implementation plan in place for longer term developments.

In addition, the more recent recommendations made by the Commission for Victims and Survivors have been accepted by the VSS Board and the senior management team and staff within the Service are fully committed to implementing these by March 2015.

However, areas to improve in terms of compliance with HM Treasury's *Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (2013)* were identified and work has been undertaken to ensure these issues are not in place at the year end March 2014.

I recognise that during 2014/2015 work has already been undertaken to continue embedding systems of control and accountability to ensure a sound system of internal governance going forward.



Margaret Bateson
Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
Victims and Survivors Service

17th December 2014

CERTIFICATE AND REPORT

Victims and Survivors Service Limited

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE MEMBERS OF THE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS SERVICE

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the year ended 31 March 2014 under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. These comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Changes in Taxpayer's Equity and the related notes. 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. I have also audited the information in the Remuneration Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

Respective responsibilities of Accounting Officer, directors and auditor

As explained more fully in the Accounting Officer's and Directors' Responsibilities Statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). These standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Opinion on regularity

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

CERTIFICATE AND REPORT

Opinion on financial statements

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 March 2014 and of its deficit, cash flows and changes in taxpayers' equity for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual; and
- the information given in the Strategic Report and Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.


Matters on which I report by exception

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

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

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.


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

18 December 2014

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2014

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £	Period ended 31-Mar-13 £
Income			
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department	5	12,812,000	2,976,590
Other Operating Income	5	297	591
		12,812,297	2,997,181
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	3	1,357,912	577,023
Programme Costs	4a	10,666,016	1,712,076
Operating Costs	4c	775,339	544,387
Depreciation	4c	14,253	1,885
		12,813,520	2,835,371
Net (Deficit) / Surplus for the year			
2014		(1,223)	141,810
Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure			
Non Operating Gain from Transfer of CRC Function	23	0	(22,294)
Non Operating Gain from Transfer of NICCY Assets	23	0	(41,937)
Non Operating Gain from Transfer of NIMF Assets	23	0	0
		(1,223)	206,041
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure			
		(1,223)	206,041
Amount Transferred to Reserves			
		(1,223)	206,041

On 7 April 2014, staff from the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund were transferred to the VSS with assets transferred on 31st October 2013. There was no gain or loss as a result of this. See Note 23.

Notes 1 to 30 on pages 70 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2014

	Note	As at 31-Mar-14 £	As at 31-Mar-13 £
Non-current assets:			
Property, Plant and Equipment	6	95,286	91,552
Intangible Assets	7	2,231	0
Total non-current assets		97,517	91,552
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	11	1,427,089	297,420
Cash and cash equivalents	12	228,594	129,353
Total current assets		1,655,683	426,773
Total assets		1,753,200	518,325
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	13	1,516,512	270,284
Non-current assets less net current liabilities		236,688	248,041
Non-current liabilities			
Provision for liabilities and charges	14	31,870	42,000
Total assets less liabilities		204,818	206,041
Taxpayers Equity			
General Reserve (Income and Expenditure)		204,818	206,041

Notes 1 to 30 on pages 70 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

In the view of the Victims and Survivors Service an exemption from the audit requirements of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 is available under section 482 of that Act, since the company meets the Department of Finance and Personnel's definition of a non-profit making company and is subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland which is performed under Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. The Victims and Survivors Service therefore claims this exemption.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

The Board and Accounting Officer acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and preparation of accounts.

The financial statements were reviewed by the Accounting Officer on 17th December 2014.



17th December 2014

Margaret Bateson
Interim Chief Executive and
Accounting Officer

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 17th December 2014 and were signed on its behalf by:



17th December 2014

Oliver Wilkinson
Interim Chairman

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOW

Statement of Cash Flow

For the period ended 31 March 2014

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £	Period ended 31-Mar-13 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
(Deficit) / Surplus for the period		(1,223)	206,041
(Increase) / Decrease in trade receivables and other current assets	11	(1,129,669)	(297,420)
Increase / (Decrease) in trade payables and other liabilities	13	1,246,228	270,284
Adjustment for Machinery of Government transfer of CRC function	23	0	(10,357)
Adjustment for NICCY Assets	23	0	(41,937)
Depreciation	4c	14,253	1,885
Increase / (Decrease) in provisions	14	(10,130)	42,000
Net cash outflow from operating activities		119,459	170,496
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	6	(17,518)	(41,143)
Purchase of intangible assets	7	(2,700)	0
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(20,218)	(41,143)
Cash flows from financing activities		0	0
Increase / (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		99,241	129,353
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		129,353	0
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		228,594	129,353

Notes 1 to 30 on pages 70 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAXPAYERS' EQUITY

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2014

	General Reserve £000	Total Reserves £000
Opening Balance 2012-13	0	0
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2012-13		
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year	206,041	206,041
Balance at 31 March 2013	206,041	206,041
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for 2013-14		
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year	(1,223)	(1,223)
Balance at 31 March 2014	204,818	204,818

Notes 1 to 30 on pages 70 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting and disclosure requirements of Companies Act 2006, the 2013-2014 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) and the Accounts Direction issued by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). Where FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the VSS are described below. These have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts. It should be further noted that FReM is not applied to the treatment of Grant in Aid (see Note 1.2). Financing and disclosures as required under FReM are outlined in Note 28.

1.1. Accounting Convention

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention. The Directors do not consider the current costs of any of the transactions or closing balances to be materially different from the historical cost.

Modifications to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets and inventories are not considered to be material.

1.2. Government Grants

Income comprises all funding provided to the company for its own purposes. Funding is provided by grant in aid from OFMDFM.

FReM requires Non-Departmental Public Bodies to regard Grant in Aid received as contributions from controlling parties giving rise to a financial interest in the residual interest of the body, and hence accounted for as financing.

The disclosure requirements in relation to this are set out in Note 27 to these accounts.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1.3. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are capitalised as if they are capable of being used for a period which exceeds one year and they:

- Individually have a cost of at least £1,000; or
- Satisfy the criteria of a grouped asset, i.e. collectively they have a cost of at least £1,000, are functionally interdependent, have broadly simultaneous purchase dates, and are anticipated to have simultaneous disposal dates.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at historical cost and are not revalued under IAS 16 because of the immateriality of the balances involved.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as:

- Furniture and Fittings 10 years
- Leasehold Improvements 10 years
- Office Equipment 3 years
- IT Equipment 4 years

A full month's depreciation is charged in the month of acquisition and no depreciation is charged in the month of disposal.

1.4. Foreign Currency

The accounts are maintained and reported in Sterling. There are no foreign currency transactions in the VSS.

1.5. Intangible Assets

Intangible non-current assets are capitalised when they are capable of being used in the VSS's activities for more than one year, they can be valued, and they have a cost of at least £1,000 (either individually or as a grouped asset).

Intangible assets are amortised at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as:

- Website Development 4 years

Purchased computer software licences will be capitalised as an intangible non-current asset where expenditure of at least £1,000 is incurred (either individually or

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

as a grouped asset). They will be amortised over the shorter of the term of the licence and their useful economic life, typically 4 years.

1.6. Impairment

Non-current assets held for operational use will be valued at historical cost and are amortised over the estimated life of the asset on a straight-line basis. Where there is an indication that the carrying value of items of property, plant and equipment or intangibles may have been impaired through events or changes in circumstances, a review will be undertaken of the recoverable amount of that asset.

1.7. Taxation

The VSS is a registered company limited by guarantee and is engaged in non-profit making activities in accordance with the memorandum of understanding with OFMDFM and the memorandum and articles of association and accordingly its activities are not liable to Income and Corporation Taxes.

The majority of the VSS's incoming resources are through grant in aid funding which is outside the scope of taxation. Accordingly the VSS is not VAT registered and amounts in these accounts are inclusive of Value Added Tax where charged.

1.8. Pension Arrangements

The VSS participates in a pension scheme administered by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (PCSPS[NI]) is for all permanent and fixed term members of staff. The defined benefit schemes are unfunded.

The company makes pension contributions at the rates outlined in the remuneration report on page 37 above to the approved pension scheme. The cost of contributions for providing pensions for employees is charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure account as they are earned, in accordance with IAS 19 *Employee Benefits*. Seconded staff members remain members of their respective pension schemes.

1.9. Provisions

The VSS makes provisions for liabilities and charges where, at the date of the Statement of Financial Position, a legal or constructive liability exists (i.e. a present obligation from past events exists), where the transfer of economic benefits is probable and a reasonable estimate can be made. Where the time value of money is material, VSS Ltd discounts the provision to its present value using a standard Government discount rate.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1.10. Grants Payable

Grants are treated as paid if they have been authorised for payment by officers at the appropriate level. Grants payable include amounts paid in the period and amounts accrued and still to be paid at the Statement of Financial Position date.

1.11. Employee Benefits

Under the requirements of IAS 19: *Employee Benefits*, staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obliged to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken leave at the period end. This cost has been calculated using the untaken leave per staff member and applying this to their annual salary to calculate the leave balance as at 31 March 2014.

1.12. Resources Expended

Support costs include all expenditure directly relating to the objectives of the company. Administration and Management costs comprise the costs involved in complying with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Costs incurred for meetings, seminars and other specific expenditure relating to the individual programmes are classified as Programme Costs.

1.13. Operating Leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis in the period in which they arise.

1.14. Funds

All income received by the company must be used for specific purposes which are within the overall aims of the company.

1.15. Segmental Reporting

The VSS's principal aim and sole activity is the provision of services to victims and survivors as defined in the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The VSS is therefore considered to have only one operating segment. All income, expenditure, assets and liabilities relate to this sole activity and are disclosed within these financial statements in the manner reported to the chief operating decision maker, which is considered to be the VSS Board.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1.16. Changes in Accounting Policy and Disclosure

The following additional or revised accounting standards and new (or amendments to) interpretations are contained within the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) 2013-14:

- IAS 1 - Presentation of Financial Statements (Other Comprehensive Income)
- IAS 12 - Income Taxes
- IAS 16 - Property, Plant & Equipment
- IAS 19 - Post Employment Benefits (pensions)
- IAS 3 - Financial Instruments (presentation)
- IAS 34 - Interim Financial reporting

VSS considers that these changes have no impact on its operations

1.17. Changes in Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective

The VSS has reviewed the following additional or revised accounting standards and new (or amendments to) interpretations contained within FReM 2014/2015:

- Definition of Control (IFRS 10)
- Joint Arrangements (IFRS 11)
- Disclosure of Interests and Risks (IFRS 12)
- Investment Entitled (IAS 27)
- Associate and Joint Ventures (IAS 28)
- Fair value measurement (IFRS 13)

These changes will be mandatory for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2014 or later periods, but which VSS has not adopted early. VSS considers that these changes are not relevant to or will have minimal impact on its operations.

