

Victims and Survivors Service Limited

Annual Report and Accounts For the year ended 31 March 2015

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under the statutory provision for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, the Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2014,
by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

on

21 December 2015

COMPANY NUMBER: NI 611922

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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

Oliver Wilkinson – Director appointed 13 December 2013, Interim Chair appointed 30 June 2014, permanent Chair appointed 1 April 2015

Peter Gay – Chair resigned 23 June 2014

Bertha McDougall – Director appointed 5 December 2013

Richard Solomon – Director appointed 5 December 2013

Beverley Clarke – Director appointed 1 April 2015

Patricia Haren – Director appointed 1 April 2015

Séamus Magee – Director appointed 1 April 2015

Stephen McIlveen – Director appointed 1 April 2015

Auditors

Northern Ireland Audit Office

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Belfast

BT7 1EU

Registered Office

1st Floor Seatem House

28-32 Alfred Street

Belfast

BT2 8EN

Principal Bankers

Danske Bank

8/9 Donegall Square North

Belfast

BT1 5GJ

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

The Directors are pleased to present their annual review and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Principal Activities

Strategic Context

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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. This definition has two distinctive dimensions, as follows:

- (1) *In this Order references to “victim and survivor” are references to an individual appearing to the Commission to be any of the following—*
 - (a) *someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident;*
 - (b) *someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned in paragraph (a); or*
 - (c) *someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident.*

- (2) *Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), an individual may be psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of—*
 - (a) *witnessing a conflict-related incident or the consequences of such an incident;*
or
 - (b) *providing medical or other emergency assistance to an individual in connection with a conflict-related incident.*¹

¹ Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/2953/contents>

Formation and Status

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

The location of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited during 2014-15 in Millennium House was initiated by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister due to an existing lease on the building. In June 2015, the organisation completed a premises move to 1st Floor Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 7AQ.

Organisational Structure

At 31 March 2015, the Interim Senior Management Team members were as follows:

Table 1: Interim Senior Management Team

Name	Grade	Post Title	Date Appointed
Margaret Bateson	G6	Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer	7 August 2014
Caroline Armstrong	DP	Finance & Governance Manager	1 July 2014
Brian Mullan	DP	Programmes Manager	1 October 2013
Jane Simms	DP	Psychologist	14 May 2013

A number of changes were made to the Senior Management Team during 2014-15. Margaret Bateson, previously the Head of Corporate Services, was appointed Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer on 7 August 2014 following the resignation of the previous Chief Executive on 18 July 2014. The Head of Client Services resigned effective 3 October 2014.

In the absence of the Grade 7 positions of Head of Client Services and Head of Corporate Services, the Interim Senior Management Team was established in August 2014, comprising the Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and each of the team managers. The Interim Senior Management Team met on a monthly basis to review management information, oversee the operational management of the service and prepare for reporting to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and Audit and Risk Committee.

At 31 March 2015, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had 23 employees in post (21.51 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 32.73 during this period as outlined in Note 2.

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

Gender Diversity

The table below illustrates the breakdown of staff by gender and grade.

Table 2: Breakdown of staff by gender and grade

Board		Grade 6 (SMT)		DP (SMT)		SO		EO1		EO2		AO	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2	1	0	1	1	2	1	7	0	1	1	3	4	2

Strategic Priorities

The 2009 Strategy for Victims and Survivors emphasises the strategic focus of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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.

These priorities underpin the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in delivering two Programmes of funding.

Programmes

Support for Individuals: the Individual Needs Programme

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited aims to provide support that is responsive to the particular needs of the individual, and that respects absolutely the dignity and personal choices of each client.

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Assistance for individuals is delivered under the Individual Needs Programme, and is informed by advice given by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in relation to the needs of victims and survivors. It includes:

- Support to access services and goods that improve the physical wellbeing and quality of life of victims and survivors living with injuries and their carers.
- Direct financial assistance for certain victims and survivors who have particularly low incomes.
- Support for certain victims and survivors to access education and training opportunities and respite.

Funding for Organisations: the Victims Support Programme

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited delivers funding to organisations that provide services and support to victims and survivors across Northern Ireland. The work funded through the Victims Support Programme within these organisations meets the Victims and Survivors Service Limited aims and objectives (outlined below) and is informed by advice given by the Commission for Victims and Survivors regarding the needs of victims and survivors.

The services and support delivered by organisations funded through the Victims Support Programme include:

- Services that support and maintain resilience among victims and survivors.
- Welfare advice and support for victims and survivors, and opportunities and activities focused on personal and professional development.
- Advocacy support for victims and survivors in relation to historical investigations and inquiries.
- Support and activities for young people affected by the impact of trauma in families and communities.
- Counselling and complementary therapies that improve the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of victims and survivors, and that enhance their quality of life.

Aims and Objectives of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited

Aims

The overarching aim of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is to provide safe, effective, and accessible support and care which places victims and survivors at the centre of our services. This goal underpins the specific aims and objectives of the Individual Needs Programme and Victims Support Programme, which are outlined in greater detail in the Review of Activities section below.

Objectives

The objectives that guide the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited are:

1. To respond to calls from victims and survivors by:
 - a delivering assistance under the Individual Needs Programme; and
 - b signposting and supporting access to victims' and survivors' support groups and other relevant agencies.
2. To support, assess, approve, fund, and monitor annual Programmes of Work to be delivered by a network of victim/survivor support organizations.
3. To monitor access to services by victims and survivors across the region.
4. To disseminate information around best practice.
5. To influence service development with a view to improving the experiences of and outcomes for victims and survivors.
6. To identify and engage with all relevant stakeholders.
7. To improve the performance of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and strengthen its Corporate Governance. This means ensuring that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited delivers funding on behalf of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to victims and survivors in an accountable, transparent and efficient way.

Stakeholders and Key Relationships

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited aims to be a safe pair of hands that supports victims and survivors as they engage with the diverse services, agencies, and other parts of society that contribute to the full and healthy life of the individual.

To be that safe pair of hands, the organisation needs and values a strong network of partners with whom it can communicate and work in the interests of victims and survivors.

Partnership-Level Stakeholders

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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.

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

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 Limited 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.

Over 2014-15 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited participated in the meetings and working groups listed below. This engagement was undertaken in order to maintain and improve relationships with these partner organisations and groups, in the interest of delivering better services for victims and survivors.

The Monthly Trilateral Meeting

The Monthly Trilateral Meeting was established in 2012-13 and continues to facilitate ongoing communication and information-sharing between the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Commission for Victims and Survivors, and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. Table 3 below lists the attendees of the Monthly Trilateral Meeting.

Table 3: Monthly Trilateral Meeting Members

Name	Organisation	Position
Margaret Bateson	Victims and Survivors Service Limited	Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
Caroline Armstrong	Victims and Survivors Service Limited	Finance and Governance Manager
John Beggs	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Secretary to the Commissioner
Peter Mann	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Policy Officer
Patricia McIntyre	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Principal, Finance, Strategic Planning & Social Change
Marie Matthews	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Deputy Principal, Finance, Strategic Planning & Social Change
Linda Mervyn	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Deputy Principal, Finance, Strategic Planning & Social Change

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 currently consists of 16 members, all of whom meet the definition of a victim as detailed in the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

The Forum 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. On occasion, The Victims and Survivors Service Limited and/or a Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board member is invited to attend these meetings, to update the Forum Services Working Group on current developments and to take the Working Group's feedback on an ongoing basis.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited met the Forum Services Working Group on 5 occasions in 2014-15. This engagement has been invaluable to the Board and Senior Management team of the Victims and Survivors Limited in hearing the views of victims and survivors and taking these into account when making decisions on the allocation of funding and support.

The Victims and Survivors Practitioners' Working Group

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited convenes the Victims and Survivors Practitioners' Working Group. This Working Group is a forum of practitioners from the statutory and community/voluntary sectors who work in the trauma field, initially piloting in the Belfast area. The group met 10 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 Limited with evidence of the needs of victims and survivors; and
5. To assist the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to develop an understanding of the barriers to participation.

It is hoped that, informed by the experience of this Working Group to date, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited has a large number of external stakeholders. Most important among these are victims and survivors themselves, and the organisations that have emerged over the past number of years to deliver dedicated services and support for them, funded by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Maintaining and further developing and improving relationships with these stakeholders continues to be a key priority for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

Strategic Developments Impacting Programmes Delivery and Stakeholder Engagement

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is working to continually improve the services and support that it delivers to victims and survivors. The following three developments have been key to this work:

- The Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, commissioned by the Commission for Victims and Survivors and published in February 2014;

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- Research commissioned by the Commission for Victims and Survivors into the impact of the Individual Needs Programme and Victims Support Programme, which reported to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in December 2014; and
- The work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Co-Design Programme, initiated in November 2014 to carry forward the recommendations emerging from the research commissioned by the Commission for Victims and Survivors.

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

In December 2013, the Commission for Victims and Survivors appointed independent consultants to carry out an assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. The assessment focused on the following four themes:

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

The report was finalised in February 2014 and made a number of recommendations focusing on the implementation of a change management process that would ensure an effective transition from an administrative model of delivery to a service model of delivery. While most of these concerned the Victims and Survivors Service Limited specifically, some were also relevant to the organisation's key partners including the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and Senior Management Team committed to implementing all of the recommendations relevant to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited on a timely basis throughout 2014-15. An action plan was immediately put in place, and was reported upon and monitored on a monthly basis by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Significant progress was made in 2014-15 and continues. By September 2015, 53 of the 70 recommendations had been implemented. The remaining recommendations relate primarily to 2 longer term key areas:

- Monitoring and Evaluation; and
- Assessment Process.

In November 2014 it was agreed with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister that the outstanding recommendations directly correlate with and influence the strategic direction of the Co-Design Programme of work described below, and as such would be carried forward into 2015-16 as part of that process.

The status of all of the recommendations in the Independent Assessment and progress as at December 2015 is outlined in [Appendix 2](#).

Commission for Victims and Survivors: Research Reports into the Impact of the Victims Support Programme and Individual Needs Programme (reported December 2014)

In July 2014, the Commission for Victims and Survivors commissioned RSM McClure Watters to deliver two research reports into the impact of the two funding Programmes delivered by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. This research involved consultation with individuals and groups. The final reports were submitted to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in December 2014.

The research delivered both strategic and operational-level recommendations for the improvement of policy and programmes for victims and survivors. Given the timing of these reports, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited agreed a process whereby the current round of Victims Support Programme funding (2013-15) was extended for a further period of up to 1 year into 2015-16. This has allowed the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and the Commission for Victims and Survivors to engage in a systematic process of programme renewal, including testing pilot measures recommended by the research, and ensuring that the whole process is informed by robust consultation with all of the relevant stakeholders.

Victims and Survivors Service Limited Co-Design Programme (Ongoing)

In November 2014, in view of the pending delivery of the research into the impact of the Victims Support Programme and Individual Needs Programme, a Victims Co-Design Programme Team was established. This has brought together strategy and policy representatives from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Commission for Victims and Survivors, and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and Senior Management in a facilitated process. This engagement is focused on re-designing service provision and delivery mechanisms in light of the learning over the past number of years.

At these early stages of work, the Co-Design Programme team has identified a number of core areas to be explored, including:

- The need for 3 strands of service provision: Individual Needs Programme, Victims Support Programme, and a Mental Trauma Service. The framework for driving this forward has been put in place, with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister having included this in a PEACE IV Operational Plan, and reference having been made to such a model for victims in the Stormont House Agreement (December 2014).

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- The need for a pilot to test an approach to the assessment process (specifically: a Personal Case Worker approach to engaging with individual victims and survivors, and a Personalised Budgets approach to delivering financial assistance).
- The need for robust Monitoring and Evaluation information to build upon the quality of services being delivered for victims and survivors.
- The need for a collaborative approach with the community and voluntary sector in ensuring funding available is targeted to those most in need through individual needs consultations with victims and survivors.
- The need for greater partnership working between all stakeholders within the sector.
- The need to review the staffing requirements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to ensure that it is equipped to deliver services in line with any agreed revisions to the service delivery model going forward.

The Victims and Survivors Limited Co-Design Programme Team members are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Victims and Survivors Limited Co-Design Programme Team Meeting

Name	Organisation	Position
Ricky Irwin	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Director, Social Investment and Victims
Patricia McIntyre	Victims and Survivors Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Head of Victims Unit
John Beggs	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Secretary to the Commissioner
Adrian McNamee	Commission for Victims and Survivors	Head of Policy
Margaret Bateson	Victims and Survivors Service Limited	Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
Bertha McDougall	Victims and Survivors Service Limited	Board Member

By 31 March 2015 the Victims and Survivors Limited Co-Design Programme Team had met 5 times. This engagement, along with the wider programme of stakeholder consultation to address the core themes outlined above and deliver an improved service delivery model, continues into 2015-16.

Review of Activities

Principal Activities for the year ending 31 March 2015

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited faced a number of challenges this year, the most significant being the impact of a budget reduction imposed in-year and subsequent budget changes following successful Monitoring Round bids.

This had a significant impact on the timing and quality of services delivered to victims and survivors as well as operational challenges and pressures internally on staff within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and our partners in the community and voluntary sector.

Budget Pressures and Associated Challenges

The opening budget position for 2014-15 was communicated to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in May 2014 as £11.7m. Following the June 2014 Monitoring Round, this position was reduced to £10m, representing a reduction of 22% on the previous year's outturn of £12.8m. An additional bid for £1.6m in the same Monitoring Round was unsuccessful.

Already in a period of significant change, this budgetary pressure added to these existing pressures within not only the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, but also the organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme. The in-year budget reduction left the Victims and Survivors Service Limited as a delivery body unable to address the needs of individual victims and survivors through the Individual Needs Programme.

With the support of the Commission for Victims and Survivors, the organisation immediately engaged with the groups funded under the Victims Support Programme to minimise the impact of limited services and support on individuals. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited also emphasised the urgency and impact of these reductions. Together, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister made successful applications for additional funding in the October 2014 and January 2015 Monitoring Rounds, and secured additional funding of £1.3m and £1.3m respectively. Additional funding of £38k for capital and £25k for depreciation was also made available, bringing the final budget position to £12.663m. In allocating these funds, meeting the needs of individual victims and survivors was treated as the priority.

In order to ensure that some funding could be issued to individuals in August 2014 to address priority needs, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board had to make a

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

number of difficult decisions across all areas. These and the subsequent adjustments made in light of additional funds secured in the October 2014 and January 2015 Monitoring Rounds are reflected in the discussion of the Programmes Activities and Review of Results below.

In outlining this activity, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is mindful of the significant pressure and distress that these difficult decisions caused for individuals supported through the Individual Needs Programme, and for organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme. Communicating these messages to vulnerable individuals and other stakeholders was not easy. The administration of this correspondence and the resolution of queries and concerns that it raised presented challenges for the senior management and staff of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, at a time when internal corporate resources were already stretched. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is grateful to all stakeholders and in particular its funded organisations for their ongoing support and cooperation over this difficult period.

Programmes Activity

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is responsible for administering funding and resources for victims and survivors. In November 2012 the organisation launched with £20m 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.

As outlined above, this programme has been extended for a period of up to 1 year into 2015-16, to create stability in the sector while the Co-Design process of consultation around service delivery improvement is carried out.

2. **The Individual Needs Programme** (2014-15) delivers funding and funded services directly to individuals who have been affected by Conflict/Troubles related incidents in the following ways:
 - Individuals who have been **physically or psychologically injured** and the injury has an ongoing impact in their day-to-day life;
 - Individuals **bereaved** of a parent, child, or spouse/partner; or
 - Individuals who **care** for someone who has been injured, for 35 hours or more per week.

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Over the year 2014-15, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited delivered support to a total of 4,189 individuals through the Individual Needs Programme, and to 11,936 individuals engaged with services provided by the 66 groups supported through the Victims Support Programme. This is outlined further in the review of activities below.

Victims Support Programme (2013-15)

Aims and Objectives of the Victims Support Programme

Over the whole period 2013-15, funding was delivered to organisations under the Victims Support Programme in two ways:

1. Grants to applicant organisations who applied **before** 17 December 2012 (Usually for more than £75,000 per annum)
2. Grants to applicant organisations who applied **after** 17 December 2012 (Maximum award £75,000 per annum)

As outlined above, these grants fund Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services delivered by the applicant organisations. The aims and objectives of the Health and Wellbeing and Social Support funding streams are detailed in Table 5 below.