In addition, certain new standards, interpretations and amendments to existing standards have been drafted but not yet issued and will come into effect in accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2015. It is not practicable to provide a reasonable estimate of the effect of these standards until a detailed review has been completed.

1.18. Contingent Liabilities

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the accounting statements; they are disclosed by way of a note if:

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- There is a possible obligation arising from past events, the existence of which will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one of more uncertain events not wholly within the Service's control; or
- A present obligation arises from past events but is not recognised because it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation or because the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

For each class of contingent liability, the nature of the contingency, a brief description, an estimate of its financial effect, an indication of the uncertainties relating to the amount or timing of any outflow and the possibility of any reimbursement has, if applicable, been disclosed. If there is a present obligation and the transfer of economic benefit in respect of a contingent liability has become probable and a reliable estimate is available, a provision will be recognised in the financial statements.

1.19. Going Concern

The Financial Statements have been prepared on the assumption that VSS is a going concern and will continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

2. Statement of Operating Costs by Operating Segment

IFRS 8 *Operating Segments* requires disclosure of financial information about an organisation's reportable segments based on the internal reporting arrangements as reviewed by the "Chief Operating Decision Maker" (CODM). The CODM for the VSS is deemed to be the Board since they have the authority for directing the main activities of the VSS throughout the period. The VSS approves the annual budget and, at each Board meeting, reviews management accounts and financial information.

The VSS is engaged solely with victims and survivors and as such is considered to have only one operating segment.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

3. Staff Numbers and Related Costs

Staff costs comprise:

	Permanently employed staff £	Others (Agency & Seconded) £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 Total £	Period ended 31-Mar-13 Total £
Wages and salaries	814,331	330,828	1,145,159	523,735
Social security costs	55,728	0	55,728	12,009
Pension costs	157,025	0	157,025	41,279
Total net costs	1,027,084	330,828	1,357,912	577,023

Pension

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS (NI)] is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme but the Victims and Survivors Service is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2010 and details of this valuation are available in the PCSPS (NI) resource accounts.

For 2013-14, employers' contributions of £157,025 were payable to the PCSPS(NI) (2012-13 £41,279) at one of four rates in the range 18% to 25% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A new valuation scheme based on data as at 31 March 2012 is currently being undertaken by the Actuary to review employer contribution rates for the introduction of a new career average earning scheme from April 2015. From 2014-15, the rates will remain in the range 18% to 25%. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2013-14 to be paid when the member retires, and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £nil (2012-13 £nil) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 3% to 12.5% of pensionable pay. Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable pay. In addition, employer contributions of £nil (2012-13 £nil) of pensionable pay, were payable to the PCSPS(NI) to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

No persons (2012-13: 0 persons) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in year amounted to £0 (2012-13: £0).

Average Number of Persons Employed:

The average number of whole-time equivalent persons employed was as follows.

	Permanently employed staff	Others (Agency & Seconded)	Year ended 31-Mar-14 Total	Period ended 31-Mar-13 Total
Administrators	13	5	18	5
Management	11	4	15	8
Senior Management	2	1	3	1
Total	26	10	36	14

Exit Packages

There were no redundancies or ill health retirements costs in the year to 31 March 2014.

4. Expenditure

a. Programme Expenditure

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £	Period ended 31-Mar-13 £
Programmes Grants	4b	10,483,987	1,595,730
Provision of Client Support Services		142,194	55,274
Independent Panel Costs		23,314	25,623
Advertising		15,821	25,983
Seminars & Events		700	9,466
Total		10,666,016	1,712,076

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

b. Grants to Funded Organisations

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Victims Support Programme Grants to Groups	6,085,294	0
Development Grants Scheme	15,944	150,238
Strategic Support Fund*	(12,998)	1,398,209
Grants to Individuals	4,395,747	0
TAPs Closure Costs	0	47,283
Total	10,483,987	1,595,730

* The amount of negative expenditure for the Strategic Support Fund is as a result of reversals of 2012/13 accruals due to the closure of the Scheme.

c. Operating Expenditure

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
Note	£	£
Rents & Service Charges	312,300	261,833
Rates	69,051	42,116
IT Services	79,799	33,205
Staff Recruitment	3,936	24,662
Telephones	39,137	22,387
Heat, Light & Power	26,496	20,602
Office Expenses	41,937	17,092
NIAO Audit	38,790	29,210
Premises Expenses	31,377	15,108
Professional Fees	64,787	14,712
Staff Training	17,346	7,577
Travel & Subsistence	28,231	7,451
Hospitality	2,885	4,570
Postage & Carriage	17,456	1,862
Insurance	1,146	0
Increase in Bad Debt Provision	665	0
Total Operating Costs	775,339	502,387
Non-cash items:		
Depreciation	6	13,784
Amortisation	7	469
Provision provided for in period	14	0
Total non-cash items	14,253	43,885
Overall Total	789,592	546,272

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

5. Income

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department	12,812,000	2,976,590
Other Operating Income	297	591
	<u>12,812,297</u>	<u>2,977,181</u>

All Grant in Aid income is received from the Sponsoring Department, OFMDFM. The other operating income relates to sundry rental income received in relation to the Dungannon office which is not recurring income.

£11,569,000 of Grant in Aid was received in cash from the Department at the year end, with a further £1,243,000 accrued and received in 2014/2015 relating to 2013/2014.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

6. Property, Plant and Equipment

	Year ended 31-Mar-14				
	Furniture & Fittings £	Leasehold Improvements £	IT Equipment £	Office Equipment £	Total £
Cost:					
At 1 April 2013	26,009	866,097	15,515	0	907,621
Additions in year	8,183	6,749	1,026	1,560	17,518
Transfer from CRC	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer from NICCY	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer from NIMF	14,076	0	672	0	14,748
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2014	48,268	872,846	17,213	1,560	939,887
Accumulated Depreciation:					
At 1 April 2013	20,486	786,330	9,253	0	816,069
Charge in year	1,109	8,430	4,028	217	13,784
Transfer from CRC	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer from NICCY	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer from NIMF	14,076	0	672	0	14,748
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2014	35,671	794,760	13,953	217	844,601
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	12,597	78,086	3,260	1,343	95,286
Asset Financing:					
Owned:	12,597	78,086	3,260	1,343	95,286
Finance Leased: On-balance sheet (SOFPI) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	0	0	0	0	0
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	12,597	78,086	3,260	1,343	95,286

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**Period
ended
31-Mar-13**

	Furniture & Fittings £	Leasehold Improvements £	IT Equipment £	Office Equipment £	Total £
Cost:					
At 1 April 2012	0	0	0	0	0
Additions in year	620	37,403	3,120	0	41,143
Transfer from CRC	25,389	26,308	12,395	0	64,092
Transfer from NICCY	0	802,386	0	0	802,386
Transfer from NIMF	0	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2013	26,009	866,097	15,515	0	907,621
Accumulated Depreciation:					
At 1 April 2012	0	0	0	0	0
Charge in year	238	395	1,252	0	1,885
Transfer from CRC	20,248	25,486	8,001	0	53,735
Transfer from NICCY	0	760,449	0	0	760,449
Transfer from NIMF	0	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2013	20,486	786,330	9,253	0	816,069
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	5,523	79,767	6,262	0	91,552
Asset Financing:					
Owned:	5,523	79,767	6,262	0	91,552
Finance Leased: On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	0	0	0	0	0
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	5,523	79,767	6,262	0	91,552

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

7. Intangible Assets

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	
	Website Development £	Total £
Cost:		
At 1 April 2013	0	0
Additions in year	2,700	2,700
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2014	2,700	2,700
Amortisation:		
At 1 April 2013	0	0
Charge in year	469	469
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2014	469	469
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	2,231	2,231
Asset Financing:		
Owned	2,231	2,231
Finance Leased:		
On-balance sheet (SOF) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:		
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	2,231	2,231

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Website Development £	Period ended 31-Mar-13 Total £
Cost:		
At 1 April 2012	0	0
Additions in year	0	0
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2013	0	0
Amortisation:		
At 1 April 2012	0	0
Charge in year	0	0
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2013	0	0
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	0	0
Asset Financing:		
Owned	0	0
Finance Leased:		
On-balance sheet (SOF) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:		
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	0	0

8. Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of the VSS are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by OFMDFM, 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 VSS expected purchase and usage requirements and the Non Departmental Public Body is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

9. Impairments

There have been no impairment charges for the period.

10. Inventories

Not applicable.

11. Trade Receivables and other Current Assets

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year arising from VSS Operations:		
Programme receivables	179,084	296,682
Prepayments & accrued income	1,276,338	28,406
Room hire receivables	1,210	1,210
Bad debt provision	(29,543)	(28,878)
	<u>1,427,089</u>	<u>297,420</u>

a. Intra-Government Balances

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Balances with Central government bodies	1,242,999	149
Balances with Local Government	0	0
Balances with NHS Bodies	0	0
Intra Government Balances	<u>1,242,999</u>	<u>149</u>
Balances with bodies external to government	184,090	297,271
Total receivables at 31 March 2014	<u>1,427,089</u>	<u>297,420</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

12. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Balance at 1 April:	129,353	0
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	99,241	129,353
Balance at 31 March 2014	<u>228,594</u>	<u>129,353</u>

The above balance comprises £228,523 at the Danske Bank, Belfast in a non-interest bearing current account and £71 in petty cash held on-site.

13. Trade Payables and other Current Liabilities

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year		
Programme payables	1,306,478	89,839
Trade payables	30,603	38,905
Other taxation & social security	0	11,217
Accruals & deferred Income	179,431	130,323
	<u>1,516,512</u>	<u>270,284</u>

a. Intra-Government Balances

	Amounts Falling Due within One Year '£'	
	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Balances with Central government bodies	62,704	52,667
Balances with Local Government	0	0
Balances with NHS Bodies	0	0
Intra Government Balances	<u>62,704</u>	<u>52,667</u>
Balances with Bodies external to government	1,453,808	217,617
Total payables at 31 March	<u>1,516,512</u>	<u>270,284</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

14. Provisions for Liabilities and Charges

	Year ended 31- Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Balance at 1 April 2013	42,000	0
Provided for in the period	0	42,000
Utilised in year	(10,130)	0
Provisions written back	0	0
Balance at 31 March 2014	<u>31,870</u>	<u>42,000</u>

The provision for liabilities and charges relates to VSS estimate for the provision of pension actuarial services and related advice in connection with the quantification of the pension obligations relating to staff that transferred from the CRC on 12 November 2012. The provision is not discounted as the VSS do not, at this time, expect the provision to be held for more than 2 years.

15. Capital Commitments

The VSS had no capital commitments in the financial period.

16. Commitments under Leases

Total future minimum lease payments under operating leases are given in the table below.