Table 5: 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 2014-15

In 2014-15, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited delivered grant funding to 66 organisations: Large Grants to 43 organisations across the region and Small Grants to a further 23 organisations.

Access to the Victims Support Programme over the whole period was by paper application. This 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.

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The Independent Assessment Panel continued to review, score and approve or reject applications to the Programme in 2014-15.

Originally, it was intended that the funding of Health and Wellbeing services (usually Counselling and Complementary Therapies) in the first year of the Victims Support Programme would move towards a commissioning model in 2014-15. Following stakeholder consultation, however, the commissioning proposal was deferred for the remainder of the Victims Support Programme. Instead, a review was carried out of services delivered in the 2013-14 year, and on the basis of targets achieved, a 1 year extension of funding was issued to the relevant organisations.

Monitoring and Evaluation

During 2013-14, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had 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 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 in November 2013.

In its absence, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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. This continued into 2014-15.

In total 22,267 Social Support interventions, including respite support, befriending, informal and formal classes, drop-in and outreach support services, welfare advice, advocacy support and youth activities, were accessed by clients/members of funded organisations, although it should be noted that this does not represent unique individuals accessing services. 1,889 individuals accessed counselling support and 3,484 individuals accessed Complementary Therapies throughout the year.

Significant progress has been made in building upon existing data capturing systems and moving towards a focus on the impact of services on the individual victim and survivors. Significant work was undertaken in 2014-15 in establishing the frameworks, stakeholder consultation and engagement to enable this to move forward.

An implementation and training programme was also established to be rolled out in 2015-16. The Co-Design programme discussed above at pages 15-16 is driving this forward in collaboration with all of the funded organisations and other statutory services.

Budget Pressures and Impact on Victims Support Programme Activity

Following the budget reduction after the June 2014 Monitoring Round, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board approved the revision of the initial allocation of £5.9m to £5.6m.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited wrote to all groups in August 2014 to advise of this reduction, and to request that each organisation identify efficiency savings of up to 4.42%. This correspondence was followed up with Project Officer visits to all of the funded organisations in September 2014.

Given the timing of the reduction, most contractual obligations (such as rent and staff salaries) had already been committed.

While a small number of organisations were able to find all of the efficiency savings within their running costs, many had no option but to reduce Social Support programmes including respite breaks, personal development courses and drop-in support facilities, and to identify savings within their Health and Wellbeing programmes.

At this point, it was estimated that over 100 clients would not be able to receive counselling in 2014-15, and over 60 clients would not be able to receive complementary therapies. In addition, 8 organisations had made successful applications to the Victims Support Programme Smaller Grants process and were deemed as meeting the essential criteria for funding; however, the Scheme resources had been exhausted and these groups were informed that their applications were on hold.

Following these initial estimations and reports, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited worked in collaboration with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to mitigate any detrimental impact on front line service delivery. Bids for additional funding made in the October 2014 and January 2015 Monitoring Rounds were successful.

This enabled the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to make a 'Critical Health and Wellbeing' grant totalling £75,000 available in February 2015 specifically to alleviate the pressures outlined above in the Health and Wellbeing Programmes which included the provision of therapies for clients at risk or on waiting lists; and where appropriate, safe exit of clients engaged in therapies coming to a conclusion.

Individual Needs Programme (2014-15)

Aims and Objectives of the Individual Needs Programme

The aims and objectives of the Individual Needs Programme are detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6: 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 that respond to the individual's needs, on the basis of confirmed eligibility for services under the Programme• To monitor progress made by individuals

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

- a) have been **physically or psychologically injured** and the injury has an ongoing impact in their day-to-day life;
- b) have been **bereaved** of a parent, child, or spouse/partner; or
- c) **care** for someone who has been injured, for 35 hours or more per week.

Budget Pressures and Impact on the Individual Needs Programme Activity

Following the June 2014 budget reductions, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board was faced with a number of difficult decisions regarding the delivery of the Programme in August 2014. To ensure that the resources available were directed at those with priority needs, a key change was introduced to the delivery of support for the physically and psychologically injured. In order to ensure consistency, to address priority needs, and remove the need for a lengthy re-assessment, disability living allowance was introduced as a means to accessing support under the Support for Injured scheme.

The schemes were streamlined so that individuals no longer needed to apply for multiple schemes, but were rather offered one award with flexibility on eligible expenditure to meet the personalised needs of the individual.

In August 2014, the Programme opened initially on a limited basis to the injured and to carers only. Correspondence was issued to all individuals registered with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to explain that, due to the budget restrictions, it was not possible for the organisation to offer further support at that time to the bereaved or to

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

the injured not in receipt of Disability Living Allowance Middle and High Rate Care Component. This resulted in an increase in complaints received by the organisation from individuals and their representatives, including party councillors and Members of the Legislative Assembly. These are outlined in the section on Complaints Handling below.

As outlined above, an additional £2.6m was secured in the October 2014 and January 2015 Monitoring Rounds. The Individual Needs Programme was the priority area for allocating these additional funds. The Board approved amendments and additions to the initial allocation of support, making this funding available to the bereaved and those with continuing chronic pain needs who were not in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. In doing so, emphasis was placed on reducing the bureaucracy and paperwork associated with accessing the Programme, and maximising the flexibility of the awards made to individuals.

Taking all of these developments into account, Table 7 below outlines the support that was made available to individuals through the Individual Needs Programme over the whole year.

Table 7: The Delivery of the Individual Needs Programme 2014-15

Scheme	Support available	Eligible individuals
SUPPORT SCHEMES		
Education & Training	Assistance with up to £500 towards the cost of education and training courses. From 1 st August 2014, limited to long-term accredited courses to which Victims and Survivors Service Limited had previously committed support.	<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.
Care for Carers	A cash payment of £500.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary carers of individuals living with injuries.
Support for the Injured 1	Assistance towards the costs of services, aids, and adaptations used by people living with injuries as a result of a conflict-related incident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who receive DLA Middle Rate Care Component as a result of injuries from a Conflict/Troubles-related incident.
Support for the Injured 2	Assistance towards the costs of services, aids, and adaptations used by people living with injuries as a result of a conflict-related incident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who receive DLA High Rate Care Component as a result of injuries from a Conflict/Troubles-related incident.
Support for the Injured 3	Assistance towards the costs of services that help individuals to manage chronic pain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals living with injuries (both psychological and physical) who have previously been assessed, and their associated treatment plans specific to chronic pain needs extended.
Support for Bereaved	Assistance towards costs associated with respite breaks, home heating, or complementary therapies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereaved partners/spouses, bereaved parents, or children who have lost a parent.
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME		
Financial Assistance	Direct financial assistance to certain individuals: cash payment of £1,000.	<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.

Application Process: Support Schemes

Access to the support available through the Individual Needs Programme in previous years had been via the Individual Needs Review and Gateway to Services processes. These processes were described in the *Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2014*. In February 2014, the *Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited* recommended that a new process for assessing individual need should be established, and over the course of 2014-15, work was undertaken by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in this regard. Establishing an agreed method for assessing individual needs is part of the Co-Design Programme of stakeholder consultation being carried forward in 2015-16.

Points 1 and 2 below outline how access to these Schemes in 2014-15 was managed in this context.

1. April – August 2014

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited received confirmation of its budget for the Individual Needs Programme in late July 2014. However, based on the delivery of the Programme in previous years, there was an expectation among existing and potential clients that the Programme would open with the beginning of the financial year in April 2014. In these circumstances, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited took steps to ensure continuity of service provision for existing clients with priority needs, and continued to register interest from new clients, advising that contact would be made with them once further details became available about the 2014-15 Programme. Any unused awards from 2013-14 continued to be honoured to ensure no break in services.

2. August 2014 – March 2015

Upon opening the Programme in August 2014 **existing clients** were contacted directly. Initially, the budget allowed only for priority needs to be addressed, and Award Letters were issued to the following clients only:

- Injured clients who could provide supporting documentation to show receipt of **Disability Living Allowance High or Middle Rate Care Component or the equivalent** due Conflict/Troubles-related injuries; and
- Carers.

Following successful Monitoring Round bids later in the year, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was able to extend support to individuals who had previously received assistance towards pain management treatments but who were not in receipt of Disability Living Allowance benefits, and to the Bereaved. In each phase of this process, the priority concern was to extend the support to individuals as rapidly as possible as it became available, reducing the bureaucracy and paperwork associated with accessing the Programme. At the same time, access to the *Education and Training Scheme* was limited to those applicants who

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were enrolled on long-term courses to which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had previously committed financial support.

To facilitate access to the Schemes by **new clients** with minimum delay and bureaucracy, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited invited new applicants to complete a simple Registration Form and provide the relevant supporting information to confirm their eligibility for the Schemes. Award Letters were issued on receipt of the completed Registration Form and supporting documentation.

In 2014-15 Victims and Survivors Service Limited was able to support clients with all supporting documentation received by 31 December 2014. After that date, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to register potential new clients, advising that contact would be made with them once further details became available about the 2015-16 Programme.

Application Process: Financial Assistance

Access to *Financial Assistance* in 2014-15 was by paper application. As in previous years, this Scheme was the only means-tested measure within the Individual Needs Programme. The sole exception to the means-testing rule was in relation to those Seriously Injured applicants who could provide evidence that they were in receipt of Disability Living Allowance High Rate Care Component or the equivalent as a result of Conflict/Troubles-related injuries.

In terms of changes to the Scheme implemented in 2014-15 it should be noted that, in previous years, applications were processed until the available budget for the scheme was fully committed. In 2013-14, 1,754 eligible applicants received financial assistance (in four payments of £260 each, totalling £1,040). Any further applications received after the budget was committed were not supported. In 2014-15 the changes described below were implemented in an effort to address the unfairness to otherwise eligible applicants occasioned by this 'first come, first served' approach.

Changes to the delivery of Financial Assistance in 2014-15

Before opening *Financial Assistance* for applications in 2014-15, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board discussed with the Commission for Victims and Survivors and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister the particular needs of the Seriously Injured and the importance of ensuring provision of support for them. Policy advice was determined that the Scheme should be opened in 2 phases, first to the Seriously Injured, defined as those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance High Rate Care Component or the equivalent level of benefit as a result of Conflict/Troubles-related injuries and then opened to all other applicants. In keeping with this guidance, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited administered the Scheme in two Phases as follows:

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- **Phase 1** was opened to the Seriously Injured, and ensured that those in this category received a particular level of assistance, i.e. £1,000 as a one-off capital payment, with minimum delay. Those who had provided evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance High Rate Care Component or equivalent in 2013-14 were required only to complete a self-declaration confirming that their circumstances were unchanged. New applicants were required to complete a full application.
- **Phase 2** was later opened to other applicants for a period of four weeks. Those who had received financial assistance in 2013-14 were required to complete a declaration to confirm that their financial circumstances were unchanged. New applicants were required to complete a full application. All were advised at the point of application that the value of any final award would be calculated by dividing the budget remaining after the delivery of Phase 1 by the total number of eligible applicants to Phase 2.

Once both phases had been closed to applications and a means test had been applied as required, it was calculated that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited could offer each eligible applicant under Phase 2 an award of £650. This was issued to the eligible applicants as a one-off capital payment. At that point, a distinction existed between the amount of financial assistance provided to the Seriously Injured, whose cases were prioritised under Phase 1 (£1,000), and that provided to other eligible applicants under Phase 2 (£650). Two factors gave rise to this distinction:

1. The budget available for this Scheme had at that time, following the June 2014 Monitoring Round, been subject to a reduction (from £1.8m to £1.7m);
2. The number of eligible applicants in 2014-15 was significantly greater than in 2013-14: the Victims and Survivors Service Limited provided financial assistance to 493 more applicants in 2014-15 (2,248 individuals) than in 2013-14 (1,755 individuals).

While it was fairer to provide support under this Scheme in this manner than on the previous 'first come, first served' basis, it was a matter of regret that the award made available to persons under Phase 2 was less than that under Phase 1. Together with the Office for the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to seek additional funding later in the year. Following the allocation of additional funds in the January 2015 Monitoring Round, it was possible to make an additional payment of £350 to all Phase 2 eligible applicants. As such, by 31 March 2015 the total payment made to all eligible applicants in 2014-15 was the same: £1,000.

Issues arising from changes to the delivery of Financial Assistance in 2014-15

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited was notified in January 2015 that an individual had applied to the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland for leave to apply

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for Judicial Review of the delivery of this Scheme in 2014-15. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited furnished the applicant's legal representatives with all of the information and formal correspondence necessitated by this process. The application for leave to apply for a Judicial Review was withdrawn on 18 September 2015.

Awards and Payments made under the Individual Needs Programme 2014-15

By 31 March 2015 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had issued 4,189 individuals with Award Letters through the Individual Needs Programme.

The final outturn of the Individual Needs Programme in 2014-15 was £4.28m. Table 8 below outlines the total number of awards and the values of payments made to individuals.

Table 8: Awards and Payments made under the Individual Needs Programme in 2014-15

Scheme	Number of Awards made	Value of Payments £'000
1: Education & Training	167	65
2: Chronic Pain	294	224
3: Care for Carers	417	218
4: Disability Support	85	79
5: Respite Breaks	121	52
6: Financial Assistance	2,248	2,237
Support for the Injured	826	686
Support for the Bereaved	2,117	722
TOTALS	6,275	4,283

6,275 awards were issued to 4,189 individuals.

Review of Results

Performance against Business Plan Objectives

The principal activities of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in this year have been outlined above. In addition, the objectives and **41** key performance indicators were agreed with the Officer of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

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The achievement of these targets was monitored over the year using the Red / Amber / Green (RAG) status updates listed in the table below. At 31 March 2015, summary progress against all 41 targets was as follows:

RAG Status		Number of Targets	Status Description
BLUE		32	Completed
GREEN		4	Achieved or on track for delivery
GREEN/AMBER		1	Broadly on track and there is <i>justifiable</i> confidence of getting close to targeted outcomes
AMBER		4	Progress less than planned. Significant doubt around the achievement of targeted outcomes
RED		0	Commitments not achieved or not expected to be achieved within the current PfG period

Further details are outlined in [Appendix 3](#).

Key progress in 2014-15 against these key objectives is outlined below. This commentary should be read in the context of the significant challenges discussed above, relating to the budget pressures, changes in service delivery structures and the Senior Management Team.

Individual Needs Programme

- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited engaged directly with individual victims and survivors to make available to them appropriate services and support. As at 31 March 2015, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had engaged with 4,189 individuals in this way.
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited exceeded its target figures for the delivery of support to individuals under the Individual Needs Programme.

In 2014-15, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited streamlined the Individual Needs Programme to improve the access to support and services and significantly reduce the administrative burden on victims and survivors. This included:

- Self declarations under *Financial Assistance* for those whose eligibility had already been confirmed;
- Fairness and equity in *Financial Assistance* by widely publicising the opening and closing date and allocating the budget across all individuals who applied;

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- Awards to the seriously injured from August 2014 with a flexible list of eligible items;
- Awards to carers from August 2014 of a cash payment of £500 to reduce the need for invoicing and quotations;
- Awards to the bereaved from December 2014 with a flexible list of eligible items.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continues to engage with, listen to, and provide support to individuals on a daily basis.

6,275 awards were made for support representing 4,189 individuals having received support through the *Support for the Injured, Bereaved, Carers or Financial Assistance Schemes*.

During 2014-15, telephone calls averaged 500 per week and on average 50 individuals called into the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in person per week.

Victims Support Programme

- Over the period April 2014 to March 2015, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited delivered funding to a total of 66 groups, the majority of which will continue to receive funding in 2015-16 with the extension of the Programme for a period of 1 year.
- The 4.42% budget reduction imposed on groups and its impact was documented and formalised with the provision of new Letters of Offer in November 2014.
- Due to additional funding becoming available later in the year, additional support was made available to organisations delivering counselling services in February 2015.
- The delivery of Befriending and Befriending Coordinator Training was delivered to 19 organisations.
- Following significant research and a review of skills and capacity, a Workforce Training Plan to enhance their skills and capacity was developed for delivery in 2015-16.
- Consultation with funded organisations in relation to the development of improved outcomes and impact-focused monitoring and evaluation was undertaken, with progress made in relation to reaching agreement on common analysis and reporting frameworks. This work will continue into 2015-16.

Corporate Governance

- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Annual Report and Accounts for the period ending 31 March 2014 was certified by the Comptroller and Auditor General and submitted to Companies House.

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Internal Audit Plan was implemented, with an Annual Assurance level of *Satisfactory* agreed.
- All funding for 2014-15 was fully allocated.
- An Interim Senior Management Team was established and met on a monthly basis to manage strategic and operational risks and ensure clear communication between functions.

Clinical Governance

- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has established a robust framework of protocols to support its Client Services function. The framework ensures the safety both of individual clients and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff.
- For individual clients this includes policies and protocols in relation to the identification of risk and unacceptable behaviour, clinical risk monitoring and management procedures, and the ongoing management of risk issues. Signposting and referral pathways have been established for individual clients requiring psychological support and interventions provided through organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme and/or their General Practitioner if acceptable to the client. A monthly recording and monitoring system of this information has been established.
- The health and well-being of staff within the service is of significant importance, and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited recognises the impact upon staff in dealing with vulnerable clients. Staff training in relation to policies and protocols on clinical risk identification and management, lone working, engaging with vulnerable adults and self-care have been developed and delivered. Staff supervision and clinical supervision are provided on a regular basis. An induction programme for new staff has been developed to raise awareness of the issues that individual clients may present with, the skills and strategies required to deal with individual clients in a sensitive, empathic and compassionate manner, and the policies and protocols that are in place to manage challenging situations safely and effectively.
- A Workforce Training Plan to enhance the skills and capacity across the sector for those delivering psychological interventions to individual clients commenced in March 2015. The purpose of the Workforce Training Plan is to build upon existing standards across the sector and promote best practice in the care of individual clients' health and wellbeing.

Complaints Handling

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has a complaints procedure in place to ensure that individual clients, funded organisations and all other stakeholders can express any dissatisfaction that may arise, and make improvements and changes to

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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 Limited website. The organisation takes all complaints and feedback very seriously and actively monitors themes and response times.

In 2014-15, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited recorded 70 complaints, at an average of 6 complaints per calendar month. While this represented an increase of 7 complaints on the total of 63 received in 2013-14, it should be noted that a robust complaints handling and recording procedure and a dedicated Complaints Officer was implemented from November 2013.

Table 9 below provides a summary of the complaints received in 2014-15.

Table 9: Summary of Complaints 2014-15

Category	Number
Total number of complaints received	70
Closed as at 31 March 2015	64
Outstanding at 31 March 2015	6

At 31 March 2015, six complaints remained outstanding. Three of these concerned cases where the complaint was received towards the end of March 2015. In those cases, the relevant responses were issued within the 10-day turnaround target time in April 2015. The remaining three cases concerned individuals who had raised complaints on the basis that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had suspended the support available to them under the Individual Needs Programme, pending investigations into payments made to them. These investigations are ongoing into 2015-16. The individuals concerned are being kept up to date with regard to this process.

The rate of complaints in 2014-15 peaked in September 2014 with receipt of 19 within a single month. This sharp increase was directly related to the opening of the Individual Needs Programme on a limited basis in August 2014, following the budget reductions imposed after the June 2014 Monitoring Round and the narrower eligibility criteria which had to be implemented to manage this. The key issues raised in these complaints recurred throughout the year.

Of the total of 70 complaints handled, 37 (52%) were partially upheld. These complaints concerned the limitations affecting the delivery of the Individual Needs Programme. This is discussed in further detail below. 28 complaints (40%) were upheld in full. These complaints concerned the internal operations of the Victims and

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Survivors Service Limited, including communications with clients, timescales affecting delivery and internal records management. These issues are also detailed below. In two cases (3%), the complaints were not upheld: the first concerned an individual who complained that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had lost their paperwork, but it was established that there was no record that this paperwork was received; the second concerned a solicitor letter complaining that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had neglected to contact their client, but it was established that the Client Services Team was in ongoing contact with the client. The remaining three cases (5%) concerned the ongoing investigations into payments noted above.

Complaints concerning the delivery of the Individual Needs Programme

A significant proportion of the complaints received in 2014-15 concerned the delivery of the Individual Needs Programme, as follows:

- Delays in opening the Individual Needs Programme for 2014-15, while waiting on budget confirmation.
- The decrease in the monetary value of awards available under the Individual Needs Programme in 2014-15 generally.
- Amended eligibility criteria for accessing *Support for the Injured*.
- Initial deferral of Support for the Bereaved, which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was finally able to make available in December 2014 following the allocation of additional funding from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.
- The fact that *Financial Assistance* is means tested, and therefore could not be availed of as a gesture of acknowledgement of bereavement or injury.
- Objection to the delivery of *Financial Assistance* in 2 Phases, prioritising the needs of the Seriously Injured over other applicants, and initially allocating these with a larger award than other applicants. As explained above, this imbalance was corrected following the January 2015 Monitoring Round and all applicants received a total award of £1,000 by the end of the year.

While it was not possible for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to fully satisfy the complaints related to the reduced monetary values of awards available, the organisation sought to engage constructively with all complainants, and ensured that their concerns were conveyed to both the Commission for Victims and Survivors and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Complaints concerning the internal operations of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited

Ten complaints were raised by clients in relation to errors in Management Information Systems. None of these complaints resulted in payments made in error: rather, they were generated on the basis that the clients concerned complained that they had been

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overlooked for awards. Where these issues were raised, they were immediately addressed and corrected. Concurrently, a longer term plan was developed to consolidate and cleanse the organisation's management information systems. Work was undertaken in earnest from January 2015 onwards to deliver this, namely:

- the consolidation of electronic records onto one Management Information System;
- the consolidation of all file records into one centralised filing system;
- the extraction of information from c.3,500 legacy Northern Ireland Memorial Fund files.

In addition, 18 of the complaints received concerned the internal operations of the organisation, including:

- Frustration with the timescales involved in accessing support and payments.
- Frustration in relation to apparently unclear communication received from front line staff members.

Each of the recorded complaints was addressed in conversation with the complainants concerned, with Victims and Survivors Service Limited acting quickly to identify the specific issue, rectify it, communicate with the complainant, and strive to improve processes to ensure that the likelihood of a recurrence was minimised. In addition, communication was expanded and improved to include regular updates to funded organisations, and the listing of Frequently Asked Questions on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's website.

Sustainability Report

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to the Executive's Sustainable Development Strategy. Policies and practices have been introduced within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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;
- reduction in the number of desk top printers with defaults set to print at the multifunction copier;
- office accommodation located within Belfast City Centre close to public transport links; and
- 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.

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited 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 Limited will continue to set a number of sustainability targets within the 2015-16 financial year, and report on the progress and success of each of these targets.

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 Limited 3 year Corporate Plan 2015-18 was approved by the Department in February 2015 and by ministers in November 2015.



Oliver Wilkinson
Chair



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

Date: 16 December 2015

Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Future Developments

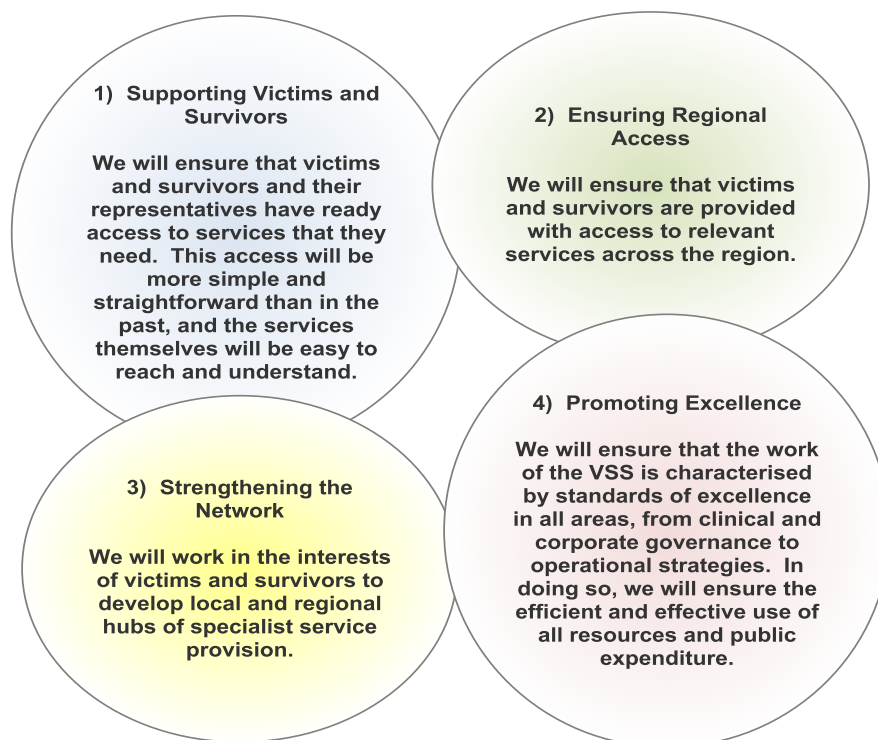
The Victims and Survivors Service Limited submitted its *Corporate Plan 2015-18* to Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in February 2015. This document, including the organisational *Action Plan 2015-16*, was approved by the Department Board on 25 February 2015 and Ministers on 12 November 2015.

The Corporate Plan 2015-18 details four key strategic objectives for the years ahead, namely:

1. Supporting Victims and Survivors
2. Ensuring Regional Access
3. Strengthening the Network
4. Promoting Excellence

These are consistent with objectives presented in the Corporate Plan for 2014-17 submitted to the Department in the previous year, as reflected the *Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2014*. Diagram 1 below provides summary detail of each of these objectives.

Diagram 1: Strategic Objectives for 2015 and Beyond



Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

In developing these priorities the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited *Action Plan 2015-16* details the measurable targets and steps that will be taken over the next financial year to work towards these objectives. Progress against this Plan is monitored on an ongoing basis and reported on monthly to the Board.

The ongoing work of the Co-Design Programme Team, described on pages 15-16 above, is integral to this Plan, and the policy and practice recommendations that flow from it will inform the shape of the organisation's strategic objectives in 2016 and beyond.

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 5 (page 95) 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 2015.

Employee Policy

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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;

Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

- 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 Limited for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Table 10: Victims and Survivors Service Limited Employee Sick Absence 2014-15

	Working days lost 2014-15	Average days lost per WTE member of staff
Including long-term absence	291	12.32*
Excluding long-term absence	82	3.45*

*Based on an average WTE of 24.81 permanent employees over the full year.

This compares to 235 days absence (including long term absence) in 2013-14, an average of 8.24 working days lost per member of staff during that period.

Excluding long term absence, this compares to 140 days absence in 2013-14, an average of 4.83 working days lost per member of staff during that period.

Pensions

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 48 and note 1.8 to the accounts

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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.

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

In 2014-15 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited received 6 Freedom of Information requests. These are detailed in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Freedom of Information Requests

Ref.	Subject	Response
01	Applicant seeking confirmation of whether the Victims and Survivors Service Limited currently / previously used to fund the Northern Ireland Retired Police Officer's Association, and if so, a range of other details.	Confirmation: Victims and Survivors Service Limited does not nor has ever funded this organisation
02	Minutes of interim board meeting from the 23 September 2013.	Full release
03	Applicant seeking: 1. The total number of contracts put out for tender by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited during the following two periods: a) 1 January 2010 - 31 December 2010, b) 1 January 2013 - 31 December 2013. 2. For each of these two periods, the number of contracts awarded following a tendering process in which only one contractor submitted a bid.	Full release
04	Applicant seeking: 1. The protocols in place for referrals between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and National Health Service, as referred to in the minutes of Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board Meeting of 5 February 2014; 2. The Queen's University Belfast report on capacity within groups as referred to in the minutes of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board Meeting of 5 February 2014; 3. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Commission for Victims and Survivors, as referred to in the minutes of the Victims and Survivors Service Board Meeting of 3 March 2014; 4. Minutes of Board Meetings that have taken place from 13 May 2014 onwards, not currently on Victims and Survivors Service Limited website; and with reference to Hansard of evidence presented to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Committee on 9 October 2013; 5. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed in conjunction with the Department; 6. Full list of outcomes which formed part of the business case for victims and survivors funding; 7. Full list of the menu of set indicators referred to; and 8. The business case for victims and survivors funding.	Full release
05	Applicant seeking all documentation in regard to conditions which must be fulfilled by groups to which you provide funding.	Full release
06	Applicant seeking: (1) All documentation in regard to procedures in respect of whistleblowing and whistle-blowers in groups which receive funding from the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. (2) All documentation in regard to procedures in respect of employment of family members of persons who serve on any boards or committees which manage, or are responsible for, groups which receive funding from the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. (3) All documentation in respect of conditions or recommendations regarding the ratio of service to running costs.	Full release

Payments to Suppliers

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited 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 year 2014-15.

Table 12: Payments 2014-15

Month	Percentage of invoices paid within 10 days	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	Average Days taken to pay invoices per month
Apr-2014	48%	98%	12
May-2014	28%	97%	13
Jun-2014	50%	99%	11
Jul-2014	51%	97%	12
Aug-2014	43%	96%	12
Sep-2014	71%	95%	10
Oct-2014	42%	100%	11
Nov-2014	32%	97%	17
Dec-2014	53%	81%	16
Jan-2015	58%	84%	19
Feb-2015	46%	97%	12
Mar-2015	43%	94%	20

Overall for 2014-15, 47% of invoices were paid within 10 days and 95% within 30 days. On average 13 days were taken to pay invoices during 2014-15. This is a significant improvement on 2013-14 when 34% were paid within 10 days, 91% within 30 days and an average of 16 days overall.

Financial Position and Resources

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited 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 2015-16. The organisation has the staff resources required to achieve its current business objectives and has a proposed staffing structure with consideration currently being given regarding the Senior Management Team and future business objectives.

The opening budget position for 2014-15 was communicated to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in May 2014 as £11.7m. Following the June 2014 Monitoring Round, this position was reduced to £10m, representing a reduction of 22% on the previous year's outturn of £12.8m.

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

An additional bid for £1.6m in the June 2014 Monitoring Round was unsuccessful, however, a further bid was submitted at the October 2014 Monitoring Round and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited secured additional funding of £1.3m following this. This allowed the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to:

1. Ease existing commitment pressures across all budget areas;
2. Provide support of £200 under a new Support for the Bereaved Scheme; and
3. Provide support of £200 to those previously assessed and with on-going chronic pain needs.

Pressures remained, however, within the Individual Needs Programme and an additional bid for £1.3m which submitted in the January 2015 Monitoring Round. The outturn of this became known on 8 January 2015 and due to the time constraints, presented a number of challenges for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to maximise spend by 31 March 2015.

Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Consequently, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited carried out the following key actions in January 2015:

1. An increase to Support for the Bereaved awards, from £200 to £400;
2. An increase to Support for the Injured awards for those on Middle Rate DLA, £200 to £400;
3. Allocation of further awards to clients pending on High Rate DLA within the Support of the Injured Scheme;
4. Allocation of a number awards within the Support for the Injured Scheme for those clients who had continued to engage in chronic pain treatments, but not on DLA;
5. An increase to Financial Assistance from £650 to £1,000;
6. Temporary recruitment of administrative staff to support delivery of the Schemes to March 2015.

The financial results for the period as set out on page 81 indicate that the company had grant in aid budget allocation of £12,662,998.

The Statement of Financial Position on page 82 shows the company had net assets of £384,452 as at 31 March 2015, and cash at bank of £781,485.

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 year. 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 during 2014-15 were as follows:

- Oliver Wilkinson – Director appointed 13 December 2013, Interim Chair appointed 30 June 2014, permanent Chair appointed 1 April 2015
- Peter Gay – Chair resigned 23 June 2014
- Bertha McDougall – Director appointed 5 December 2013
- Richard Solomon – Director appointed 5 December 2013

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

Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

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 Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has designated the Interim Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. Her relevant responsibilities as Interim 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 2014-15.