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Annual Obligations under operating leases for the following periods comprise:		
Buildings:		
Not later than one year	295,031	251,475
Later than one year, and not later than five years	0	0
Later than five years	0	0
Total	<u>295,031</u>	<u>251,475</u>
Other:		
Not later than one year	3,341	2,559
Later than one year, and not later than five years	5,772	0
Later than five years	0	0
Total	<u>9,113</u>	<u>2,559</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

17. Commitments under PFI Contracts and Other Service Concession Arrangements Contracts

None.

18. Other Financial Commitments

None.

19. Contingent Liabilities Disclosed Under IAS 37

On 11 November 2012, the functions and staff of the victims unit of the Community Relations Council (CRC) were transferred to the Victims and Survivors Service. 11 staff from the CRC were transferred under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

There is a contingent liability in respect of the pension bulk transfer value. The liability to be met by VSS is in respect of the difference between the amount of money which will be paid from NILGOSC (CRC's pension scheme) to PCSPS (VSS' pension scheme) in respect of the transferring employees and the amount which is required by the PCSPS(NI) in order to accept the transfer of liabilities.

Government Actuaries Division (GAD) were appointed in November 2013 and the transfer value is expected to be calculated and confirmed in the second half of 2014. However negotiations may take place thereafter for a period of time. At the time of the preparation of the accounts, it is not possible to quantify this value as the actuarial valuation is unknown and no quantifiable liability has been agreed between parties.

20. Losses and Special Payments

There are no losses or special payment to report for 2013-14. However as part of the review into the three outstanding suspected fraud cases as outlined on page 58, a number of payment recoveries may be initiated in 2014-15. At the time of the audit, these are still at preliminary stages of their reviews and awaiting PSNI advice.

21. Related-Party Transactions

The VSS is an Arms Length Body sponsored by OFMDFM. OFMDFM is regarded as a Related Party. During the period the VSS had various material transactions with OFMDFM (Grant in Aid £12,812,000).

During the period members of the Board, Audit and Risk Committee, Senior Management Team nor other related parties have directly undertaken any material transactions with the VSS.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A conflict of interest declaration was signed by each Board member.

However the following is noted:

- Fergus Devitt, former Chairman and Director is employed by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister as Director of United Community Division and
- Marie Matthews, former Director is employed by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister as Deputy Principal, Equality and Strategy Directorate.

In addition, DFP Internal Audit conducted a follow up audit assignment within VSS on behalf of OFMDFM during this initial period. Any perceived conflict of interest between the DFP Head of Internal Audit and an interim VSS Board member was managed using the protocols, established in the DFP Internal Audit Manual, for dealing with conflicts of interest.

The VSS has had a small number of transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies.

Compensation for key management personnel has been disclosed in the Remuneration Report.

22. Third Party Assets

None.

23. Transfers

NI Memorial Fund to the VSS 2013-14

The transfer of assets from NIMF as a charity and Arms Length Body sponsored by OFMDFM has been accounted for by absorption accounting in line with the International Financial Reporting Standards 3, *Business Combinations*, as outlined in FReM.

Four NIMF staff were transferred to the VSS effective 7 April 2013. These staff were previously on fixed term contracts. Therefore, no liabilities transferred as a result of this.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Transfer of assets and liabilities from NIMF to the VSS:

	£
Fixed assets at Cost	14,748
Accumulated Depreciation	-14,748
	0

The assets held by NIMF pertaining to fixtures, fittings and IT equipment located at Millennium House have been transferred to VSS effective 31st October 2013 at a zero NBV.

Community Relations Council Victims and Survivors Programme to the VSS prior period 2012-13

Transfer of assets and liabilities from CRC to the VSS that occurred on 12 November 2012 are as follows:

	£
Fixed assets at Cost	64,092
Accumulated Depreciation	(53,735)
Trade receivables	1,210
Other receivables	34,012
Prepayments	5,593
Bad debt provision	(28,878)
	22,294

NICCY to the VSS prior period 2012-13

Transfer of assets and liabilities from NICCY to the VSS that occurred effective 31 March 2013 are as follows:

	£
Fixed assets at Cost	802,386
Accumulated Depreciation	(760,449)
	41,937

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

24. Net Incoming Resources is Stated after Charging

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	13,784	1,885
Amortisation of intangible assets	469	0
Auditors' remuneration	38,790	29,210
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	53,043	31,095

25. Fund Balances

	Year ended 31-Mar-14	Period ended 31-Mar-13
	£	£
Opening balance	129,353	0
Net movement in funds	99,241	129,353
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Closing balance	228,594	129,353

Any positive funds above must be spent in accordance with the memorandum of understanding with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on victims and survivors and associated administration and overhead costs incurred in delivering the programmes.

26. Financial Compliance – Programmes

The VSS maintains and manages a register outlining any significant breaches and issues of non-compliance for all groups funded under the VSP and individuals under the INP.

Two such breaches were transferred from the CRC to the VSS, both of which are with the PSNI.

In addition to the suspected fraud cases on page 58, a further four breaches relating to non-compliance with procurement guidelines and insufficient audit trail were investigated by the VSS. Three of these have been resolved and closed and the VSS continues to work with one organisation to reach an agreed and satisfactory conclusion.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27. Additional Disclosures to Comply with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM)

FReM requires non-departmental public bodies to regard grant in aid received as contributions from controlling parties giving rise to a financial interest in the residual interest of the body, and hence accounted for as financing, i.e. by crediting them to the income and expenditure reserve.

If the VSS were to comply with FReM, the following would be the effect of this compliance.

27.1 Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure prepared under FReM

	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £	Period ended 31-Mar-13 £
Income		
Rental Income	297	591
	<u>297</u>	<u>591</u>
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	1,357,912	577,023
Programme Costs	10,666,016	1,712,076
Operating Costs	775,339	544,387
Depreciation	13,784	1,885
Amortisation	469	0
	<u>12,813,520</u>	<u>2,835,371</u>
Net deficit for the period	(12,813,223)	(2,834,780)
Non operating gain on transfer of function and assets	0	64,231
	<u>(12,813,223)</u>	<u>(2,770,549)</u>

There are no recognised gains or losses for the current period other than as stated above. Accordingly, no statement of changes in equity is given.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27.2 Statement of Cash flows prepared under FREM

	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £	Period ended 31-Mar-13 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net Deficit after interest and tax	(12,813,223)	(2,770,549)
Non Cash Transactions (Depreciation/Amortisation)	14,253	1,885
Adjustment for Machinery of Government transfer of CRC function	0	(10,357)
Adjustment for NICCY Assets	0	(41,937)
Increase in trade and other payables	1,246,228	270,284
Increase in trade and other receivables	(1,129,669)	(297,420)
Increase in Provisions	(10,130)	42,000
Net Cash used in operating activities	<u>(12,692,541)</u>	<u>(2,806,094)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Grant in Aid from Parent Department	<u>11,569,000</u>	<u>2,976,590</u>
Net Cash used in financing activities	<u>11,569,000</u>	<u>2,976,590</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment	(17,518)	(41,143)
Purchase of intangible assets	<u>(2,700)</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Cash used in investing activities	<u>(20,218)</u>	<u>(41,143)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(1,143,759)	129,353
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the period	<u>129,353</u>	<u>0</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the period	<u>(1,014,406)</u>	<u>129,353</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27.3 General Reserve note prepared under FReM:

	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £	Period ended 31-Mar-13 £
Analysis of General Reserve:		
Opening Balance	206,041	0
Grant in Aid received in period	11,569,000	2,976,590
Net operating cost for the period	<u>(12,813,223)</u>	<u>(2,770,549)</u>
Balance at 31 March 2014	<u>(1,038,182)</u>	<u>206,041</u>

28. Guarantee

The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, undertake to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of the same being wound up while such party is a member, or within one year after such party ceases to be a member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before such party ceases to be a member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of the rights of its contributories among themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding one pound.

29. Events after the Reporting Period

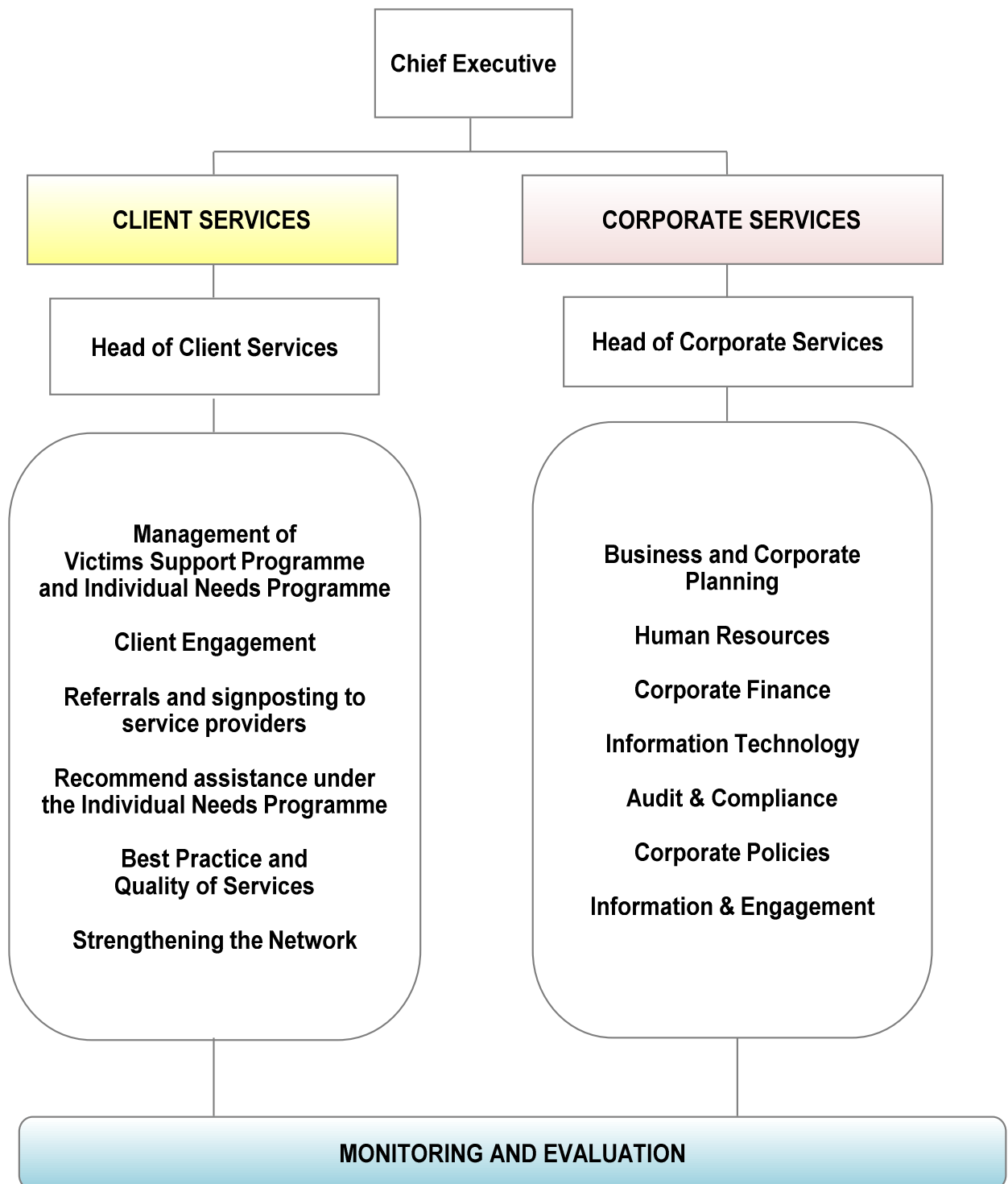
There are no events after the reporting period as defined in IAS10 to disclose.