Senior Management Team

The permanent head of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. This position was held during 2014-15 by Anne Dorbie (appointed November 2012 and resigned effective 18 July 2014).

On 7 August 2014, Margaret Bateson was appointed Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

At the beginning of 2014-15, the composition of the Senior Management Team was as follows:

- Anne Dorbie, Chief Executive (Appointed: November 2013, resigned July 2014)
- Katrina Hinfey, Head of Client Services (Appointed: December 2013, resigned November 2014)
- Margaret Bateson, Head of Programmes and Corporate Services (Appointed: February 2013)

From November 2014 an Interim Senior Management Team was put in place as follows:

- Margaret Bateson, Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer (Appointed: August 2014)
- Caroline Armstrong, Finance and Governance Manager (Appointed: July 2014)
- Brian Mullan, Programmes Manager (Appointed: October 2013)
- Jane Simms, Psychologist (Appointed: May 2013)

Related Parties

Details of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited related parties are set out in Note 20 to the financial statements and in the Remuneration Report on page 48.

Off-Payroll Engagements

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited does not have any 'off-payroll' engagements at a cost of over £58,200 per annum during 2014-15.

Register of Interests

The Chair, the Board, the former Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, the Interim 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 Limited, 1st Floor, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN.

Corporate Governance

The company's Corporate Governance framework is set out in the Annual Governance Statement on page 56.

Charitable Donations

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

Statement of Disclosure of Information to the Auditors

The Interim 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 they ought to have taken in their 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 has the statutory responsibility for the audit of Victims and Survivors Service Limited under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. There were no payments made to the Northern Ireland Audit Office in the year in respect of non audit work.



Oliver Wilkinson
Chair



Margaret Bateson
Interim Chief Executive
and Accounting Officer

Date: 16 December 2015

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Remuneration Policy

Remuneration of all staff members, including the former Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, the Interim Chief Executive and 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 appointment and remuneration of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Board is determined by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Service Contracts

Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited 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, the former Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and the Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Remuneration (including salary) and Pension Entitlements (Audited)

Officials	2014-15					2013-14				
	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefit s in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)	Total £'000	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefit s in kind (to the nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (to nearest £1000)	Total £'000
Mrs Anne Dorbie, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. Termination Date 18 July 2014	0-5 (full-year equivalent 60-65)	-	-	1	5-10	60-65	-	-	38	95-100
Mrs Margaret Bateson, Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. From 7 August 2014	35-40 (full-year equivalent 50-55)	-	-	13	55-60	-	-	-	-	-
Mr Peter Gay, Board Chair. Termination Date 23 June 2014	0-5 (full-year equivalent 5-10)				0-5	0-5	-	-		0-5
Mrs Bertha McDougall, Board Member	0-5				0-5	0-5	-	-		0-5
Mr Oliver Wilkinson, Board Member Interim Chair from 30 June 2014	5-10				5-10	0-5	-	-		0-5
Mr Richard Solomon, Board Member	0-5				0-5	0-5	-	-		0-5
Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Remuneration	60-65				60-65	60-65				60-65
Median Total Remuneration	23,108				23,108	26,431				26,431
Ratio	2.3				2.3	2.3				2.3

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

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Note:

- Anne Dorbie resigned from the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer post on 18 July 2014, and the terms of her departure are confidential.
- Margaret Bateson was appointed Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer on 7 August 2014.
- Peter Gay resigned on 23 June 2014.
- Oliver Wilkinson was appointed Interim Chair on 30 June 2014 and became Chair on 1 April 2015.

The following members have been appointed to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board effective from 1 April 2015:

- Oliver Wilkinson, Chair
- Beverley Clarke
- Stephen McIlveen
- Patricia Haren
- Séamus Magee

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 year.

Bonuses

Bonuses are not payable to Victims and Survivors Service Limited Directors or employees. There were no ex-gratia payments made to current Directors or employees. The previous Chief Executive left on 18 July 2014 and the terms of her departure are confidential.

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Pension Benefits (Audited)

	Accrued Pension at pension age as at 31 March 2015 & related lump sum	Real increase in pension & related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31 March 2015	CETV at 31 March 2014	Real increase in CETV	Employer contribution to partnership pension account
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	Nearest £100
Mrs Anne Dorbie, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. Termination Date 18 July 2014	20-25 Plus lump sum of 65-70	0-2.5 Plus lump sum of 0-2.5	383	377	3	-
Mrs Margaret Bateson, Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. From 7 August 2014	0-5 Plus lump sum of 0-5	0-2.5 Plus lump sum of 0-2.5	19	13	4	-

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 the Assembly each year. From April 2011 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.

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

A new pension scheme, Alpha, will be introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The majority of existing members of the NICS pension arrangements will move to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age will not move to alpha and those who were within 13.5 years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to Alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age. Alpha is also a 'Career Average Revalued Earnings' (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of the scheme membership. The rate will be 2.32%. CARE pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases to the CPI.

For 2015, public service pensions will be increased by 1.2% for pensions which began before 6 April 2014. Pensions which began after 6 April 2014 will be increased proportionately.

Employee contribution rates for all new members for the period covering 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016 are as follows:

Scheme Year 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

Pay band – assessed each pay period		Contribution rates – Classic members	Contribution rates –, classic plus, premium, nuvos and Alpha
From	To	From 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016	From 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016
£0	£15,000.99	3%	4.6%
£15,001.00	£21,000.99	4.6%	4.6%
£21,001.00	£47,000.99	5.45%	5.45%
£47,001.00	£150,000.99	7.35%	7.35%
£150,001.00 and above		8.05%	8.05%

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

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 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

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**. The normal pension age in Alpha will be linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. Further details about the NICS pension 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 NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations and do not take account of any actual or potential benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the year.

Remuneration Report for the year ended 31 March 2015

Compensation for Loss of Office

The Chief Executive left on 18 July 2014 and the terms of her departure are confidential.

Fees to Third Parties

Only remuneration and expenses were paid to Directors of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in 2014-15.

The Board of Directors has received the following remuneration, reflected in the 2014-15 financial statements:

	Remuneration Rate	Year end 31 March 2015 (£)	Year end 31 March 2014 (£)
O. Wilkinson, Member/Interim Board Chair	£125 per day/£5,600 p.a	5,325	1,480
P. Gay, Board Chair	£5,600 p.a	1,400	1,867
B. McDougall, Board Member	£125 per day	2,750	1,576
R. Solomon, Board Member	£125 per day	2,906	438
		10,981	5,361

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

	Year end 31 March 2015 (£)	Period end 31 March 2014 (£)
O. Wilkinson, Member/Interim Board Chair	1,121	173
P. Gay, Board Chair	360	27
B. McDougall, Board Member	183	172
R. Solomon, Board Member	30	-
	1,334	372

No further remuneration or expenses were paid to non-executive Directors in 2014-15.



Margaret Bateson
Interim Chief Executive
and Accounting Officer

Date: 16 December 2015

Statement of Accounting Officer's and Director's Responsibilities

Statement of Interim Accounting Officer's and Directors' 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Interim 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 Interim 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 Interim 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.

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has appointed the Interim Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. 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 Limited assets are set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2015

Introduction

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 through the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL). The Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited report directly to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

This statement is given in respect of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's accounts for 2014-15. The Governance Statement comprises two broad elements. First, the Statement describes the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's governance framework, identifying responsibilities and explaining the functions of its constituent elements. Second, the Statement reports my assessment as Interim 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 Limited conformance with the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013.

The Purpose of the Governance Statement

The purpose of the Governance Statement is to report publicly on the extent to which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited complies with the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013. 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 Limited 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 Limited'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 Limited operated for the year ended 31 March 2015 comprises:

- The Accounting Officer;

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2015

- The Board;
- The Audit and Risk Committee;
- The Internal Audit function.

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 September 2014);
- Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Oversight Arrangements;
- Commission for Victims and Survivors Research (December 2014);
- The Corporate Plan 2015-18 and Business Plan 2014-15 (agreed by Department Board in February 2015, Ministerial approval obtained November 2015);
- The Performance Management Framework (signed November 2012, updated May 2014);
- The Risk Management Framework (signed July 2013, updated May 2014);
- Financial Policies and Procedures (signed July 2013, updated July 2015);
- Whistleblowing Policy (signed July 2013); and
- Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan (signed December 2014).

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 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 Limited. I also have responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances allocated to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and for safeguarding public funds and assets, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013 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 Limited (“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) 2013.

The Board takes an objective long-term view of the business of the organisation, leading its strategic planning process and assisting the Interim 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 Limited, including risk management; and
- Overseeing and monitoring progress against all of its equality of opportunity and good relations obligations.

The Chair of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board left in June 2014 resulting in the Board consisting of three members. This presented challenges for the remainder of 2014-15 in ensuring that all three were available to ensure a quorum to allow Board meetings to proceed. This was rectified in April 2015 with the appointment of four additional members. Table 13 below lists the Board members.

Table 13: Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board Membership

Name	Position
Oliver Wilkinson	Director appointed 13 December 2013 Appointed as Interim Chair 30 June 2014 Appointed as Chair 1 April 2015
Peter Gay	Chair appointed 5 December 2013 Resigned 23 June 2014
Bertha McDougall	Director appointed 4 December 2013
Richard Solomon	Director appointed 5 December 2013
Beverley Clarke	Director appointed 1 April 2015
Patricia Haren	Director appointed 1 April 2015
Séamus Magee	Director appointed 1 April 2015
Stephen McIlveen	Director appointed 1 April 2015

The Board met 14 times in 2014-15. Table 14 below details the attendance of Board members at the meetings.

Table 14: Board Meeting Attendance

Meeting Date	Peter Gay	Oliver Wilkinson	Bertha McDougall	Richard Solomon
14 April 2014	✓	✓	✓	✓
12 May 2014	✓	✓	✓	✓
16 June 2014	✓	✓	✓	Apologies
25 July 2014	n/a	✓	✓	✓
14 August 2014	n/a	✓	✓	✓
13 October 2014	n/a	✓	✓	✓
20 November 2014	n/a	✓	✓	✓
26 November 2014	n/a	✓	✓	✓
8 December 2014	n/a	✓	✓	✓
17 December 2014	n/a	✓	✓	✓
12 January 2015	n/a	✓	✓	✓
16 February 2015	n/a	✓	✓	✓
18 March 2015	n/a	✓	✓	✓
30 March 2015	n/a	✓	✓	✓

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In addition to the key considerations outlined above, at these meetings the Board addressed the following standing agenda items:

- Minutes of Previous Meeting;
- Interim Accounting Officer Update;
- Progress Against Budget;
- Progress against business and corporate plan and risks in achieving stated objectives;
- Progress reports on Programmes, Client Services and Communications.

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 Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

As Interim 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 Limited website; Assembly Questions relevant to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited; and absence management.

The quality and timeliness of the information and reports has been acceptable to the Board within the context of 2014-15. A review of all management reporting is scheduled for 2015-16 to adapt to a strengthened Board of seven members and the strategic direction of the organisation.

The Board maintains a Register of Interests. This lists, for each Director, all commercial and other relevant interests. A similar register is maintained by senior management within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. Directors and Senior management 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

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committee member concerned is required to withdraw from any discussion of the relevant matter and to abstain from any associated vote.

The Board reviewed its own effectiveness by carrying out a self assessment in March 2015. Given the size of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and the period of time in position, the overall conclusion was that the Board performed well in 2014-15. The actions of this will be taken forward in 2015-16, and include:

- A review of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited risk appetite;
- Inclusion of a more detailed Chairman's Report with each agenda;
- Building upon existing skills and experience through training, induction and development; and
- Continual review of performance and best practice.

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 Limited's Board.

The Audit and Risk Committee's terms of reference set out its purpose as being to support me as Interim 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 and Risk Committee does not have executive powers.

Table 15 below lists the Audit and Risk Committee members:

Table 15: Audit and Risk Committee Membership

Name	Position
Colm Doran	Committee Member – Chair from October 2013
Mary Ann Smith	Committee Member, resigned 10 September 2014
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

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

- The Interim Accounting Officer of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited;
- The Finance and Governance Manager (Secretary of the Committee);
- 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.

The Audit and Risk Committee met 5 times in 2014-15. Table 16 below shows dates of and attendance at each of these meetings.

Table 16: Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Dates and Attendance

Committee Members	26.8.14	25.9.14	8.12.14	17.12.14	18.3.15
Colm Doran	✓	✓	✓	Apologies	Apologies
Oliver Wilkinson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Richard Solomon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bertha McDougall	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mary Ann Smith	Apologies	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

With the exception of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, the remaining members are Board members. For this reason, additional reports were not provided from the Audit and Risk Committee to the Board in 2014-15. This action will be taken forward in 2015-16.

In line with best practice set out in the Department of Finance and Personnel's Audit and Risk Assurance Handbook, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee has approved an agreed agenda of work for its meetings, which will include standing agenda items and annual agenda items including:

- 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;
- The annual self-assessment of the Audit and Risk Committee; and
- The monitoring of residual audit recommendations.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed its own effectiveness by carrying out a self assessment in March 2015. The overall conclusion was that the Audit and Risk Committee was performing well. The actions of this will be taken forward in 2015-16, and include:

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- A review of existing membership and the Terms of Reference;
- A review of existing Corporate Governance Frameworks including schemes of delegation, assurance processes and internal controls;
- Build upon existing skills and experience through induction, training and development;
- Use of closed sessions with External and Internal Auditors;
- The recruitment of at least one member who is a member of an accounting body; and
- A review of reporting between the Audit and Risk Committee and Board.

Risk Management Strategy

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Risk Management Strategy was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in March 2013 and adopted formally in the financial year 2013-14. This was updated again in May 2014. This sets out the process whereby the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 2014-15 and new risks identified and managed during the reporting period included:

- Delays in support to victims due to Individual Needs Programme agreement and prolonged consultation between all stakeholders and schemes now open on a limited basis per budget reduction;
- Financial Assistance final award amount, impact on clients and dissatisfaction at difference in amounts of those on Disability Living Allowance High Rate Care and those who are not;
- Victims not receiving support through lack of agreement on health and wellbeing model;
- Victims and other stakeholders not understanding the scope of support available through the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, giving rise to (a) misplaced expectations, and in some cases (b) the opposite, i.e. poor uptake of support;
- Failing to meet ministerial priority on implementation of Commission for Victims and Survivors Review of Victims and Survivors Service Limited Recommendations, due to lack of internal capacity;
- Increased margin for error/duplication of effort due to lack of end to end consolidated on-line management information system;
- Undermine good relationships and lack of future capacity with Victims Support Programme funded organisations through lack of agreement of future policy for funding;

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- Inability to achieve full expenditure due to the late allocation of October and January monitoring rounds (£2.6m in total);
- Risk of Judicial Review as a result of fluctuating budget during 2014-15;
- Risk of lack of agreement on policy framework for the Individual Needs Programme for 2015-16 on a timely basis; and
- Staff morale and the reduced Senior Management Team.

In 2014-15 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 2015-16.

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

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 72. 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 Interim 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.

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

Capita Consulting has developed an internal audit charter which meets the requirements of Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. This was reviewed and confirmed by the Head of Internal Audit of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in November 2015.

Table 17 below outlines the internal audit programme that was carried out relating to 2014-15.

Table 17: Internal Audit 2014-15

Date	Scope	Audit Rating	Status
Mar 2015	Travel and Subsistence	Satisfactory	Final Report
Mar 2015	Bank and Cash	Satisfactory	Final Report
May 2015	Corporate and Business Planning	Satisfactory	Final Report
May 2015	ICT	Satisfactory	Final Report
Jul 2015	Client Services – Individual Needs Programme	Satisfactory	Final Report
Jul 2015	Victims Support Programme	Satisfactory	Final Report
Jul 2015	Case Load Management	Satisfactory	Final Report
Jul 2015	Procurement and Creditor Payments	Satisfactory	Final Report
Jul 2015	Corporate Governance	Satisfactory	Final Report
Aug 2015	Human Resources	Satisfactory	Final Report
Sept 2015	Victims Support Programme - Compliance	Satisfactory	Final Report
Sept 2015	Health and Safety	Satisfactory	Final Report
Sept 2015	Follow Up	N/A	Final Report

The 2014-15 audit timetable was carefully planned to complete some activity post year end to take into account:

- the late release of funding from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in December 2014 and January 2015 to allow sufficient claims to have been released and processed to permit a reliable sample; and
- a reasonable length of time to follow up the recommendations of 2013-14 fieldwork.