30. Date of authorisation for issue

The Comptroller and Auditor General authorised these financial statements for issue on 18 December 2014.

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1: VSS Organisation Chart as at 31 March 2014







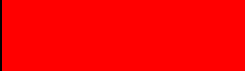
APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2: Progress in relation to Implementation of Recommendations of the *Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service*

The Department for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Victims and Survivors Service monitor the progress of the implementation of these recommendations using an Overarching Implementation Plan. The tables below summarise the agreed position on each of the recommendations at the time of presenting this Annual Report and Accounts. The recommendations are listed in order of the reference number attributed to each one within the Overarching Plan.

Summary of Recommendations as at December 2014	
Implemented	49
Partially Implemented	17
Pending Confirmation	2
Delayed	2

RAG Status

Fully Implemented		Completed
Achieved or on track for delivery		Green
Level of progress is broadly on track with easily redeemable deviations from plans and there is justifiable confidence of achieving agreed actions within agreed timescales		Green / Amber
Rate of progress is less than planned and there is significant doubt around the achievement of actions within agreed timescales		Amber
Actions not achieved or not expected to be achieved within agreed timescales		Red

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
1	Collaborative relationships should be developed further between key VSS stakeholders including the Victims Forum		Implemented	
2	A fresh communications strategy should be developed to help gain confidence of the public, victims and other stakeholders		Implemented	
3	We recommend that the VSS urgently engages with the Forum in an open and constructive manner as soon as possible; this should be facilitated by CVSNI		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
4	We recommend that urgent consideration be given to the culture, process and overall management of communication within VSS, particularly with individual victims and survivors	<p>The culture, process and the overall management of communications have improved significantly. This has included weekly and where necessary daily staff briefings to ensure consistency in messages to individuals, and the establishment of a monthly staff meeting to improve horizontal communication between teams.</p> <p>VSS held staff planning days in September and October to ensure staff were included in the planning process.</p> <p>The Communication and Engagement Plan is monitored on a monthly basis as a standing agenda item by the VSS Board (Monthly Progress Report on Communications).</p> <p>Monthly tri-laterals continue between the CVS/VSS and department, the VSS continues to co-chair the Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group, and the Forum Services Working Group continues to invite VSS to attend when it meets.</p> <p>Communication was issued to all individuals in August and September 2014 outlining the impact of budget reductions.</p> <p>Actions regarding this recommendation are ongoing.</p>	Partially Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
5	We recommend that the Forum play a key role in helping the VSS improve communication with victims and survivors. It can offer unique insight and advice, and should be encouraged to do so.		Implemented	
6	We recommend that a simplified form for those seeking help with relatively simple needs – for example, educational support or respite breaks - should be introduced as a matter of urgency. This should be developed by the VSS after consultation with CVSNI and the Forum		Implemented	
7	The Board needs to ensure it is satisfied that the assessment process is appropriately designed to meet the needs of individuals whilst at the same time meets public accountability requirements	<p>The Board has approved a hybrid Assessment Process.</p> <p>Two key issues remain: no budget available to support further individuals coming forward and the HWB review process has not been agreed.</p>	Partially Implemented	
8	We recommend that the VSS offer a streamlined, more focused and less intrusive, simple needs assessment process for victims and survivors	<p>The VSS has completed their proposal for the HWB review and consulted with all stakeholders. VSS await a response from the CVS and Department on taking this forward.</p> <p>Fully Implemented by VSS.</p>		

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
9	We recommend the new assessment process takes a comprehensive approach to assessing need, in consultation with groups, the Forum and CVSNI			
10	We recommend a triage approach to needs assessments so that those who need simpler assessments can be managed separately from those with more complex needs		Implemented	
11	Ensure that the process of reviewing individual needs is based on what is necessary to ensure access to appropriate goods and services without intrusive and unnecessary psychological assessments. As such a 'gateway' approach should be developed, as originally conceived, to ensure a more effective approach	See recommendations 7-9 above.	Partially Implemented	
12	The performance management system in VSS should be reviewed in favour of a reduced number of key performance indicators that focus on those that are essential to monitor the quality of service to clients/users and also to meet the needs of the Board and sponsor Department	<p>The VSS Corporate Plan 2014-17 was agreed by Departmental Board in September and has been submitted to Ministers for approval.</p> <p>VSS Corporate Plan and Action plan for 2014/15 to be approved by Ministers – pending approval, this recommendation can be closed.</p> <p>Fully implemented by VSS.</p>	Partially Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
13	VSS should explore finding an efficient and effective way to monitoring outcomes from the funding provided to individuals and groups in partnership with all relevant stakeholders (including representatives of funded organisations) with the aim of finding a workable solution that is acceptable to both parties.	<p>A suite of month end management reporting is in place and scrutinised by the SMT, VSS Board, CVS and Department on a monthly basis. In addition, an Interim Monitoring and Evaluation framework is currently in place to include: Monthly statistics from each VSP groups, year-end qualitative progress report and quarterly vouching and verification reporting. The Interim Monitoring and Evaluation framework will continue throughout 14/15.</p> <p>Consultation is currently taking place with all groups and is the key agenda item at the Victims Practitioners Working Group on 25 November 2014. Timetable for implementation of MIS and monitoring and evaluation tools has been revised and will be updated again following the VPWG and issued to all groups for comment. Monthly Monitoring and Evaluation Group and terms of reference to be established.</p> <p>Finalisation of tools and requirements pending current CVS research project due to report end November 2014.</p> <p>M&E Timetable and MIS implementation plan updated - November action plan includes Feedback to all VSP funded groups and FSWG on the outcome and initial plan for M&E moving</p>	Partially Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
		<p>forward including any changes to existing tools.</p> <p>MIS Working Group to sign off on all procurement documentation and submit to CPD to review. Tender process to begin early December 2014.</p>		
14	<p>Ensure that all monitoring and evaluation tools are reasonable and proportionate supporting the recording of useful and important data to support future development of services/packages of care and support are scrutinised regularly carefully and sensitively to ensure that they are meeting the needs of victims and survivors, and any relevant professional standards or regulatory requirements as necessary</p>	<p>See recommendation 13 above.</p>	<p>Partially Implemented</p>	
15	<p>We recommend that the monitoring and evaluation of the available packages of care and support are scrutinised regularly carefully and sensitively to ensure that they are meeting the needs of victims and survivors, and any relevant professional standards or regulatory requirements as necessary</p>	<p>See recommendation 13 above.</p>	<p>Partially Implemented</p>	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
16	We recommend that a separate questionnaire, guaranteeing anonymity, be considered to capture data about victims and survivors to inform future policy and services for victims and survivors	See recommendation 13 above.	Partially Implemented	
17	VSS should consider whether any of the practical steps to reduce bureaucracy set out in the April 2013 Northern Ireland Executive report 'Addressing Bureaucracy : A report on tackling bureaucracy in government funding to the voluntary and community sector', might be applied to the VSP		Implemented	
18	VSS should conduct a systematic review of each of its funding requirements necessitating action by applicants/funded organisations, considering whether each requirement could be removed/reduced or met in a different way		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
19	We recommend that the relationship with groups would improve greatly if the grant allocation requirements and process, and the monitoring arrangements are reviewed in consultation with the groups themselves.	<p>An Independent Assessment Panel assesses all groups against published criteria. The application process is published in VSP Guidance Note 1. The budget allocation process was recorded and documented in a meeting with each group individually. This will be considered in conjunction with the current CVS review for the next programming period.</p> <p>Funding workshops to be arranged following the CVS Research project into future funding and guidance note on the Application process to be updated and published.</p>	Partially Implemented	
20	The VSS should give careful consideration to reviewing the assessment of the quality of groups' applications for funding against criteria, but also in relation to geographical location, client base, separation of political activity from advocacy and welfare support and a range of other factors.	<p>Fully implemented by VSS.</p> <p>Awaiting outcome of CVS Research due end November 2014; this will inform the extent to which any new funding arrangements provide for geographical location as a consideration in allocating awards.</p>	Partially Implemented	
21	The Board should seek assurance that key governance policies such as Anti-Fraud, Whistle-blowing, Gifts & Hospitality and Conflicts of Interest are operating effectively in practice		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
22	The VSS Board should become familiar with the requirements of the Companies Act and the MSFM and address inconsistencies and non-compliance identified in the report		Implemented	
23	The VSS Board should review its priorities and work with OFMDFM to identify suitable ways of augmenting the numbers and skills on the VSS Board and should seek a qualified accountant to Chair the Audit & Risk Committee	<p>Sufficient skills in the interim on the ARC following the agreement of 2 existing independent panel members to remain on the ARC.</p> <p>This was agreed at the ARC on 26 August 2014</p> <p>Awaiting selection and ministerial appointment of additional Board members (Advertisement for additional Board Members issued w/c 29 September.) Once new members are in place VSS will be in a position to take this recommendation forward.</p>	Partially Implemented	
24	The Board should re-visit the purpose of VSS and explore whether these services fit within the future strategy, or are better provided by specialist organisations		Implemented	
25	The Board should review the VSS Corporate Plan, revise it as appropriate and monitor progress of its implementation		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
26	The Board should review its structures and processes to have a Schedule of Matters Reserved for the Board and a Scheme of Delegation that clearly sets out decisions that must be taken by the Board		Implemented	
27	The Board is properly inducted to VSS to ensure that it understands and is able to fulfil its role and responsibilities. It may also be helpful for OFMDFM officials and officials in the Commissioner's office to participate.		Implemented	
28	The Board should ensure that its Audit Committee has appropriate skills, training and support to ensure it fulfils its function.		Implemented	
29	The Programme Board should be placed in abeyance at an appropriate time in order to create space for the VSS Board to focus on its priorities, but there should be regular communication on progress of the VSS		Implemented	
30	Ask the Chair of the Board of VSS to provide assurance that they are confident the knowledge, skills and experience of the Senior Management Team and the Board are appropriate to deliver the changes necessary to meet the outcomes required for improvement		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
31	VSS should seek to reduce the number of agency staff in favour of more permanent resourcing arrangements	Paper submitted 19 June 2014, however it was agreed at the VSS Accountability meeting on 30 July to reconsider this at a later date as it may need to be amended due to the changes in budget and the CVS review of VSS programmes Budget reductions have meant that the VSS have had no option but to put all agency staff on notice.	Pending Confirmation	
32	Staffing proposals submitted by VSS to OFMDFM in September 2013 should be updated to reflect the overall outcome of this review and resubmitted for the Department to give early consideration to decide on the future staffing needs of VSS	Interim staffing structure submitted 10 November 2014 including interim SMT and reduced staffing numbers against budget available. VSS currently relying on 3 agency staff. This is appropriate given the roles: 2 receptionists and 1 Client Services Officer. The VSS are unable to undertake any further actions in 2014/2015. An interim SMT and staffing structure in line with budget availability and prioritising front line service delivery, staff welfare and workload has been established. Any further staffing structures in the longer term will be dependent on the current co-design project being lead by the Department in terms of the policy framework and delivery models moving forward.	Pending Confirmation	
33	CIPFA recommends that the senior executive team should evaluate the effectiveness of the appraisal system and advise the Board accordingly		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
34	The Board should consider a staff survey to systematically capture the mood of staff within the next three months		Implemented	
35	OFMDFM should give early consideration to the case for a new database for VSS	M&E evaluation delayed, reviewing business case, design predicated on schemes 1-5, seeking more flexibility in spec for outcome of CVS research. VSS engaged with CPD. OFMDFM have approved the original MIS and have advised VSS that a revised specification should be run in tandem to ensure any further changes following the outcome of the co-design programme are taken on board. See recommendation 13 above.	Partially Implemented	
36	We recommend a clear, simple and well-publicised process explaining how decisions are reached		Implemented	
37	We recommend a timely re-calibration of the relationship between the VSS and OFMDFM based on clear and established lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability		Implemented	
38	We recommend that the VSS website is made more “user friendly” with customer feedback positively welcomed. The website should also include a section on the role of OFMDFM and CVSNI so that the public		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
	can have added confidence that the VSS is accountable and subject to effective scrutiny			
39	We recommend a re-calibration of the tripartite relationship between the VSS, OFMDFM and CVSNI. It should be based on an open and clear reporting, accountability and response structure, and be regularly reviewed		Implemented	
40	We recommend that there should be a full review of the complaints procedure, involving Senior Managers at the VSS, the newly appointed Board, the Forum, CVSNI and victims and survivors		Implemented	
41	We recommend that the complaints procedure includes an independent review or appeals stage. In our view, this role would sit best within CVSNI		Implemented	
42	We recommend that an agreed list of approved providers for services and goods would go some way to allaying issues of trust and safety for victims and offer the added advantage of being able to monitor expenditure and quality of service	<p>N/A for 14/15 given the current budget restrictions and the opening of the INP on a limited basis. This recommendation will be considered in line with future funding delivery.</p> <p>Currently, awards are capped up to £200 or £1,500 and individuals have been with the same supplier for a number of years through the NIMF and following into the VSS.</p> <p>Therefore to change suppliers at this stage would</p>	Delayed	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
		<p>cause undue distress and anxiety at a time when significant change is already planned for future programme delivery.</p> <p>Pending outcome of CVS Research at end November 2014 - this is currently being considering as part of the funding arrangements from 1st April 2015 in line with the current CVS research project.</p>		
43	<p>We recommend that where victims and survivors are identified as requiring acute psychological or psychiatric interventions, then protocols with statutory health services must be in place and are subject to monitoring and evaluation. This should be a priority for consideration by CVSNI, OFMDFM, DHSSPS and the Health and Social Care Board advising the VSS</p>	<p>N/A to VSS. CVS taking forward with OFMDFM and Health and Social Care Board.</p>	Partially Implemented	
44	<p>We recommend the introduction of a formalised minimum monthly one-to-one line management supervision process for all staff, including the CEO, and that a review of health and safety policies is undertaken, with the urgent development of a Lone Worker policy</p>		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
45	If victims and survivors would rather access psychological support from other agencies and organisations, this must be facilitated	See recommendation 43 above. N/A for VSS action. Awaiting advice from the working group	Partially Implemented	
46	The VSS should move away from an administrative model of delivery to a service model of delivery with groups	See recommendation 7 above.	Partially Implemented	
47	Consider how to build sustainability in to the victims and survivors sector by putting on funding workshops so groups can develop knowledge and skills in applying for other funding	See recommendations 18-20. Funding workshops will be carried out following the finalisation and publication of the current CVS research project (estimated completion date end November 2014).	Delayed pending CVS research project	
48	Minutes of all Board meetings and Committee meetings should show clearly the members of the Committee, as distinct from those 'in attendance'		Implemented	
49	A senior executive in VSS should be specifically charged with advising the Board on the legal framework within which VSS is required to be governed		Implemented	
50	The Board should clearly identify its information needs and identify the best way for executives to provide this to members		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
51	The Board (with support from the executive team) should identify key strategic risks, prioritise them, and ensure clear plans are in place for their mitigation		Implemented	
52	Endorse the recommendations of the CIPFA report in full and ensure their implementation in a timely manner		Implemented	
53	Ensure all Board members of such bodies should be appointed using the CPANI process		Implemented	
54	To ensure, in setting up future organisations, to have the requisite Board in place before the organisation becomes operational		Implemented	
55	OFMDFM should make the necessary arrangements for public appointments in VSS fall into the scope of the Office of the Commissioner of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland and ensures compliance with the Code in future Board appointments		Implemented	
56	OFMDFM should provide intensive support to the Chair and other Board Members including tailored governance training and mentoring		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