The 2014-15 fieldwork was completed in sufficient time to allow draft financial statements to be issued to NIAO by the deadline of September 2015.

The internal auditor's overall assurance rating for 2014-15 was Satisfactory, in line with the previous financial year.

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Specifically, the Satisfactory rating in the Client Services - Individual Needs Programme, is an improvement from 2013-14 when the rating was Limited.

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.

36 recommendations were made across the 12 areas, 2 were identified as priority 1, 22 were identified as priority 2, and 12 as priority 3.

Significant work has been undertaken in establishing monitoring and reporting procedures in relation to internal audit recommendations, assigning responsibility and timeframes for follow up. Audit recommendations are being followed up on a timely basis.

Key recommendations from Internal Audit include:

Victims Support Programme

- Financial awards to groups published on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's website should be as per the most recent letter of offer;
- Remittance letters should be issued promptly following payment transmission; and
- Finalisation of risk based approach to verification including revision of the verification procedures.

Client Services - Individual Need Programme

- A comprehensive review of the Operating Manual should be carried out to ensure that it adequately sets out the processes to be followed in relation to each of the Individual Needs Programme Schemes; and
- Payments should be made on relevant supporting documentation which is likely to include supplier invoice as opposed to a quotation.

Case Load Management - Individual Need Programme

- Update operating procedures to reflect new Case Load Management and Monitoring functions which will be available on the upgraded ICONI management information system.

Corporate Governance and Corporate/Business Planning

- A formal action plan is developed and processes implemented for the monitoring of the timely implementation of actions arising from the recent Board and Audit and Risk Committee self assessments and that future assessments continue to be undertaken during the last quarter of each financial year; and
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited should continue to liaise with the Department to ensure that Ministerial approval is provided in relation to the corporate plan and business plan and subsequently published on the organisation's website.

Corporate Finance Functions

- Management should enhance the Financial Procedures and Procurement Manual to ensure that it accurately reflects current processes undertaken by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

Corporate HR and ICT Functions

- Policies in relation to Travel, Subsistence, and Gifts and Hospitality should be enhanced and clearly communicated with all Board members and staff;
- The Interim Senior Management Team structure should be finalised as soon as possible. In particular, that the Victim and Survivors Service Limited prioritise the recruitment of a substantive Chief Executive;
- Management should formally plan for and test part or all of the Business Continuity Plan in the new offices to confirm assumptions made can be relied upon;
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited should request copies of the quarterly / 6 monthly assurance statements issued by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to assurances provided over IT Assist; and
- Health and Safety reporting and record keeping to be enhanced.

In addition to the internal audit work carried out within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, a formal assessment of the provision of internal audit services against Public Sector Internal Audit Standards was carried out by the Head of Internal Audit of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

The final report was issued in November 2015.

The Internal Audit Quality Assessment Framework (IAQAF) was used as a tool for evaluating the quality of the internal audit service provided the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. The review considered four key areas:

- Purpose and Positioning
- Structure and Resources
- Audit Execution
- Impact

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The assessment concluded that Internal Audit has generally or fully conformed in all areas.

One exception of partial conformance was noted. This related to the audit performance, particularly in relation to the timeliness of field work. The reasons for this have been previously outlined above and this issue has been subsequently rectified.

External Audit

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

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 Limited. 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 Limited, and the primary point of contact for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Tri-Lateral Meetings between the Commission for Victims and Survivors Limited, the Department and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited (attended by the Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and senior Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff); see Table 3 above.
- Accountability and Oversight Meetings (attended by the Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and senior Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff); see Table 18 below.
- Quarterly Stewardship Statements; see Table 19 below.
- Management Statement and Financial Memorandum updated September 2014.

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- Performance Monitoring against Business Plan and preparation of Corporate Plan 2015-18 submitted to the Department in February 2015.
- Financial Monitoring Reports (updated August 2014).

Accountability Meetings and Monthly Oversight Meetings

The former Accounting Officer, current 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 18 below:

Table 18: Accountability Meetings 2014-15

Meeting	Date
1	8 May 2014
2	30 July 2014
3	20 August 2014
4	26 September 2014
5	11 November 2014
6	18 December 2014
7	12 February 2014

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.

Senior Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff and the Interim 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. Month end management reporting is shared as standard, in addition to further reporting outlined below.

Stewardship Statements

The Quarterly Stewardship statement, prepared under the direction of and signed by the Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, 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;

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- 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 former Accounting Officer and current Interim Accounting Officer have submitted four Stewardship Statements to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister as requested by the Department, as shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Stewardship Statements

Effective Date	Duration
1 April 2014 – 30 June 2014	3 months
1 July 2014 – 30 September 2014	3 months
1 October 2014 – 31 December 2014	3 months
1 January 2015 – 31 March 2015	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 Limited 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 Limited's overall aims, objectives and targets;
- The rules and guidelines relevant to the exercise of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited functions, duties and powers;
- The conditions under which any public funds are paid to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited; and
- 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; and
- Current month end management information and reporting systems.

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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 Limited Board in November 2014.

Corporate Plan 2014-17 and Business Plan 2014-15

The Interim Chief Executive has monitored the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's performance against the targets set out in its 2014-15 Business Plan, included at [Appendix 3](#). This was agreed with the Department in September 2014 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 Limited; absence management; recruitment and communications.

Key achievements and emerging activities carried out in 2014-15 are further outlined under Performance against Objectives on pages 29-31.

The Board is satisfied as to the quality of data and information provided by the Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer who gained assurance through reports provided by senior staff in 2014-15. Plans are in place to build upon and improve information and reporting in 2015-16 taking into account the expanded and strengthened Board, significant improvements made to the Management Information System early in 2015, and new targeted actions developed as a result of the Co-Design Programme.

In addition, during the year, work was undertaken between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and the Department on updating the Corporate Plan for 2015-18 which sets out the medium term objectives for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 in February 2014, Programme and Project Boards in addition to staff feedback from staff planning days. An updated Corporate Plan was approved by the Department in February 2015 and Ministers in November 2015.

Financial Monitoring

During the year, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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. This was increased to weekly towards the end of the financial year to manage risks associated with the late allocation of funding.

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 Interim 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 Limited financial management process in 2014-15 included:

- The setting of annual Grant in Aid;
- Monitoring of actual income and expenditure against the annual budget;
- Setting and management of expenditure profiles;
- Monthly reporting of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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; and
- Three in-year monitoring bids submitted to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited. Plans are in place and a qualified accountant is in post to further develop cost centre accounting and more detailed and strengthened variance analysis.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited's annual training and development plan.

Fraud and Counter-Fraud

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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

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in line with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan which was updated in December 2014.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has identified and investigated ten instances of suspected fraud in 2014-15. Six of these cases have been closed. In four of these cases, after investigation, no payment was released. In another case, a refund was obtained and in the final case, which was investigated, the VSS were able to conclude that no fraud had occurred and payment was released. The investigation of the remaining four cases is ongoing, three of which are with the PSNI.

As part of these investigations, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited received advice from DARD CIS not to make certain payments to individual victims and survivors due to concerns relating to the legitimacy of invoices submitted with a claim for payment. These payments were however made and are confirmed as irregular. The amounts paid in May 2014 were £6,400.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited undertook a review of all suspected fraud cases in December 2014 and strengthened monitoring and reporting processes to include a monthly review and update of a compliance register by the Senior Management Team and an updated Anti-Fraud Policy and Response Plan approved by the Audit and Risk Committee in December 2014. In addition, revised Compliance papers are submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee and Board on a regular basis.

Whistle-blowing

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Whistleblowing 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.

There were three instances of whistle-blowing within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in the year to 31 March 2015. Two of these cases were investigated and resolved, with the third resulting in a fraud investigation (one of the four investigations discussed above which is ongoing).

Training

The 2014-15 Training Plan was finalised in June 2014. Utilising internal resources, Victims and Survivors Service Limited delivered training internally until additional monies became available in January 2015 at which point Victims and Survivors Service Limited commissioned external providers to delivery training in line with employee Personal Development Plans. This has included increasing technical competencies in project, information and financial and staff management in addition to increasing our

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capacity to provide evidence based services to victims and survivors through health and wellbeing, trauma and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy courses.

In this period, the Victims and Survivors Service provided training in Fire Awareness and First Aid in order to meet mandatory Health and Safety requirements. Each newly recruited employee received induction training. The induction training provides information relating to the wider organisational context, internal policies and key procedures including training in Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

Training is delivered to employees within each team to ensure alignment with the Corporate Objectives. To build upon staff self-care and resilience, the following employee workshops were delivered in this period:

- Positive Steps to Wellbeing;
- Stress Management;
- Dealing with Unacceptable and Challenging Behaviour; and
- Client Call Management.

Significant Governance Issues

Progress was made operationally in the implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations in relation to embedding documented processes and procedures. The overall Internal Audit assurance rating was satisfactory.

I was appointed Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer mid-year on 7th August 2014. However, I take full responsibility for reporting for the full financial year 2014-2015 and have outlined below a series of governance issues which emerged throughout the year and a number of review or audit recommendations still remain outstanding.

Qualified Finance Professional – Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board does not currently have a member with a specific finance qualification. This is required by the Corporate Governance Code and is also an outstanding Commission for Victims and Survivors review recommendation. While the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board does have members with significant finance, Board and Audit and Risk Committee experience, options to strengthen this in terms of a qualified finance professional are currently being progressed with the Office of the First and deputy First Minister. An appointment is expected to be made in 2016-17 financial year.

Reporting from the Audit and Risk Committee to the Board

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board of three members was recognised as insufficient throughout 2014-15 and this was rectified on 1 April 2015 with the appointment of 4 additional Board members. For the same reason, the Audit and Risk Committee did not produce an Annual Report to the Board for 2014-15, given that aside

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from the independent Chair, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board member and Audit and Risk Committee members were the same individuals. This has been identified as an action point within the self assessment which was carried out in March 2015. This will be taken forward in 2015-16.

Spot Checks on Self Declarations for Financial Assistance and Care for Carers

In 2014-15, applications to the Financial Assistance and Care for Carers Schemes by existing clients could be made by Self Declaration (i.e. rather than a full application, clients submitted a statement to confirm that their circumstances had not changed since the previous year). Payments totalling £1.8m were made in 2014-15 based solely on self declarations. The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister required the Victims and Survivors Service Ltd to undertake a 10% spot check of applications in order to confirm that the schemes' requirements continued to be met.

It was the intention of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to carry out the 10% spot check of Self Declarations in July 2014 following the closure of the Financial Assistance Scheme. This was later deferred to January 2015.

The decision to suspend the 10% spot checks "in light of current pressures the Victims and Survivors Service Limited (was) facing" was made at the Board Meeting on 12 January 2015. These pressures included a reduced budgetary environment, reduced staffing numbers and the need to ensure there was no further distress to clients following the postponement or reduction of further schemes at this time. Therefore, no spot checks were performed for 2014-15. Correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has reiterated the importance of the spot checks as a key internal control.

Spot checks for 2015-16 have commenced and are due for completion in January 2016.

Payments made without appropriate prior approval

In 2014-15, in order to manage client risk, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to make payments for awards made in 2013-14 for the Chronic Pain scheme until the new Support for the Injured Scheme was opened later in 2015-16. Extensions were also made for respite breaks which had not been used in the previous year. This expenditure totalled £133k. Letters of Offer were neither issued nor evidenced by the Accounting Officer in these instances nor was approval sought from the Board on this matter.

NIAO also identified in other instances, payments made on items other than those specified in the Letter of Offer and a retrospective award to a client for which no written application had been made in 2014-15 without seeking prior approval.

I retrospectively approved these payments in November 2015.

Payments made in error

The eligibility criteria for the Bereaved scheme are as follows: bereavement of a Partner/Spouse, Parent or Child. This Scheme was opened late in 2014-15, in December 2014.

93 bereaved siblings were issued an award letter towards support services. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited subsequently contacted them to inform them that the award was made in error for 2014-15. However, in order to alleviate potential distress, given these individuals had been previously assessed as psychologically injured, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited honoured these awards (payments totalling £18,600). This was immediately reported to the Victims and Survivors Service Board and Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister at the time.

Further payments were made in error in 2015-16 of £5,120.

I have reviewed and updated the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's internal control procedures to ensure that errors are detected and prevented going forward.

Confidentiality Agreement

The Chief Executive Officer left in July 2014. The terms of departure are subject to a confidentiality agreement. I acknowledge that the use of a confidentiality agreement is not encouraged and that full compliance with FReM disclosure requirements in the Annual Report and Accounts is prevented by this agreement. DFP approval was not obtained in advance for a small element of this relating to the pension contribution. Retrospective approval has been sought and obtained.

Retrospective Approval of a Direct Award Contract

One procurement exercise required a Direct Award Contract, following two unsuccessful attempts at open competition. Retrospective prior approval from the Office of the First and deputy First Minister was not obtained but this has now been regularised. The value of the contract was £3,600 relating to the salary review of staff within the victims sector.

Conformance with Code of Conduct

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited, 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 the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013. Where appropriate, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has taken account of additional good practice documented in the 2013 edition of the Code.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is not a Central Government Department and cannot, therefore, comply with those parts of the code that are only applicable to such

Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2015

Departments. However, the corporate governance arrangements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited "the code should be applied with adjustments to suit their scale, responsibilities and accountability chains".

Throughout the year to 31 March 2015, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has complied with all relevant 2013 Code provision, apart from the requirement to have a qualified finance professional on the Victims and Survivors Service Board, which is discussed at page 74.

CERTIFICATION

Certification

As Interim 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 Interim 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 2014-15. Significant work has been undertaken in ensuring the structure of the organisation is appropriate to meet the organisation's business and corporate plans and in investing in management information systems to improve how we deliver, monitor and evaluate the quality of services that we are delivering.

A further external review of the impact of the services being provided to victims and survivors was undertaken in 2014-15. This, together with any recommendations outstanding from the review by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in February 2014, has been taken forward in the Co-Design process in conjunction with key stakeholders.

Furthermore, 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.

I am confident that work has continued to embed and improve systems of control and accountability to ensure a sound system of internal governance in 2014-15 and beyond.



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

16 December 2015

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 LIMITED

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the year ended 31 March 2015 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 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.

Respect responsibilities of Interim Accounting Officer, directors and auditor

As explained more fully in the Interim Accounting Officer 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). I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the 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.

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 2015 and of its surplus, cash flows and changes in equity for the year then ended;

CERTIFICATE AND REPORT

- 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 Director's 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

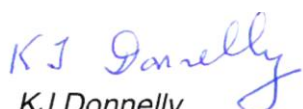
I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

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

Report

The Interim Accounting Officer in her Governance Statement has drawn attention to a number of significant governance issues which are of some concern. In particular, the absence of the spot checks on self declared applications for payment under the Financial Assistance and Care for Carers Schemes. This is a key internal control and in my opinion its operation underpins the validity of payments made under these schemes. The value of such payments totalled £1.8m in 2014-15.

Subsequent to my staff raising this internal control failure with management, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has now asked that the spot check be operative in 2015-16 and subject to review by Internal Audit. In addition, the Department has required that the control is enhanced. The spot checks are to be carried out in advance of payment to the relevant individuals. VSS has advised me it commenced the spot checking in September 2015 and it is due to be completed in January 2016. I welcome these developments however I will keep this matter under close review in 2015-16.



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

17 December 2015

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2015

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Income			
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department	4	12,662,998	12,812,000
Other Operating Income	4	0	297
		12,662,998	12,812,297
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	2	1,227,161	1,357,912
Programme Costs	3a	10,363,086	10,666,016
Operating Costs	3c	808,863	775,339
Depreciation	3c	19,624	14,253
Loss on Fixed Asset Disposal	3c	43,380	0
Provision provided for in period	3c	21,250	0
Total Expenditure		12,483,364	12,813,520
Net (Deficit) / Surplus for the year			
2015		179,634	(1,223)
Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure			
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure		179,634	(1,223)
Amount Transferred to Reserves		179,634	(1,223)

Notes 1 to 28 on pages 86 to 108 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2015

	Note	As at 31-Mar-15 £	As at 31-Mar-14 £
Non-current assets:			
Property, Plant and Equipment	5	63,455	95,286
Intangible Assets	6	1,556	2,231
Total non-current assets		65,011	97,517
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	10	455,381	1,427,089
Cash and cash equivalents	11	781,485	228,594
Total current assets		1,236,866	1,655,683
Total assets		1,301,877	1,753,200
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	12	868,574	1,516,512
Non-current assets less net current liabilities		433,303	236,688
Non-current liabilities			
Provision for liabilities and charges	13	48,851	31,870
Total assets less liabilities		384,452	204,818
Taxpayers Equity			
General Reserve (Income and Expenditure)		384,452	204,818

Notes 1 to 28 on pages 86 to 108 form part of these financial statements.

In the view of the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Limited therefore claims this exemption.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

The Board and the Interim 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 Interim Accounting Officer on 16 December 2015.



16 December 2015

Margaret Bateson
Interim Chief Executive and
Accounting Officer

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 16 December 2015 and were signed on its behalf by:



16 December 2015

Oliver Wilkinson
Chair

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOW

Statement of Cash Flow

For the year ended 31 March 2015

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Surplus / (Deficit) for the period		179,634	(1,223)
Decrease / (Increase) in trade receivables and other current assets	10	971,708	(1,129,669)
(Decrease) / Increase in trade payables and other liabilities	12	(647,938)	1,246,228
Depreciation	3c	19,624	14,253
Loss on Fixed Asset Disposal	3c	43,380	
Increase / (Decrease) in provisions	13	16,981	(10,130)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		583,389	119,459
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(30,498)	(17,518)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	0	(2,700)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(30,498)	(20,218)
Cash flows from financing activities		0	0
Increase / (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		552,891	99,241
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	11	228,594	129,353
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	11	781,485	228,594

Notes 1 to 28 on pages 86 to 108 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAXPAYERS' EQUITY

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2015

	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 2013-14		
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year	(1,223)	(1,223)
Balance at 31 March 2014	204,818	204,818
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for 2014-15		
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year	179,634	179,634
Balance at 31 March 2015	384,452	384,452

Notes 1 to 28 on pages 86 to 108 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 2014-15 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 Limited for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 25.

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. Basis of Accounting

Income and expenditure are treated on the accruals basis of accounting. Without limiting the information given, the accounts meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting Standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board and accounting and disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

1.3. 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 Arms-Length 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 25 to these accounts.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1.4. 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 in the month of disposal.

1.5. Foreign Currency

The accounts are maintained and reported in Sterling. There are no foreign currency transactions in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

1.6. Intangible Assets

Intangible non-current assets are capitalised when they are capable of being used in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 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.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1.7. 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.

1.8. Taxation

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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.

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

1.9. Pension Arrangements

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited participates in a pension scheme administered by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (PCSPS[NII]) 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 48 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.

1.10. Provisions

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited makes provisions for liabilities and charges where, at the date of the Statement of Financial Position, a legal or constructive liability exists (ie, 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, Victims and Survivors Service Limited discounts the provision to its present value using a standard Government discount rate.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1.11. 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.

1.12. 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 year 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 2015.

1.13. 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.

1.14. Operating Leases

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

1.15. Funds

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

1.16. Segmental Reporting

The principal aim of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and sole activity is the provision of services to victims and survivors as defined in the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1.17. 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) 2014-15:

- Consolidation Standards (IFRS10, IFRS11, IFRS12)

Victims and Survivors Service Limited considers that these changes have no impact on its operations

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

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has reviewed the following additional or revised accounting standards and new (or amendments to) interpretations contained within FReM 2014-15:

- Fair Value Measurement (IFRS13)

These changes will be mandatory for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2015 or later periods, but which Victims and Survivors Service Limited has not adopted early. Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is compliant with all International Financial Reporting Standards.

1.19. Contingent Liabilities

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

- 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited'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.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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.

1.20. Going Concern

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

2. Staff Numbers and Related Costs

Staff costs comprise:

	Permanently employed staff £	Others (Agency & Seconded) £	Year ended 31-Mar-15 Total £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 Total £
Wages and salaries	787,524	261,821	1,049,345	1,145,159
Social security costs	57,440	0	57,440	55,728
Pension costs	120,376	0	120,376	157,025
Total net costs	965,340	261,821	1,227,161	1,357,912

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 Limited is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2012. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the DFP Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2015.

For 2014-15, employers' contributions of £120,376 were payable to the PCSPS(NI) (2013-14 £157,025) 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. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every 4 years following a full scheme valuation. A new scheme funding

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

valuation based on data as at 31 March 2012 was completed by the Actuary during 2014-15. This valuation was used to determine employer contribution rates for the introduction of a new career average earning scheme from April 2015. From 2015-16, the rates will range from 20.8% to 26.3%. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2014-15 to be paid out 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 (2013-14: £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% (2013-14: 3% to 12.5%) of pensionable pay. Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable pay. In addition, employer contributions of £nil (2013-14: £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.

No persons (2013-14: 0 persons) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in year amounted to £0 (2013-14: £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-15 Total	Year ended 31-Mar-14 Total
Administrators	12.00	5.21	17.21	17.85
Management	10.27	2.71	12.98	14.95
Senior Management	2.54	0.00	2.54	3.32
Total	24.81	7.92	32.73	36.12

Exit Packages

There were no redundancies or ill health retirements costs in the year to 31 March 2015.

The Chief Executive left on 18 July 2014 and the terms of her departure are confidential.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

3. Expenditure

a. Programme Expenditure

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Programmes Grants	3b	10,247,767	10,483,987
Provision of Client Support Services		50,515	142,194
Independent Panel Costs		7,409	23,314
Workforce Training and Development		20,927	0
Advertising		25,137	15,821
Seminars & Events		0	700
Increase in Bad Debt Provision		11,331	0
Total		10,363,086	10,666,016

b. Grants to Funded Organisations

	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Victims Support Programme Grants to Groups	5,955,152	6,085,294
Development Grants Scheme	0	15,944
Strategic Support Fund	10,120	(12,998)
Grants to Individuals	4,282,495	4,395,747
Total	10,247,767	10,483,987

* The expenditure in relation to the Strategic Support Fund represents a reduction of prior year debtors

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

c. Operating Expenditure

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Rents & Service Charges		314,014	312,300
Rates		107,831	69,051
IT Services		99,639	79,799
Staff Recruitment		6,639	3,936
Telephones		34,460	39,137
Heat, Light & Power		21,456	26,496
Office Expenses		35,727	41,937
NIAO Audit*		31,810	38,790
Premises Expenses		28,540	31,377
Professional Fees		55,388	64,787
Staff Training		12,513	17,346
Travel & Subsistence		22,814	28,231
Hospitality		1,553	2,885
Postage & Carriage		21,334	17,456
Insurance		1,385	1,146
Increase in Bad Debt Provision		0	665
Managed Services		1,980	0
Office Move Costs		2,592	0
Board Costs		1,188	0
The Disappeared		8,000	0
Total Operating Costs		808,863	775,339
Non-cash items:			
Depreciation	5	18,949	13,784
Amortisation	6	675	469
Loss of Fixed Asset Disposal	5	43,380	0
Provision provided for in period	13	21,250	0
Total non-cash items		84,254	14,253
Overall Total		893,117	789,592

* The audit fee in respect of 2014-15 is £28,000. The remaining £3,810 is the result of an under-accrual in 2013-14.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

4. Income

	Year ended 31-Mar-15	Year ended 31-Mar-14
	£	£
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department	12,662,998	12,812,000
Other Operating Income	0	297
	12,662,998	12,812,297

All Grant in Aid income is received from the Sponsoring Department, OFMDFM. There was no other operating income in 2014-15.

The resource and cash budgets for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited were £12.663m and £13.165m respectively.

5. Property, Plant and Equipment

					Year ended 31-Mar-15
	Furniture & Fittings	Leasehold Improvements	IT Equipment	Office Equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost:					
At 1 April 2014	48,268	872,846	17,213	1,560	939,887
Additions in year	0	0	30,498	0	30,498
Disposals	0	(434,307)	(11,710)	0	(446,017)
At 31 March 2015	48,268	438,539	36,001	1,560	524,368
Accumulated Depreciation:					
At 1 April 2014	35,671	794,760	13,953	217	844,601
Charge in year	1,354	8,272	8,803	520	18,949
Disposals	0	(390,927)	(11,710)	0	(402,637)
At 31 March 2015	37,025	412,105	11,046	737	460,913
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	11,243	26,434	24,955	823	63,455

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Year ended 31-Mar-15				
Asset Financing:					
Owned:	11,243	26,434	24,955	823	63,455
Finance Leased: On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	0	0	0	0	0
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	11,243	26,434	24,955	823	63,455

	Year ended 31-Mar-14				
	Furniture & Fittings £	Leasehold Improvements £	IT Equipment £	Office Equipme nt £	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 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 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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Asset Financing:

Owned:	12,597	78,086	3,260	1,343	95,286
Finance Leased: On-balance sheet (SOF) 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

6. Intangible Assets

	Year ended 31-Mar-15	
	Website Development £	Total £
Cost:		
At 1 April 2014	2,700	2,700
Additions in year	0	0
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2015	<u>2,700</u>	<u>2,700</u>
Amortisation:		
At 1 April 2014	469	469
Charge in year	675	675
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2015	<u>1,144</u>	<u>1,144</u>
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	<u>1,556</u>	<u>1,556</u>
Asset Financing:		
Owned	1,556	1,556
Finance Leased: On-balance sheet (SOF) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:		
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	<u>1,556</u>	<u>1,556</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	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

7. Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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

8. Impairments

There have been no impairment charges for the year.

9. Inventories

Not applicable.

10. Trade Receivables and other Current Assets

	Year ended 31-Mar-15	Year ended 31-Mar-14
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year arising from Victims and Survivors Services Limited Operations:		
Programme receivables	144,265	179,084
Prepayments & accrued income	350,780	1,276,338
Room hire receivables	1,210	1,210
Bad debt provision	(40,874)	(29,543)
	<u>455,381</u>	<u>1,427,089</u>

a. Intra-Government Balances

	Year ended 31-Mar-15	Year ended 31-Mar-14
	£	£
Balances with Central Government bodies	291,979	1,242,999
Balances with Local Government	264	0
Balances with NHS Bodies	0	0
Intra Government Balances	<u>292,243</u>	<u>1,242,999</u>
Balances with bodies external to Government	163,138	184,090
Total receivables	<u>455,381</u>	<u>1,427,089</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

11. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	Year ended 31-Mar-15	Year ended 31-Mar-14
	£	£
Balance at 1 April 2014:	228,594	129,353
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	552,891	99,241
Balance	<u>781,485</u>	<u>228,594</u>

The above balance comprises £781,433 at the Danske Bank, Belfast in a non-interest bearing current account and £52 in petty cash held on-site.

12. Trade Payables and Other Current Liabilities

	Year ended 31-Mar-15	Year ended 31-Mar-14
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Programme payables	596,125	1,306,478
Trade payables	91,057	30,603
Other taxation & social security	0	0
Accruals & deferred Income	181,392	179,431
	<u>868,574</u>	<u>1,516,512</u>

a. Intra-Government Balances

	Year ended 31-Mar-15	Year ended 31-Mar-14
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Balances with Central Government bodies	74,835	62,704
Balances with Local Government	0	0
Balances with NHS Bodies	0	0
Intra Government Balances	<u>74,835</u>	<u>62,704</u>
Balances with Bodies external to Government	793,739	1,453,808
Total payables	<u>868,574</u>	<u>1,516,512</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

13. Provisions for Liabilities and Charges

			Year ended 31-Mar-15	Year ended 31-Mar-14
	Pension Actuarial Services £	The Disappeared £	Total £	Total £
Balance at 1 April 2014	31,870	0	31,870	42,000
Provided for in the year	5,250	16,000	21,250	0
Utilised in year	(4,269)	0	(4,269)	(10,130)
Provisions written back	0	0	0	0
Balance at 31 March 2015	32,851	16,000	48,851	31,870

The provision for liabilities and charges relates to Victims and Survivors Service Limited estimate for:

1 *Pension Actuarial Services*

- 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 Community Relations Council on 12 November 2012.

3 *The Disappeared Funeral Costs*

- At 31 March 2015, the remains of six of the Disappeared were still to be located, however, two of these were located during 2015-16. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited have provided for a contribution in respect of funeral costs (for four of The Disappeared) as previously provided under the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund.

The provisions are not discounted as the Victims and Survivors Service Limited do not, at this time, expect the provision to be held for more than 3 years.

14. Capital Commitments

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no capital commitments in the financial year (2013-4: Nil).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

15. Commitments under Leases

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

	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Buildings:		
Not later than one year	125,643	295,031
Later than one year, and not later than five years	0	0
Later than five years	0	0
Total	125,643	295,031
Other:		
Not later than one year	2,515	3,341
Later than one year, and not later than five years	3,257	5,772
Later than five years	0	0
Total	5,772	9,113

16. Commitments under PFI Contracts and Other Services Concession Arrangements Contracts

None.

17. Other Financial Commitments

None.

18. Contingent Liabilities Disclosed Under IAS 37

Pension Bulk Transfer Value

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 Limited. 8 staff from the Community Relations Council were transferred under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

There is a contingent liability in respect of the pension bulk transfer value. The liability to be met by Victims and Survivors Service Limited is in respect of the difference between the amount of money which will be paid from NILGOSC (CRC's pension scheme) to PCSPS (Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 2015-2016. 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.

Millennium House Dilapidation Costs

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited inherited the lease on Millennium House in November 2012 and, therefore, became liable for any costs associated with restoring the premises to its original state. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited vacated Millennium House in June 2015.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has commissioned a building surveyor to negotiate on its behalf in respect of the assessment the potential charges. This value is expected to be confirmed in the second half of 2015-16.

19. Losses and Special Payments

The delegated limit, as outlined in the Management Statement Financial Memorandum, for cash losses is up to £1,000 per case/incident.

There are no losses or special payments to report for 2014-15. However as part of the review into the four outstanding suspected fraud cases as outlined on page 72, a number of payment recoveries may be initiated in 2015-16. At the time of the audit, these are still at preliminary stages of their reviews and three are awaiting PSNI advice.

20. Related-Party Transactions

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is an Arms Length Body sponsored by OFMDFM. OFMDFM is regarded as a Related Party. During the period the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had various material transactions with OFMDFM (Grant in Aid **£13,164,998**).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

During the year no members of the Board, Audit and Risk Committee, Senior Management Team nor other related parties have directly undertaken any material transactions with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

OFMDFM Internal Audit conducted an External Quality Assurance Review against Public Sector Internal Audit Standards within Victims and Survivors Service Limited on behalf of OFMDFM during this initial period. Any perceived conflict of interest between the DFP Head of Internal Audit and an OFMDFM representative on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Audit and Risk Committee was managed using the protocols, established in the DFP Internal Audit Manual, for dealing with conflicts of interest.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has had a small number of transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies.

Compensation for Directors, the former Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and Interim Chief Executive and Accounting Officer has been disclosed in the Remuneration Report.

21. Third Party Assets

None.

22. Net Incoming Resources is Stated after Charging

	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	18,949	13,784
Amortisation of intangible assets	675	469
Auditors' remuneration	31,810	38,790
	<hr/> 51,434 <hr/>	<hr/> 53,043 <hr/>

23. Fund Balances

	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Opening balance	204,818	206,041
Net movement in funds	179,634	(1,223)
Closing balance	<hr/> 384,452 <hr/>	<hr/> 204,818 <hr/>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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.

24. Financial Compliance – Programmes

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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.

In addition to the suspected fraud cases on page 72, three further breaches under the Victims Support Programme relating to non-compliance with procurement guidelines and a conflict of interest was investigated by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continues to work with these organisations to reach an agreed and satisfactory conclusion.

One breach in relation to the Individual Needs Programme occurred in December 2014 and January 2015 relating to 93 awards made to bereaved victims where the relationship was not spouse, partner or child per the eligibility for this scheme. Given the value of payment (£200), this was not requested from the individuals in question. Given the demonstrated and assessed need historically of these individuals, this has been maintained as eligible expenditure. Work undertaken on internal management information systems since January 2015 will minimise any errors going forward.