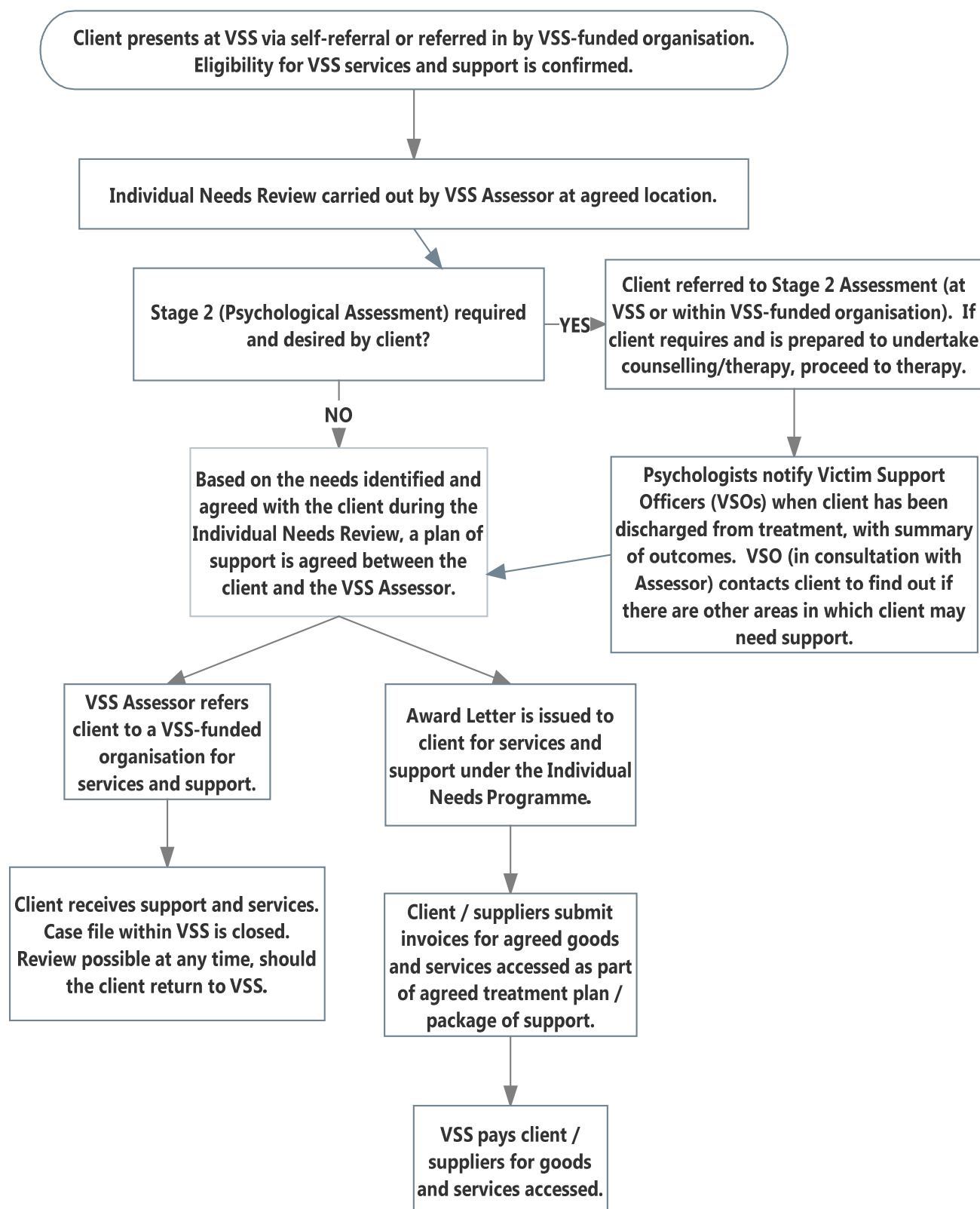
Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
57	In addition to the above, the VSS Board should facilitate the provision of support to the executive team and those charged with ensuring good governance within VSS		Implemented	
58	The Board should oversee performance of the corporate management team to ensure VSS meets its objectives		Implemented	
59	The VSS Board should gain assurance that VSS does not stray into a management role for the organisations it funds		Implemented	
60	The Board of VSS should oversee the future production of financial statements in line with statutory requirements		Implemented	
61	The VSS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee should oversee the implementation of the 2013 internal audit recommendations		Implemented	
62	Ask for assurances from the Board of the VSS that all matters of internal and external audit and control will be overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee and reported to the Board		Implemented	
63	Endorse the recommendations in full and ensure implementation in timely manner		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress as at December 2014	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
64	Agree a change management process to ensure an effective transition from an administrative model of delivery to a service model of delivery		Implemented	
65	We recommend that all VSS staff be made aware of the role of CVSNI and its relationship to the VSS, and that the VSS website includes a section on the role of CVSNI		Implemented	
66	We recommend that consideration be given to setting up the VSS joint team meetings to include Assessors		Implemented	
67	We recommend that CVSNI be listed as a key stakeholder in the VSS Communication Plan		Implemented	
68	We recommend regular meetings between the Chair of the VSS Board and the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors		Implemented	
69	Endorse the recommendations in full and ensure implementation in timely manner		Implemented	
70	When clients are accessing psychological therapies in groups, this must not be interrupted to undertake another assessment with the VSS, to then be referred back to the group for the therapy to continue		Implemented	

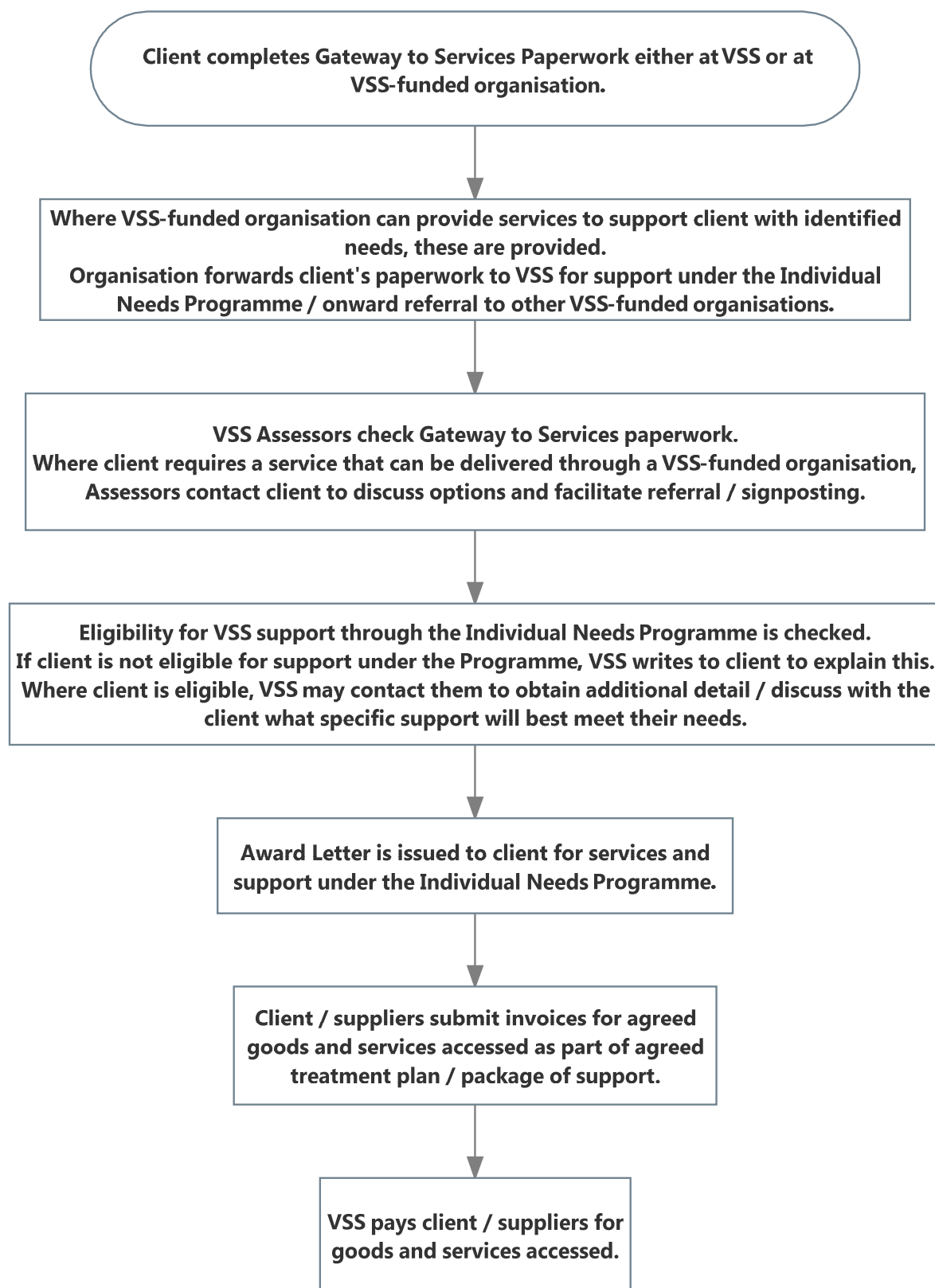
APPENDIX 3

Appendix 3a: Client Journey – Individual Needs Review



APPENDIX 3

Appendix 3b: Client Journey – Gateway Process



APPENDIX 4

Appendix 4: VSS Business Plan 2013-2014





The table below sets out the VSS Business Plan for 2013-2014. It details the organisation's objectives and 93 key performance indicators. The achievement of these targets was monitored over the year using the following Red / Amber / Green (RAG) status updates:

RAG status	Description
BLUE	Completed
GREEN	Achieved or on track for delivery
GREEN/AMBER	Broadly on track and there is <i>justifiable</i> confidence of getting close to targeted outcomes
AMBER	Progress less than planned. Significant doubt around the achievement of targeted outcomes
RED	Commitments not achieved or not expected to be achieved within the current PfG period









In the financial year 2103/2014, summary progress against all 93 targets was as follows:

Blue	Green	Green/Amber	Amber	Red
84	4	0	5	0









APPENDIX 4

BUSINESS RESULTS			
Strategic Objective 1: Ensure the effective and efficient delivery of funding for Health and Wellbeing and Social Support through the Victim Support Programme and Individual Needs Programme.			
Action (PM)	Ensure the aims and objectives of the Individual Needs Programme (INP) are met		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Process 1,750 applications to Scheme 6A Regular Financial Assistance	1,750 individuals receiving award and paid by December 2013 100% of complete and valid applications September 2013	60% of complete and valid applications were processed by June 2013 100% of complete and valid applications target were complete by September 2013. 1,754 awards paid. All applications now closed – awaiting opening of new scheme.	
Process 100 applications to Scheme 6B Discretionary Financial Assistance	100 individuals receiving award Payment processed within 10 working days of receipt of valid application	As agreed with Project Board in allocating the additional £1.1m October Monitoring budget, this scheme did not open in 2013/2014.	
As a result of a recommendation from an Individual Needs Review, process 800 Respite Break recommendations	800 respite breaks awarded in recommended packages	Awards issued: 2,725 Awards claimed (paid out): 2,320	
	By September 2013, award processed within 20 working days of receipt of valid recommendation from Client Services	All awarded Respite breaks processed to Award Letter stage.	

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	Payment processed within 10 working days of receipt of valid reimbursement claim/invoice	Processing time for payments 10 working days upon receipt of invoices/receipts.	
	Review of uptake in October 2013	Reviewed for October monitoring round and submitted to Project Board in November for consideration.	
As a result of a recommendation from an Individual Needs Review, process 1,300 Education and Training recommendations	1,300 education and training opportunities awarded	Awards issued: 1,268 Awards claimed (paid out): 559	
	By Sept 2013, award processed within 20 working days of receipt of valid recommendation from Client Services	Processing times within 10 working days.	
	Payment processed within 10 working days of receipt of valid reimbursement claim/invoices	Current processing time for payments 10 working days	
	Review of uptake in October 2013	Reviewed for October monitoring round and submitted to Project Board in November for consideration.	
As a result of a recommendation from an Individual Needs Review, process 300 Chronic Pain recommendations	300 chronic pain treatments and support awarded	Awards issued: 884 Awards claimed (paid out): 805	
	By September 2013, award processed within 10 working days of receipt of valid recommendation from Client Services	Processing times within 10 working days.	






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	Payment processed within 10 working days of receipt of valid reimbursement claim/invoice	On Target.	
	Review of uptake in October 2013	Reviewed for October monitoring round and submitted to Project Board in November for consideration.	
As a result of a recommendation from an Individual Needs Review, process 300 Disability Support recommendations	300 disability support awards	Awards issued: 410 Awards claimed (paid out): 358	
	By September 2013, award processed within 20 working days of receipt of valid recommendation from Client Services	Processing times within 5 working days.	
	Payment processed within 10 working days of receipt of valid reimbursement claim/invoice	On Target.	
	Review of uptake in October 2013	Reviewed for October monitoring round and submitted to Project Board in November for consideration.	
As a result of a recommendation from an Individual Needs Review, process 300 Carers recommendations	300 carers supported and awards issued	Awards issued: 242 Awards claimed (paid out): 223	
	By September 2013, award processed within 10 working days of receipt of valid recommendation from Client Services	Processing times within 10 days – on target.	


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	Payment processed within 10 working days of receipt of valid reimbursement claim/invoice	Ongoing.	
	Review of uptake in October 2013	Reviewed for October monitoring round and submitted to Project Board in November for consideration.	
Action (PM)	Maintain efficient and effective delivery of services under the Victims Support Programme (VSP)		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Agree final budgets and work plans with all funded groups	Reduction in overhead costs and maximization of front line delivery	Completed.	
Meet with the Chair/CEO of each Group to agree priorities and objectives	Final letters of offer and agreed priorities, consistent aims and objectives across all funded groups	Completed.	
Follow up Site Visit to each group to finalise LoO		Completed.	
Carry out a cost analysis of their outputs, results and impacts.	Consistency in unit costs and service provision across all groups.	Analysis completed. Output to be reviewed and reported to feed into future funding periods (2015 onwards).	
Action (PM)	Ensure compliance with all national and Programme Rules		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	

APPENDIX 4

Issue Guidance Notes on key programme areas including procurement, fraud and recruitment	Consistency across all groups in application of funding rules	Guidance notes issued and on website.	
Implement VSP and INP Operating Manual to include standard award letters and terms and conditions of Grant	Structured approach to disseminating information and responding to eligibility queries	First training event took place in October 2013 with feedback to be reviewed and drive further sessions in 2014. Training budget for VSP groups reviewed in December 2013 based on slippage in other areas and letters of offer issued. 3 Practitioner's Working Group meetings have taken place.	
Action (PM)	Preparation for 2014-2015 Health & Wellbeing Programme		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Design a model of commissioned based services	Move to a commissioned based approach to the delivery of health and well being services	Consultation with sector took place in September, with further consultation in October. Proposals delivered to Project Board. Commissioning delayed and groups informed. New proposal in place. New Letters of Offer issued March and April 2014.	
Establish a Funding Working Group	Agree design of commission based model and consultation from the sector	Meeting took place place in October 2013. Discussions have taken place at Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group. Agreement reached that establishment of a Funding Working Group will not go ahead.	
Open a call for applications/tenders for the Health & Wellbeing programme 2014/2015	Improvement in quality of delivery by qualified and accredited service providers	Commissioning delayed until late 2014. Year end reporting and review process in place in lieu of open call.	




APPENDIX 4

Manage independent Assessment of applications/tenders		Assessment of year end reports and progress to date took place in March 2014.	
Issue contracts to successful Health & Wellbeing applicants for funding over 2014/2015		Letters of Offer for 2014-15 Health and Wellbeing Awards issued. 3 in draft and in discussion with group.	