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

FReM requires Arms-Length 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, ie, by crediting them to the income and expenditure reserve.

If the Victims and Survivors Service Limited were to comply with FReM, the following would be the effect of this compliance.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

25.1 Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure prepared under FReM

	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Income		
Rental Income	0	297
	<u>0</u>	<u>297</u>
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	1,227,161	1,357,912
Programme Costs	10,363,086	10,666,016
Operating Costs	808,863	775,339
Depreciation	18,949	13,784
Amortisation	675	469
Loss on Fixed Asset Disposal	43,380	0
Provisions provided for in period	21,250	0
	<u>12,483,364</u>	<u>12,813,520</u>
Net deficit for the period	(12,483,364)	(12,813,223)
Amount transferred to Reserves	<u>(12,483,364)</u>	<u>(12,813,223)</u>

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

25.2 Statement of Cash flows prepared under FREM

	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net Deficit after interest and tax	(12,483,364)	(12,813,223)
Non Cash Transactions (Depreciation/Amortisation)	19,624	14,253
Loss on Fixed Asset Disposal	43,380	0
(Decrease) / Increase in trade and other payables	(647,938)	1,246,228
Increase / (Decrease) in trade and other receivables	469,708	113,331
Increase / (Decrease) in Provisions	16,981	(10,130)
Net Cash used in operating activities	<u>(12,581,609)</u>	<u>(11,449,541)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Grant in Aid from Parent Department	<u>13,164,998</u>	<u>11,569,000</u>
Net Cash used in financing activities	<u>13,164,998</u>	<u>11,569,000</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment	(30,498)	(17,518)
Purchase of intangible assets	<u>0</u>	<u>(2,700)</u>
Net Cash used in investing activities	<u>(30,498)</u>	<u>(20,218)</u>
Net Increase/(Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	552,891	99,241)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	<u>228,594)</u>	<u>129,353</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	<u>781,485</u>	<u>228,594</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

25.3 General Reserve note prepared under FReM:

	Year ended 31-Mar-15 £	Year ended 31-Mar-14 £
Analysis of General Reserve:		
Opening Balance	204,818	206,041
Grant in Aid received in year	12,662,998	12,812,000
Net operating cost for the year	<u>(12,483,364)</u>	<u>(12,813,223)</u>
Balance at 31 March 2015	<u>384,452</u>	<u>204,818</u>

26. 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.

27. Events after the Reporting Period

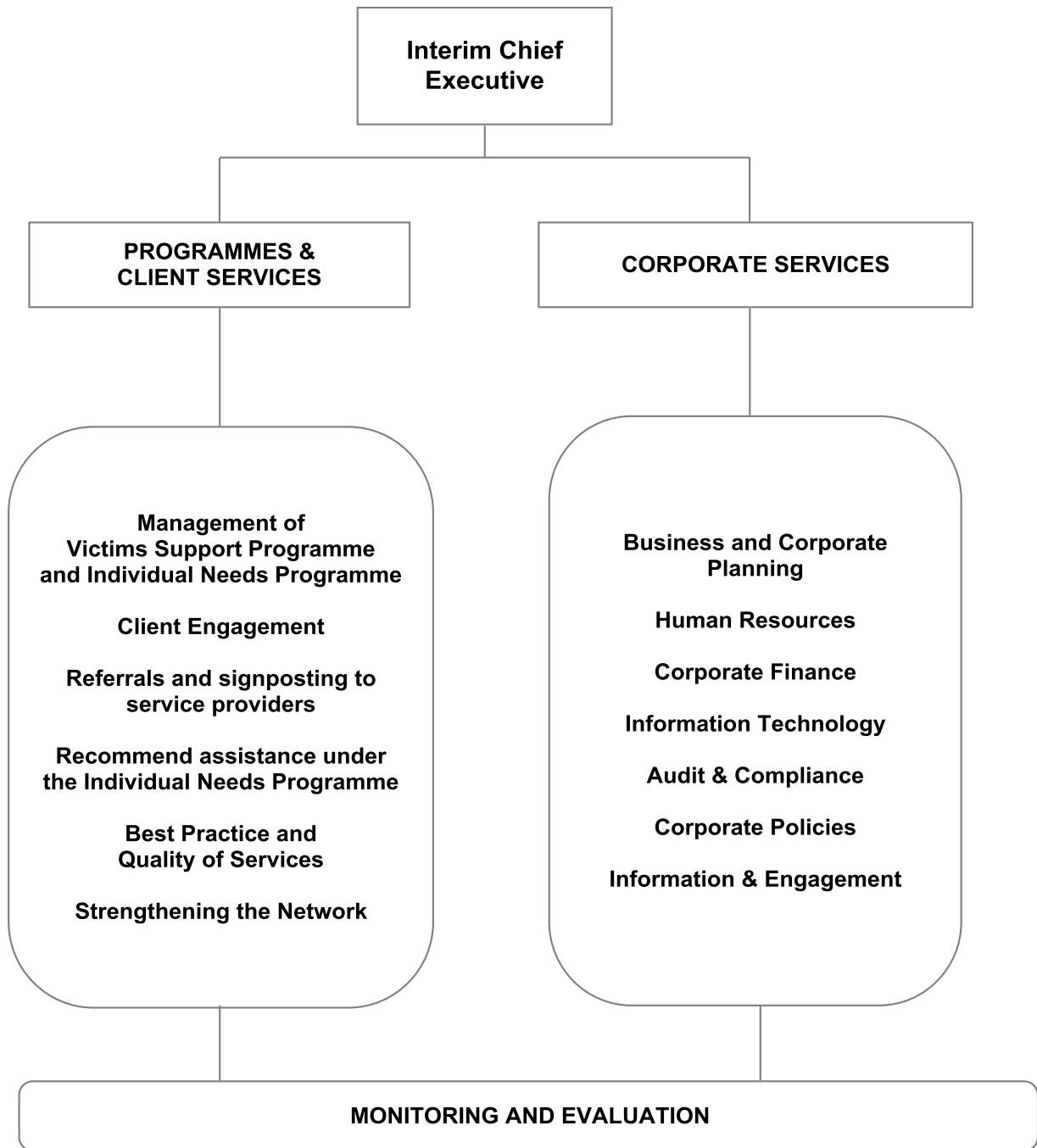
The Victims and Survivors Service Limited was notified in January 2015 that an individual had applied to the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland for leave to apply for Judicial Review of the delivery of the Financial Assistance Scheme. The application for leave to apply for a Judicial Review was withdrawn on 18 September 2015.

Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 17 December 2015.

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1: Organisation Chart as at 31 March 2015



APPENDIX 2

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

The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 September 2015	
Implemented	53
Partially Implemented	15
Delayed	2

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

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
1	Collaborative relationships should be developed further between key Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited urgently engages with the Forum in an open and constructive manner as soon as possible; this should be facilitated by CVSNI		Implemented	
4	We recommend that urgent consideration be given to the culture, process and overall management of communication within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, particularly with individual victims and survivors		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
5	We recommend that the Forum play a key role in helping the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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	The Board has approved a hybrid Assessment Process. Two key issues remain: no budget available to support further individuals coming forward and the HWB review process has not been agreed.	Partially Implemented	
8	We recommend that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited offer a streamlined, more focused and less intrusive, simple needs assessment process for victims and survivors	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has completed their proposal for the HWB review and consulted with all stakeholders. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited await a response from the CVS and Department on taking this		

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	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	forward. Fully Implemented by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.		
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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Corporate Plan 2014-17 was agreed by Departmental Board in September 2014 and has been submitted to Ministers for approval. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Corporate Plan and Action plan for 2014-15 to be approved by Ministers – pending approval, this recommendation can be closed.	Partially Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
		Fully implemented by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.		
13	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 2014-15.</p> <p>Consultation is currently taking place with all groups and was 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>	Partially Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
		<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 forward including any changes to existing tools.</p> <p>SMT finalised all procurement documentation in July 2015 which was submitted to CPD in August 2015 to allow the tender process to commence.</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	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	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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	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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited.</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	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
22	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board should review its priorities and work with OFMDFM to identify suitable ways of augmenting the numbers and skills on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and should seek a qualified accountant to Chair the Audit & Risk Committee		Implemented	
24	The Board should re-visit the purpose of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and explore whether these services fit within the future strategy, or are better provided by specialist organisations		Implemented	
25	The Board should review the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Corporate Plan, revise it as appropriate and monitor progress of its implementation		Implemented	
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		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
	Board			
27	The Board is properly inducted to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board to focus on its priorities, but there should be regular communication on progress of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited		Implemented	
30	Ask the Chair of the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to provide assurance that they are confident the knowledge, skills and experience of the Senior Management Team and the Board are appropriate to		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
	deliver the changes necessary to meet the outcomes required for improvement			
31	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited should seek to reduce the number of agency staff in favour of more permanent resourcing arrangements		Implemented	
32	Staffing proposals submitted by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited		Implemented	
33	CIPFA recommends that the senior executive team should evaluate the effectiveness of the appraisal system and advise the Board accordingly		Implemented	
34	The Board should consider a staff survey to systematically capture the mood of staff within the next three months		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
35	OFMDFM should give early consideration to the case for a new database for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited	M&E evaluation delayed, reviewing business case, design predicated on schemes 1-5, seeking more flexibility in spec for outcome of CVS research. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited engaged with CPD. OFMDFM have approved the original MIS and have advised the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited and OFMDFM based on clear and established lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability		Implemented	
38	We recommend that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 can have added confidence that the		Implemented	

APPENDIX 2

Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
	Victims and Survivors Service Limited is accountable and subject to effective scrutiny			
39	We recommend a re-calibration of the tripartite relationship between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited, 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	N/A for 2014-15 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. 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 Victims and Survivors	Delayed	

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Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
		<p>Service Limited.</p> <p>Therefore to change suppliers at this stage would 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited</p>	<p>N/A to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. CVS taking forward with OFMDFM and Health and Social Care Board.</p>	Partially Implemented	

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Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
44	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		Implemented	
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 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited action. Awaiting advice from the working group	Partially Implemented	
46	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited should be specifically charged with advising the Board on the legal framework within which the Victims and Survivors		Implemented	

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Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
	Service Limited is required to be governed			
50	The Board should clearly identify its information needs and identify the best way for executives to provide this to members		Implemented	
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 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited fall into the scope of the Office of the Commissioner of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland and		Implemented	

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Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
	ensures compliance with the Code in future Board appointments			
56	OFMDFM should provide intensive support to the Chair and other Board Members including tailored governance training and mentoring		Implemented	
57	In addition to the above, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board should facilitate the provision of support to the executive team and those charged with ensuring good governance within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited		Implemented	
58	The Board should oversee performance of the corporate management team to ensure the Victims and Survivors Service Limited meets its objectives		Implemented	
59	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board should gain assurance that Victims and Survivors Service Limited does not stray into a management role for the organisations it funds		Implemented	
60	The Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited should oversee the future production of financial statements in line with statutory requirements		Implemented	

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Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
61	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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	
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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff be made aware of the role of CVSNI and its relationship to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, and that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website includes a section on the role of CVSNI		Implemented	
66	We recommend that consideration be given to setting up the Victims and Survivors Service Limited joint team meetings to include Assessors		Implemented	

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Plan Ref.	Summary	Progress	Current Status (Partially Implemented, Pending Confirmation, Delayed)	RAG STATUS
67	We recommend that CVSNI be listed as a key stakeholder in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Communication Plan		Implemented	
68	We recommend regular meetings between the Chair of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 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 Victims and Survivors Service Limited, to then be referred back to the group for the therapy to continue		Implemented	

APPENDIX 3

Appendix 3: Business Plan 2014-15

The table below sets out the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Business Plan for 2014-15. It details the organisation's objectives and 41 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 2014-15, summary progress against all 41 targets was as follows:

Blue	Green	Green/Amber	Amber	Red
32	4	1	4	0

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Strategic Objective 1: SUPPORTING CLIENTS – We will ensure that victims and survivors and their representatives have ready access to services that they need.			
Action 1.1: Streamline and improve access to goods and services to the Individual Needs Programme for individual victims and survivors			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Implementation of Financial Assistance including the design of self declaration and application form	Decreased complaints	1,815 means tested awards issued. 433 High Care DLA Self Declarations/New Applications processed and paid. All means tested awards increased to £1,000 in line with HRC DLA awards following additional January monitoring.	
Streamline access to Care for Carers scheme	Improved access to good and services	Cash payment of £500 made to 417 registered Carers	
Streamline access to Seriously Injured - Support for Injured (DLA High Rate Care and Middle Rate Care component recipients only) and Support for Bereaved	Improved access to good and services	402 Personal allowance of £400 for those on middle Rate Care DLA. 418 Personal allowance of £1,500 for those on High Rate Care DLA. 44 Extensions of scheme to those in current active treatment plans to treat chronic pain for up to £400. 2,117 Support for Bereaved awards increased to £400 and issued to clients.	
Chronic Pain and Disability Support - Health and Wellbeing Review to be developed and approved in collaboration with CVS and OFMDFM	Improved outcomes for individuals: to be added once HWB review complete	Revised HWB form developed and approved by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board but has not been accepted by the CVS. The CVS carried out a workshop in March 2015 with those who carried out the original independent assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to consult with all stakeholders and agree the tool going forward. This will be taken forward in 2015-16 as part of the caseworker and personalized budget approach to assessing individuals' needs.	

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Action 1.2: Design and implement a pathway to services model for individual victims and survivors			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Design the signposting process at entry to service. Document available support through partner and funded organisations and general support available in local areas.	<p>Simplified process for those</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously with NIMF • Members of Groups • New clients 	<p>Clients not currently eligible for the INP due to budget reductions have been provided with information of other support services available. Groups have been asked to provide information about their capacity to take referrals at this stage in the year. Due to lack of capacity within groups a limited call for additional support towards counselling was issued in February 2015 to ease waiting lists and ensure that high risk clients were seen quickly.</p> <p>The basic information available for each support organisation on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website will be developed in 2015-16, and improved with a full needs and gaps analysis of the sector.</p>	
Monitor the client journey	Agree remit in terms of level of support and engagement	<p>Client journey is monitored in terms of priority need; all clients who had an active treatment plan under chronic pain were contacted in April / May/ June were advised to continue with treatments until 31 August 2014. These clients have now been offered up to £400 to continue treatment plans only.</p> <p>Phase 2 of schemes opened in early December with assistance going to the bereaved and those seriously injured not on DLA but who had an active treatment plan last year.</p>	
	Revision of complaints procedure and published on website.	Complete.	

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Action 1.3: Design an automated Client Management System (PM / CLSM)			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Implementation of MIS timetable to improve current manual system and upgrade to an electronic records management system	<p>Improved client response times</p> <p>Automated management reporting to ensure quicker decision making</p>	<p>Provision of an MIS officer funded by the CVS in December 2014 enabled:</p> <p>(1) Merging and consolidation of all existing information within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited current systems which will dramatically improve the accuracy and efficiency of internal MI.</p> <p>(2) development of a longer term MIS and timetable This work will continue into 2015-16 as part of the co-design process.</p>	
Implementation of advanced Telephony System	<p>Upgraded telephone system</p> <p>Automated management reporting to ensure 24 hour call back in place</p>	<p>Upgrade of telephone system complete. New telephony system supports management reporting, facilitating 24 hour call back.</p>	
Transition of manual file system to automated consolidated client records management system (MS Access)	<p>Consolidate NIMF and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited manual files into one system</p>	<p>Consolidation of electronic information occurred in January-March 2015.</p> <p>All filing systems merged into the centralized client files, including Financial Assistance information.</p> <p>Small final step for 2015-16 includes completion of extraction of relevant information from NIMF files.</p>	

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Strategic Objective 2: ENSURING REGIONAL ACCESS – We will ensure that victims and survivors are provided with access to relevant services across the region.			
Action 2.1: Ensure regional access to goods and services (PM / CLSM)			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Ensure continuity of services of the Health and Wellbeing Programme under the VSP by issuing letters of offer for 2014-2015	Monitoring and Evaluation reports from each Group	Completed – New Letters of Offer (LoO) issued based on year 1 outturn.	
	Consistent service review meetings between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and Groups re activity	Victims and Survivors Service Limited met each group prior to issue of LoO. Activity analysis completed prior to issue of LoO. Quarterly project support visits completed.	
	Promotion of existing signposting services and support available to all clients through the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.	4.42% budget reductions and impact documented and formalized with the provision of new LoO in November. Analysis undertaken in January 2015 of groups with HWB capacity and number of referrals that could be made. Additional support made available for counselling services in February 2015.	
Monitor geographical spread across the region	Identified areas with limited access to services support. Priority areas identified for VSP re-opening late 2014	The Victims and Survivors Service Limited provided information to the Departmental statisticians to carry out a mapping exercise. This basic information and priority areas will be built upon as part of the co-design process in 2015-16.	
Carry out a trend/gap analysis of goods and services available	Identified gaps in goods and services. Accurate information to feed into future policy and decision making	Per above.	