CUSTOMER RESULTS

Strategic Objective 2: Identify and agree the needs of individual victims and survivors through Individual Needs Reviews and recommend individual packages of support





Action (CLSM) Ensure a Stage 1 Individual Needs Review is carried out for all individuals requesting support

Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Arrange Individual Needs Review	Appointment letter issued and individual booked an appointment	From 3 rd February 2014 to 31 March 2014, 28 Groups forwarded 1,231 Gateway Process forms to the VSS. 671 had been processed by year end, leaving 560 still to be processed.	
Carry out an Individual Needs Review for 3,000 individuals	Individual's needs assessed and package of support discussed	From April 2012-March 2014, VSS recorded 3,056 Individual Needs Reviews. At year end, VSS had a waiting list of 833 clients. Due to the high volume of Gateway Process forms submitted by groups, the waiting list increased, as the VSS Assessment team had to verify each form for eligibility before proceeding to awards.	 







APPENDIX 4

Action (CLSM)	Offer Stage 2 Psychological Assessment for all individuals demonstrating complex mental health needs		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Arrange a stage 2 Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual client assessment to determine level of counseling support required. Recommendations made by Stage 2 Therapist • Improved physical health & well being • Improved mental and emotional health and wellbeing • Positive Attitude • Improved Integration • Improved quality of life 	<p>Carecall completed their caseload as at 31.3.14.</p> <p>Stage 2 psychological assessments have been stopped by the VSS and the process altered to move clients in need of mental health support to the Health and Social Care Board.</p>	
Action (CLSM)	Ensure all assessed clients have access to and a choice of quality counseling service of treatment		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Ensure completion of Stage 2 Assessment	Reduce risk and ensure the best outcome for client	Process transferred to Health and Social Care Board.	
Arrange recommended treatment or therapy		Process transferred to Health and Social Care Board.	
Follow up outcomes from therapy and treatment		Process suspended with suspension of Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, as directed by Programme Board in November 2013.	

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Put in place a framework of clinical associates to carry out Stage 2 assessments and treatment		Process transferred to Health and Social Care Board.	
Agree a referral process with each service provider		Currently designing a 'client journey' process to include entry to service, referral, exit, client review.	
Action (CLSM)	Ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Monitor and follow up on 'Do not Arrive' (DNA) and cancellations (VSO)	Analyse and make recommendations to reduce instances to Head of Client Services	Where contact numbers provided, Client Services call client within 15 minutes of not attending. Client services team call the following working day to make a new appointment and write within 5 working days to invite re-engagement.	
Monitor and follow up accuracy of Stage 1 referrals appropriate for Stage 2	Establish agreement between therapist and Individuals Needs Review.	Process no longer a VSS function – transferred to Health and Social Care Board.	
Action (CLSM)	Recommend packages of support in line with the Individual Needs Programmes		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	





APPENDIX 4

<p>Ensure eligibility with criteria</p>	<p>Agree packages of support in line with the target of the Individual Needs Programme as outlined above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved physical health & well being • Improved mental and emotional health and wellbeing • Positive Attitude • Improved Integration • Improved quality of life 	<p>100% Eligibility Checking in place, per direction of VSS Board. Routine includes checking:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Northern Ireland Memorial Fund records 2. Lost lives 3. GP and/or PSNI reports where applicable. 	
<p>Recommend packages of support to individuals, including: Respite Breaks</p>		<p>Awarded on receipt of complete and eligible Gateway process paperwork.</p>	
<p>Education and Training</p>		<p>Awarded on receipt of complete and eligible Gateway process paperwork.</p>	
<p>Chronic Pain</p>		<p>Awarded on receipt of complete and eligible Gateway process paperwork.</p>	
<p>Disability Support</p>		<p>Awarded on receipt of complete and eligible Gateway process paperwork.</p>	
<p>Carers</p>		<p>Awarded on receipt of complete and eligible Gateway process paperwork.</p>	




APPENDIX 4

GROWTH AND LEARNING			
Strategic Objective 3: Promote Best Practice in Services and Therapies and extend opportunities for learning and sharing, both internally and through networks of specialists, policy makers and service providers			
Action (CLSM)	Finalise work stream, operating manual, policies processes and procedures		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Individual Needs Reviews Operating Manual	Consistency across all individuals in application of funding rules Structured approach to disseminating information and responding to eligibility queries Respond professionally to client needs	Principles agreed and consistency actively managed through regular team meetings.	
Internal policies relating to all areas including working with vulnerable adults and children, lone working and flexible working arrangements	Staff trained in using the policy by November 2013 Agreed policy review on bi-annual basis, based on learning	Policies in place. Vulnerable adult and ASIST training completed in January 2014. Mental health first aid completed February 2014. Child protection training took place in August 2013. Emotional resilience for client facing staff scheduled for early April 2014. Client Services division created in June 2013 to quality assure the client journey.	
Action (CLSM/PM)	Establish and Implement a Monitoring and Evaluation System to collect and validate data on individuals and services provided		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress to Date	

APPENDIX 4

<p>Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group</p>	<p>Agreed specification for permanent MIS solution and interim solution to be put in place</p>	<p>Establishment of Working Group deferred to 2014/15.</p> <p>Consultation event convened by CVS took place with all funded groups on 31st March 2014.</p> <p>Interim Year End Qualitative Report in place.</p> <p>In conjunction with quarterly verification reports this will provide information for monitoring and evaluation purposes in 2013/2014.</p> <p>In addition, this provides basis for VSS to meet with Health and Wellbeing groups to discuss and agree 2014/15 extension of Letter of Offer. These meetings currently underway.</p>	
<p>Develop Specification of Requirements for a Management Information System</p>	<p>Management Information System, to produce clear information to feed into future policy</p>	<p>Specification document with CPD for procurement for system. Looking at an interim system of Salesforce until MIS is implemented.</p> <p>Upgrade to ICONI and the telephony system agreed for implementation April, 2014.</p>	
<p>Put in place an Interim solution, including training of officers and groups</p>	<p>Well trained staff, robust system</p>	<p>Interim Monitoring and Evaluation information now being received and input onto system by Programmes team.</p>	
<p>Go Live with final monitoring and evaluation database</p>	<p>Monthly update on statistics of victims and survivors availing of services.</p>	<p>Delayed until next financial year (April 2014 onwards).</p>	





APPENDIX 4

<p>Evaluate the provision of services and outcomes achieved of Individual Needs Programmes and Victim Support Programme</p>		<p>Evaluation of first 2 quarters data was due in October, but suspended pending the outcome of the CVS Review of VSS.</p> <p>Monitoring and Evaluation process in place as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input (verification reports) - Outputs (work plans) - Outcomes (qualitative year end report) <p>Funded organisations due to submit qualitative year end reports in June 2014.</p>	
<p>Monitor and follow up service delivery standards throughout the Client's Journey</p>	<p>Review and feedback from Annual Progress reports from each funded organization on services delivered to individuals</p>	<p>Funded organisations due to submit qualitative year end reports in June 2014.</p>	
<p>Action (CLSM/PM)</p>	<p>Ensure all service providers funded under the VSP are adequately trained and experienced to deliver services to victims and survivors</p>		
<p>Targeted actions</p>	<p>Outputs/Outcomes</p>	<p>Progress</p>	
<p>Carry out a Skills Audit of all VSS-funded counsellors and therapists</p>	<p>Clear information on capacity and skills of funded groups.</p>	<p>Information regarding qualifications and experience received and collated.</p> <p>VSS worked in partnership with David Bolton and Barney Devine of Institute for Conflict-Related Trauma on a Knowledge Transfer Programme (funded by the Public Health Agency) to develop focus group discussions around professional service delivery.</p>	






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	Accredited training courses and seminars for therapists and counsellors on talking therapies including CBT and EMDR	Diploma and certificate level qualifications were offered to funded organisations in 2013/2014.	
Carry out a Skills Audit of all VSS-funded complementary therapists	Clear information on capacity and skills of funded groups.	Subject to review in 2014.	
Delivery of training every 6 weeks, training programme for groups	Training timetable in place for groups including monitoring and evaluation, fraud and whistleblowing, procurement, corporate governance, recruitment etc	First training event took place in October 2013 with feedback to be reviewed and drive further sessions in 2014. Training budget for VSP groups reviewed in December 2013 based on slippage in other areas and letters of offer issued.	
Action (CLSM)	Best Practice in Services and Therapies		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Implement post assessment procedures	Provision of effective, efficient service and follow up	Client Services Division restructured and a staffing paper including specification of 5 core roles and responsibilities submitted to OFMDFM. Client Journey refined as per the recommendations from CVS. Health and Wellbeing Review and registration forms re-designed to make the process simpler and easier to access for clients.	


APPENDIX 4



Develop partnerships with QUB and Health Trusts/Health & Social Care Board	Long term strategy for therapies and treatments for victims and survivors within the wider health environment	Meetings held with QUB and the Bamford Institute at UU. Immediate routes established to transfer VSS clients seeking mental health support to HSC Mental Health teams (Clinical lead assigned).	
Action (CO/CSM)	Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Contact with all NIMF clients and request to transfer data to the Service	Improved awareness and understanding of programmes and services	Completed by NIMF in previous financial year. Permission sought from clients re-engaging with VSS.	
Disseminate publicity information re: Individual Needs Review	Engagement of previously 'hidden' victims and maximum number of stakeholders across the statutory, government and community sectors	In addition to contacting 5,500 NIMF clients, newspaper advertisements were placed in all regional newspapers.	
Finalise and implement Communication and Engagement Plan	Improved learning and sharing and feeding into best practice	Communications Plan in place and currently being enacted. March 2014: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan reviewed in line with recommendations in CVS Review - Successful completion of procurement of PR Services as a managed service to assist VSS with communications, messaging, and proactive media engagement around implementation of CVS Review. (MCE Public Relations) 	

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Chair bi-monthly V&S Practitioners Working Group	Discussion on emerging issues/policy/good practice/partnership work	Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group convened in September 2013. Terms of reference agreed and regular meetings held from that date.	
Meet Department requirements in line with Good Governance Checklist and SLA at OFMDFM Accountability Meetings	Partnership approach to implementation of victims and survivors strategy	Quarterly and monthly accountability meetings took place throughout 2013/2014	
Monthly bi-laterals with the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS)	Robust engagement with the CVS and the Forum for Victims and Survivors	Regular tri-lateral meetings took place between CVS, VSS and the Department throughout 2013/2014. VSS attended regular meetings of the Victims and Survivors Forum Practitioners Working Group in the latter half of 2013/2014, with VSS Board Members attending to take the Forum's feedback and contribute to the discussions.	
Review and update publicity and communications information and actions for clarity and relevance	Informed and dynamic engagement with key stakeholders that is responsive to changing views and emerging concerns	VSS communications reviewed on ongoing basis throughout 2013/2014. Website amended to facilitate easy access to information in relation to the Gateway to Services Process in February 2014.	
Undertake a customer satisfaction and experiences survey	Feedback from service users and input into future implementation plans	Delayed to October 2014 in light of CVS Review and recommendations Addressed in draft workplan for 2014/2015	
Action (CSM/CLSM/PM/CO)	Implementation of Recommendations from the <i>Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service</i> commissioned by CVS, published 21 February 2014		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	

APPENDIX 4







Address and monitor all recommendations in 2014/2015 workplan	Focused, measurable targets for improvement and other development, based on CVS Review, for the period 2014/15	Ongoing 3 / 6 /9 – month workplan in place for 2014/2015 Regular meetings underway with Programme Board. Regular meetings underway with Project Board.	
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INTERNAL BUSINESS PROCESSES			
Strategic Objective 4: Implement effective business and operational strategies to improve the performance and strengthen the Corporate Governance of VSS			
Action (CSM)	Ensure full staffing complement is in place during 2013/2014 to meet all corporate and business plan objectives		
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Review of staffing structure to date and proposal for future staffing requirements	Efficient and effective service to meet business and corporate plan objectives	Staffing paper submitted to Department in September 2013. This was deferred pending the CVS review and will be re-submitted in 2014.	
Recruitment of all remaining positions	Full recruitment of posts contained in approved staffing structure (contingent upon OFMDFM approvals for staff amendments paper)	Recruitment exercises in progress for Finance and Governance Manager and Programmes Officer. Finance and Governance Officer and Receptionist being advertised April 2014 following approval.	
Action (CSM)	Strengthen the Corporate Governance Arrangements of the Service		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	

APPENDIX 4

Ensure a Senior Management Team meeting takes place every 6 weeks	Reduced risk and increased communication between functions	Senior Management Team meet weekly since April 2013. Formalised and standing agenda items since month end October 2013. Formal minuted month end meetings in place. Mid month meetings focusing on key actions.	
Provision of quarterly progress reports	Periodic management information to monitor progress against business and corporate plan targets	Progress reports reviewed monthly at Senior Management Team Meeting and presented to Board, ARC and Commission. Review of reporting undertaken in July 2013 and improvements incrementally made to reporting timeframes. Quarter end December 2013 achieved within 5 working days and month end January 2014 and February achieved within 4 working days. Additional ad hoc fortnightly reporting commenced January 2014.	
Arrange Audit and Risk Committee and Board Meetings	Independent review of the Service by Audit and Risk Committee and Board members	The newly appointed Board in December 2013, have met formally three times. ARC met once: 24 March 2014.	
Action (CSM)	Manage and monitor to mitigate operational, business and security risks		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Risk Register updated at each SMT	Minimise impact of risk	Risk register updated each month end by each Risk Owner and reviewed by Head of Corporate Services and CEO on a monthly basis. Risk register reviewed month end January 2014 in line with CIPFA review comments.	






APPENDIX 4

Staff training on Risk Management, Bribery Act, Fraud and Whistleblowing	Training staff with the knowledge to manage risk	Training took place at staff Corporate Days in May and June 2013. Further fraud training took place in March 2014 for VSS staff.	
Action (CSM)	Ensure all policies and procedures are up to date and implemented by all staff		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Review of all priority internal policies and procedures and issue to all staff	Staff knowledge and understanding of all policies and procedures – strengthened governance	Procurement and Recruitment updated in July 2013.	
		Additional policies reviewed and updated November 2013 to January 2014 due to absence of Corporate Services Manager. 4 outstanding policies due April 2014.	
Action (CSM)	Ensure all staff have access to training and development opportunities necessary for their roles		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Performance Appraisal including: Professional Development Plan (PDP) and	Improved productivity, necessary skills, legal, compliance and continuity, and succession planning	Corporate Services complete. Client Services pending due to restructure and planning in place since June 2013.	
	On the job training, transfer of skills	Training Plans in place based upon staff Personal Development Plans. Review of Performance Management Policy March 2014.	
Organisational Staff Training Plan	Monitoring of Stability Index, Turnover Rate and Absence Rate	Staff statistics compiled monthly for reporting to the Board and Senior Management Team.	





APPENDIX 4

Action (CSM/CO)	Provide requested information to sponsor department and other relevant organizations in accordance to Financial Memorandum and other governing documents		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Prepare Financial Statements of Account	Statutory and regulatory obligations met	Completed March 2014.	
Prepare annual accounts and report and submit to Northern Ireland Audit Office	Annual Report to be presented to the Board of Directors for signing prior to audit commencement	Annual Report completed, NIAO review completed, accounts submitted to Companies House 27 th March 2014.	
Develop 2014/2015 Business Plan and update Corporate Plan		Corporate Planning delayed pending the release of the CVS Review of VSS. Senior Management Team have prepared a 3, 6 and 12 month plan and submitted to Department in February 2014. Corporate plan completed after the year end in May 2014.	
Answer all FOI requests	FOI requests answered within statutory time frame of 20 working days	All FOI requests were responded to within the statutory time frame.	
Provide accurate/ timely responses to AQs, Departmental /Ministerial Briefing	AQs and Departmental / Ministerial Briefing answered within timeframes set on requests	All AQs and Departmental/Ministerial briefing queries were responded to within the stipulated time frame.	
Action (CSM)	Ensure effective financial strategies are implemented to improve business performance		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	





APPENDIX 4

Pay 100% of invoices within the 30 days statutory timeframe	Payments made to suppliers on a prompt basis	There have been no breaches of the 30 day deadline with the exception of invoices queried by VSS.	
Update Procurement Policy in line with CPD guidance, best practice and Financial Memorandum	Two dedicated and trained Procurement Officers, with centralization of all major procurement within Corporate Finance function.	Financial Procedures Manual updated in September 2013. OFMDFM to update MSFM. VSS provided updates required in March 2014	
Manage budget against expenditure and achieve 99.5% consumption	Accurate and timely information to feed into government monitoring rounds, monthly consumptions reports and cash drawdowns	Budget pressure identified in July 2013 and a bid submitted in Monitoring Round. £1.1m was allocated to VSS following the Monitoring Round.	
Action (CSM)	Ensure all legislative requirements are fulfilled		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Establish Section 75 reporting requirements	Produce report and plan within stipulated timeframes	VSS are not required to submit Section 75 information to the Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI). VSS are required to report monitoring information to ECNI under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. Reporting due 6 th October 2013 – sent to ECNI w/e 6 th September 2013. Next return due 2014.	
Maintain a working environment which is health and safety compliant	Conduct risk assessments every year Keep health and safety risk register up to date	Display Screen Equipment evaluation complete. Health and Safety Risk Assessment complete 28 th August 2013 and reviewed by Premises Officer. Due for review August 2014.	






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		<p>A Health and Safety Risk Register is currently in place.</p> <p>Risks identified include: high volumes of work, challenging and complex client cases and external political/dept/media pressures negatively impacting on staff wellbeing, agency staff leaving, permanent staff reporting issues of work overload and stress.</p> <p>Senior Management Team identified Carecall as appropriate external provider to come onsite to do a wellbeing survey. To be raised with VSS Board.</p>	
Full compliance with all Data Protection Principles		No breaches of Data Protection were recorded in 2013/2014.	
Action (CSM)	Ensure compliance with Individual Needs Programme rules, terms and conditions		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Carry out 10% desk check on each payment run	Accurate analysis of all expenditure to identify key priorities for future funding	Completed with each payment run.	
Carry out 100% management check at desk on supporting documentation	Assurance of value for money and that funding is being directed to the greatest needs	Completed with each payment run.	
Carry out 10% check with suppliers to verify goods and services		100% checks being conducted by Programmes Team when making payment directly to client and 10%+ on direct supplier payments.	
Action (CSM)	Ensure compliance with Victims Support Programme rules, terms and conditions		





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Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Provide sufficient information to the Programmes team to permit verification issues to be addressed in Operating Manual	Assurance of value for money and that groups have appropriate policies and procedures in place.	An Irregularities Register is in place and is updated on a monthly basis. Findings of the Vouching and Verification (V&V) Team shared with Programmes Team upon the completion of each verification exercise.	
Prepare a schedule of on-site systems review of High Risk groups	Consistency in implementation of programme rules.	A groups risk register is under development incorporating the value of award, disallowed expenditure, underspend against workplan and identified irregularities. Implemented from month end January 2014 onwards for next financial year. VSS has continued vouching and verifying at 100%.	
Desk vouching of 100% of expenditure claims		100% of expenditure claims vouched.	
Action (PM)	Strengthen the Corporate Governance of VSP funded groups		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Arrange an independent Information Security Review	Robust security policies, measures and systems in line with best practices and audit recommendations to ensure all electronic and hard copy information integrity is maintained at all times by both VSS and funded organisations	OFMDFM recommended completing such a review in-house rather than externally contracting a review team. This has formed part of the post-contract checks carried out on funded organisations. The majority were completed in November/December 2013 with any outstanding in the final quarter of 2013/2014.	

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Arrange an independent Corporate Governance Review on low capacity groups		Complete. Results used to inform conditions of funding in Letters of Offer.	
Carry out a review of all funded staff positions within each funded organization.		Business case drafted and staffing/salary review due to take place in 2014.	
Action (CSM/PM)	Ensure sufficient staff capacity and understanding of VSP rules both within VSS and funded groups		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Finalise verification checklist and sampling procedures	Consistency in approach and framework for new staff to develop and follow.	100% vouching and verification has been completed for 2013/2014 and consideration will be given in 2014/2015 to changing to a risk based approach.	
Monthly meeting with Programmes	Learning and sharing between finance and development staff	Compliance and Programmes meeting has taken place in October to discuss significant variances and irregularities. Temporary line management of both teams consolidated pending recruitment of Finance Manager	
Action (CSM)	Ensure previous funding schemes (SSF and DGS for 2012/2013) are successfully closed		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Carry out verification of final claims 2012-2013	Closure of previous year-end financial accounts	Vouching and verification has been completed on 2012/13 funded organizations.	

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Recover any unvouched funds in line with VSS Debt Recovery Procedure		VSS is following Debt Recovery Procedures with one group funded in the 2012/13 financial year with a further 3 being considered.	
Action (CSM)	Ensure compliance with internal policies, procedures and processes		
Targeted Action	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	
Appoint Internal Audit function and implement internal audit plan	Full compliance and minimization of organizational risk	Tenders due from CPD December 2013. Appointment was made in January 2014 with fieldwork commenced in February 2014 and will continue throughout the year.	
Action recommendations in line with priority ratings	Improved processes and procedures, and strengthened corporate governance	Internal Policies and Procedures have been updated in line with DFP Internal Audit Recommendations. Timetable has been provided to the Department and staff training has also been provided.	
Maintain a register of all Audit Recommendations and Irregularities	Register issued to management for monitoring and follow up	Irregularities register in place and updated on a month end basis. Internal Audit report and register of recommendations complete No resource to take forward recommendations on a proactive basis. This was included in the Staffing paper submitted to the Department in September 2013.	



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