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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.			
Action 3.1: Development of local and regional specialist hubs (PM / CLSM / CO)			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Identify and roll out Best Practice across the sector	<p>Identified role within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to begin scoping 'standards development and quality assurance routines with Groups and partner organisation'</p> <p>Mapping of development and training plans.</p>	<p>Report titled 'Developing Trauma-Related Services and Standards in Northern Ireland' completed and presented to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board February 2015.</p> <p>3 day course for counsellors dealing with Trauma took place 18 -20 March, and a conference took place on 28 March in partnership with CVSNI to launch the workforce training and development plan for 2015-16.</p>	
Chair bi-monthly Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group Meetings	Improved communication between agencies and organisations involved in delivering services to victims and survivors	<p>Meetings in place occurred on a regular basis over the course of the year. Attended by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited representatives / Board members as appropriate. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited co-chaired the VSPWG meeting. Representatives of CVS and OFMDFM also attended. The last meeting took place on 17 February 2015. Next meeting 14 April 2015. Consideration will be given in 2015-16 to an evaluation of this group and rolling out geographically.</p>	

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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.			
Action 3.2: Development of relationships with statutory mental health providers (CLSM)			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Develop care pathway for victims and survivors with mental health needs	Documented and agreed referral process with each VSP group	<p>Longer term strategic direction underway between CVS, Dept Health and OFMDFM in relation to Trauma Services and key topic on Co-Design Meeting on 17 April 2015.</p> <p>However, in the interim, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continues to refer to GP, VSP funded organizations or other statutory services. There is concern that the holistic approach to victims' care is not being adequately addressed by this interim measure.</p>	
Action 3.3: Stakeholder Engagement (CO / PM / CLSM)			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Review and renew stakeholder analysis and engagement plan	<p>Current and accurate framework of stakeholders</p> <p>Strong network of communication with relevant agencies and sectors</p>	<p>Reviewed and updated and progress reported in month end Communications Progress Reports.</p> <p>Internal Communications maintained as a priority during delivery of £1.3m January Monitoring Round funding over months of January and February, with weekly staff briefings to ensure all staff up to date with current messages and processes.</p> <p>Communication with funded organisations, CVS, and OFMDFM ongoing throughout year.</p> <p>Political and Media engagement carried out over course of the year, with targeted meetings attended by Interim CEO and/or Interim Chair.</p>	

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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.			
Review and renew communications plan	Strong and relevant key messages	Key messages in Communications and Engagement Plan reviewed and updated at end April 2014 and reported on in month end Communications Progress Reports. Updated Communication Plan for 2015-16 in progress, to be completed by month end April 2015.	
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 Website E-zine Engagement diary	Per above. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Publication Scheme made publicly available on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website from October 2014 and all website content reviewed in line with this on ongoing basis. Pilot edition of e-zine deferred pending resource constraints until 2015-16. Engagement diary established end-June 2014. Month-end reporting in place as part of Communications progress report.	
Integrated engagements plan with key stakeholders including FSWG, CVS and OFMDFM	MOU agreed between CVS and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited	Completed.	
	Monthly tri-lateral meetings CVS / the Victims and Survivors Service Limited / OFMDFM	Regular meetings occurred over the course of the year with representation from the Victims and Survivors Service Limited senior management team.	
	Regular engagement with Forum Services Working	Regular meetings occurred over the course of the year, including representation from the Victims and	

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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.			
	Group	Survivors Service Limited senior management team.	
	Monthly Accountability Meetings	Regular meetings occurred over the course of the year with representation from the Victims and Survivors Service Limited senior management team.	

Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
Action 4.1: Driving Results through Clinical Governance (CLSM / PM)			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Follow through 2013 Skills Audit of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited - funded counsellors and psychological therapists with targeted information sessions. To be developed in consultation with funded organisations through the Practitioners Working Group and the Knowledge Transfer Partnership work.	<p>Accredited training courses and seminars for therapists and counsellors</p> <p>Increased capacity and confidence within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited -funded organisations</p> <p>Consistent high standards of service delivery across funded organisations</p>	<p>Training plan updated and funding confirmed for this year and next year.</p> <p>A one year pilot training programme has been developed and timetable due to be rolled out across the sector from April 2015.</p>	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
Procurement of befriending supervision and co-ordination	Framework for supervision and support across groups providing befriending services	Procurement exercise carried out and successful bidder appointed. Training and co-ordination carried out	
Action 4.2: Driving Results through Corporate Governance (PM / FM / CO)			
Targeted actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Implementation of Individual Needs Programme	Decreased bureaucracy in access to services, while maintaining public accountability rules	<p>Financial Assistance closed 30 June, 2014 – all new applicants processed.</p> <p>Support for Bereaved Scheme was opened in early December with an initial award of up to £200 increased to £400 in January 2015.</p> <p>Support for Injured Scheme for those in High Rate Care Component DLA opened in October with an award of up to £1,500.</p> <p>Support for Injured Scheme for those in Middle Rate Care Component DLA opened in October with an award of up to £200. This was increased to £400 in January 2015.</p> <p>Award letters issued to individuals who have been seriously injured, are not on DLA but were in treatment last year.</p>	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
Implementation of Victims Support Programme	Review of VSP Operating Manual and Guidance Notes	Initial review and amendments completed March 2014. No further review required in 2014-15.	
	Monthly training sessions with groups	Training schedule planned for the course of the year had to be suspended due to funding constraints. Workforce Training Plan developed for implementation in 2015-16.	
	Review of VSP application Open call for applications Issued letters of offer for next programming period	Extension of scheme confirmed and process of reporting on 2014-15 outturn underway. Letters of Offer Issued. Pre-contract checks carried out on 8 new groups.	
Carry out a review of all funded staff positions within each funded organisation	Clear information on capacity of funded organizations. Clear information on salary requirements of funded organizations.	Report received from Sector Matters. This work will continue into 2015-16, with the implementation of the report's recommendations.	
Design and implement Monitoring and Evaluation Tools in consultation with stakeholders	VSP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of existing tools • Update M&E tools, present to CVS and FSWB • Consultation with sector 	This work will continue into 2015-16. VSPWG will take forward the M&E work at their next meeting in April 2015.	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
	Individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVS and FSWG consultation to agree info requirements • Implement tools • Carry out 3 month review • Implementation of consolidated online MIS 	This work will continue into 2015-16.	
Develop a robust Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board to oversee the strategic direction and governance arrangements	Monthly Board meeting and minutes published on website	Minutes published on website on ongoing basis over the year, 1 month in arrears.	
	Board training and induction to include MSFM and Companies Act	Schedule of matters agreed and standing agenda items in line with MSFM and Companies Act requirements.	
	Appointment of independent Accountant	<p>The Independent Chair (non-Board member) of the ARC has agreed to maintain this position.</p> <p>OFMDFM have selected a Chair and additional Board members which are awaiting Access NI clearance at 31 March 2015 (appointment confirmed on 1 April 2015).</p>	
	Finalisation of Modus Operandi	Schedule of Matters and Standing agenda items agreed in August 2014.	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
	Appointment of a trained and experienced ARC	Current ARC members received training in November 2014. However, further training will commence in 2015-16 following discussion with new Board members. Independent Chair (non-Board member) of ARC has retained this position.	
	Review of key governance policies and performance of SMT	Role of the Board and CEO/AO were documented and agreed at August 2014 Board meeting. Performance reporting and KPI agreed.	
Design and develop the long term strategy of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited moving forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Vision, Mission and Objectives Finalise the Victims and Survivors Service Limited work plan for 2014-15 and 3 year Corporate Plan 	<p>2014-15 Corporate Plan (Including Vision, Mission and Objectives) in draft format, was amended and returned to Dept early June 2014. Revised and re-submitted in September 2014 in line with reduced £10m budget. This is currently awaiting OFMDFM approval.</p> <p>A Co-Design process has commenced within OFMDFM re future service delivery and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is participating in this working group.</p> <p>A Corporate Planning day occurred on 4 February 2015 in respect of 2015-16. The Corporate Plan for 2015-16 was approved by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board approval on 18 March 2015 and submitted to OFMDFM.</p>	
	Review KPI to ensure focus on quality of service and stakeholder needs	KPI reviewed and reported on a monthly basis and submitted to the Board and Accountability meetings.	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
Implementation of recommendations from the <i>Independent Assessment of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited</i> commissioned by Commission for Victims and Survivors, published 21 February 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved service delivery Improved stakeholder trust in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited 	Recommendations record updated and submitted to the Department and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board on a monthly basis. At October 2014, the only outstanding items related to monitoring and evaluation and the assessment process, which will be taken forward as part of the co-design process in 2015-16.	
Monthly tri-laterals with Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) and OFMDFM, regular meetings with the Forum for Victims and Survivors	Robust engagement with CVS and the Forum for Victims and Survivors	Monthly tri-laterals ongoing throughout the year with CVS and OFMDFM; regular meetings with Forum Services Working Group occurred.	
Ensure robust financial processes and procedures are being developed and followed	Resolution of outstanding 2012-13 audit recommendations	Completed.	
	Submission of final 2012-13 financial statements	Completed.	
	Implementation of Internal Audit Plan	2013-14 audit work complete. 2013-14 Annual Assurance level of Satisfactory achieved. 2014-15 audit plan agreed.	
	Draft financial statements 2013-14	Draft financial statements submitted to ARC in September 2014 and to NIAO on 30 September 2014.	
	Final financial statements 2014-15	Financial statements finalized and signed off by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board on 17	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
		December 2014 and laid in NI Assembly on 22 December 2014 and at Companies House on 31 December 2014.	
	Updated Asset Management Strategy	Review initiated by temporary resource from OFMDFM (who returned on 5 December 2014) – due date rescheduled from Dec 2014 to July 2015	
	Update Financial Procedures and Procurement Manual	Revised implementation date July 2015 from July 2014. Revised Procurement Policy and new Procurement Manual rescheduled to July 2015.	
	Updated MSFM	Updated MSFM signed off on 26 September 2014. Further changes originally requested by OFMDFM no longer required. Will be reviewed by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board in May 2015.	
Manage budget against expenditure and achieve 98.5% consumption	Monthly NDPB consumption reports Monthly cash drawdowns Monitoring Returns	Monthly reporting in place. Impact paper and progress updated each month end. All funding was fully allocated, however, underspend of 0.8% is forecast. Deadline in respect of INP extended to 15 April 2015 to maximize spend.	
Pay 100% of invoices within the statutory time frame 30 days	Prompt Payments	Monthly monitoring and reporting of payments in place.	
Carry out vouching and verification in line with VSP and INP operating rules	Carry out 10% desk check on each payment run	In place.	
	Carry out 100% management check at desk on supporting documents	In place.	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
	Carry out 10% check with suppliers to verify goods and services	In place.	
	Desk vouching 100% of expenditure claims	In place.	
	Debt recovery in line with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Debt Recovery Procedure	Debt Recovery Procedure (Debt Recovery, Bad Debt and Write Off) revised.	
Meet Department Requirements in line with Good Governance Checklist and SLA at OFMDFM Accountability Meetings	Partnership approach to implementation of Strategy for Victims and Survivors Quarterly ALB Performance Reports	In place, addressed at monthly accountability meeting	
Senior Management Team meetings	Reduced risk and increased communication between functions	In the absence of Head of Corporate Services and changes in CEO, an Interim SMT has been established and first met on 14 November 2014. Monthly meetings continue.	
Ensure a robust risk management process is in place and followed	Monthly Risk Registers Quarterly Stewardship Statements Staff knowledge and understanding of all policies and procedures, strengthened governance	Risk register updated by all teams on a monthly basis by working day 3 and reviewed by SMT.	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
Ensure information is provided in response to statutory obligations and any external information requests	Answer all FOI Requests within statutory timeframe	All FOI requests responded to within the statutory timeframe. Total number of FOI requests for period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015: 6.	
	Full compliance with all Data Protection Principles	Regular monitoring in place, reported on monthly in Communications Progress Report	
	Provide accurate and timely responses to AOs, Departmental / Ministerial Briefings, etc.	All deadlines met, with clear and constructive two-way communication between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and Departmental staff on all points of information.	
Improvement in internal communications	Staff knowledge and understanding of role and function of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, up-to-date knowledge of current activity	Staff briefings issued via intranet on weekly basis to keep all staff up to date on organizational activity, with ad hoc additional email updates when required. Monthly Staff Meetings in place, led by staff, with agreed agenda and shared responsibility for chairing and minute-taking. Weekly team leader meetings in place from November 2014.	
	Staff intranet (September/October 2014)	Intranet in place from 5 January 2015. Weekly updates and a selection of policies, procedures, useful guidance notes, and wellbeing resources available. Staff encouraged to give feedback and suggestions on additional content.	
	Quarterly Corporate Planning Day to include CVS role	13 May 2014 – Draft Corporate Plan. 2 September 2014 – presentation and participation of CVS and Department. Change management process and budget reductions.	

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Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
		<p>17 October 2014 – focus on interim staffing arrangements and highlighted operational areas that require clarification/attention.</p> <p>4 February 2015 – Business Plan for 2015-16, with all staff involved in identifying and detailing activities and objectives. This was finalized and submitted to the Departmental Board on 18 February 2015. Representatives from CVS and the Department also attended this Planning Day and briefed staff on recent CVS Research and the newly established Co-Design Programme.</p>	
<p>Maintain a working environment that is health and safety compliant</p>	<p>A working environment that is health and safety compliant</p>	<p>Health and Safety risk assessment completed September 2014 and timetable in place. Two workshops on stress management for staff took place 16 and 19 December 2014. File containing self-help information available to all staff.</p> <p>Internal Audit Review of HR occurred in February 2015 and a satisfactory assurance rating was given.</p>	

APPENDIX 3

Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.			
Action 4.3: Carry out a reorganisation of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for implementation of new strategy (PM / FM / CLSM)			
Targeted actions	Target date Outputs/Outcomes	Progress	RAG status
Plan capacity requirements for going forward in line with documented change management plan	Review of staffing needs and skills and confirm required organisational structure	Due to budget restrictions, internal restructure took place to allow short term staffing needs to be considered. Change Management Plan discussed with team leaders on 7 October 2014 and with staff on 17 October 2014.	
	Submission of staffing needs to OFMDFM for approval Implementation of Change Management plan	Interim staffing structure and SMT in place. Long term plans can now be considered in line with 2015-16 budget position.	
Implement a Training and Development plan for all staff to ensure skills and competencies match any changes in role requirements	Monthly One to One supervision of staff structure	Occurred regularly, reported to HR on a monthly basis.	
	Review of current Performance and Professional Development Plans (PDPs)	Internal training re Unacceptable Behaviour delivered in September 2014. Internal training on Risk Management planned for January 2015 re-scheduled to April 2015, following updating of Client Risk Policy. Staff training plan delivered over period January to March 2015 following additional funding allocation.	
	Management System to incorporate values	Performance appraisal updated and approved by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board in August 2014.	

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	Develop competency framework per staff grade	Work has commenced on this - Due date May 2015 for rolling out 2015-16.	
	Resilience built through promotion of NICS employee assistance programme	Training on handling challenging client behaviour completed by all staff in September 2014. Two workshops on stress management completed: 16 and 19 December 2014. Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Plan drafted January to March 2015 for implementation 2015-16.	