

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

Annual Report and Resource Accounts

2014-15



Independent, Fair and Effective



Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

Annual Report & Resource Accounts 2014-15

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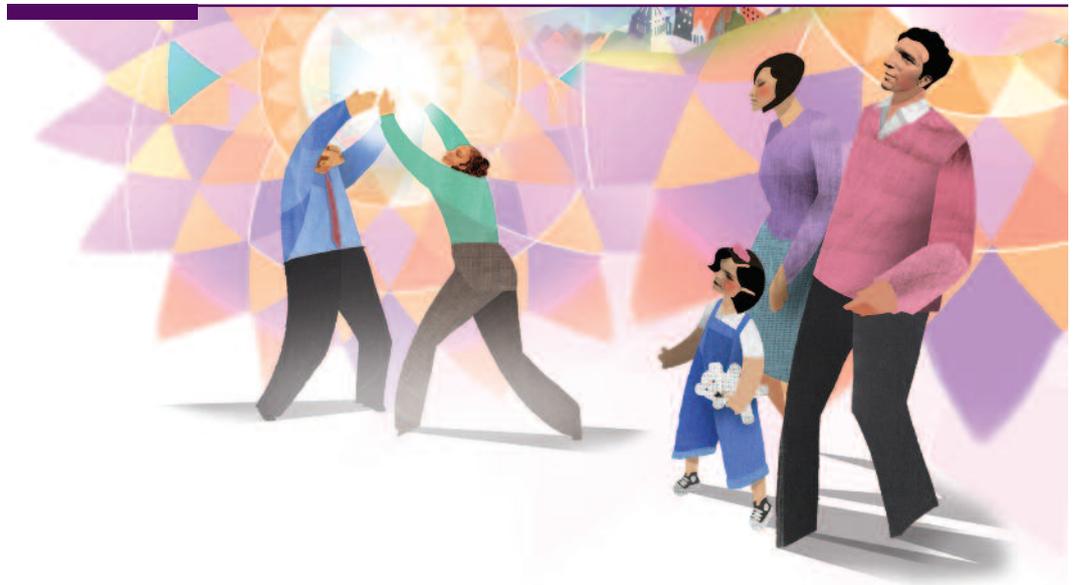
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Foreword

by the Attorney General for Northern Ireland

The challenges facing the PPS are great. Its responsibilities encompass the full range of criminal cases in Northern Ireland from the most complex cases to those cases that, at least initially, appear most straightforward or simple.

As Attorney General for Northern Ireland I am committed to support a fair and effective system of prosecution in any way that I can, and in whatever statutory framework that is currently in place.

Citizens should have confidence in the administration of justice. A fair and effective system of prosecuting offences is a necessary pre-condition for the existence of such confidence. Citizens are entitled to expect that decisions about whether or not to prosecute are taken lawfully, fairly and are based on the available evidence. Victims and witnesses must be treated with consideration and respect.

A citizen's view of the criminal justice system can be often informed or shaped by media reports highlighting aspects of individual cases. It is important that the fullest possible range of material is available to the citizen in order to permit a proper assessment of the effectiveness or otherwise of any element in the administration of justice. The present report can be seen as a useful resource for the citizen and I commend it to anyone who wishes to learn more about our system of prosecuting offences.



John F Larkin QC
Attorney General for Northern Ireland

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'John F Larkin'.

John F Larkin QC
Attorney General for Northern Ireland

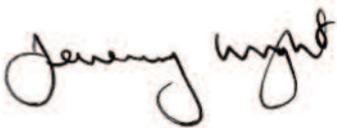
Foreword

by the Advocate General for Northern Ireland

2015 marks 10 years since the establishment of the Public Prosecution Service. In those 10 years it has seen significant changes, including the devolution of justice and policing, which the organisation has managed capably. Its role and its decisions are at the very centre of the criminal justice system for Northern Ireland. It is deservedly well-regarded by the Northern Irish public; 74% of those who had heard of the PPS were very or fairly confident regarding the fairness and impartiality of the Service (up from 71% in 2014 and 68% in 2013). Such an achievement is both highly impressive, and crucially important.

Barra McGrory QC continues to perform commendably in his role as Director of Public Prosecutions, an office he has held since 2011. The organisation has achieved much over the last year, not least in relation to the adoption of new “Prosecution Quality Standards”, the successful pilot of an improved system of dealing with indictable cases, and building closer working relationships with CJSNI partners, including the Department of Justice.

I look forward to working with the Attorney General for Northern Ireland and the Director in the coming year in helping the PPS maintain its success.



The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP
Advocate General for Northern Ireland



Jeremy Wright QC MP
Advocate General for Northern Ireland

PPS Vision and Aim

Our Vision

To be recognised as providing a first class prosecution service for the people of Northern Ireland.

Our Aim

The aim of the Public Prosecution Service is to provide the people of Northern Ireland with an independent, fair and effective prosecution service.

- **Independence**

The Service will be wholly independent of both police and Government; its decisions will be impartial, based on an independent and impartial assessment of the available evidence and the public interest.

- **Fairness**

All actions will be undertaken with complete impartiality, to the highest ethical and professional standards. All persons, including those accused of offences, will be treated fairly. All victims and witnesses will be treated with respect and sensitivity.

- **Effectiveness**

All prosecution decisions will be taken and every prosecution conducted in an effective and efficient manner. We will provide value for money, while delivering a timely and quality service.

Part 1: Annual Report



Director's Report

Introduction

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) presents its Annual Report and Resource Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2015. The accounts demonstrate the resources that have been used in delivering the Service's objectives.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual and guidance as directed by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and on the basis of PPS being a going concern.

Accountability Arrangements

The PPS was established on 13 June 2005 by the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. The Service is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland, Barra McGrory QC, who was appointed on 7 November 2011. The responsibilities of the Director are specified in the 2002 Act.

Since the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly in April 2010, the PPS has been designated as a non-ministerial government department. Funding for the PPS is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly through the bi-annual Estimate process (main and supplementary). As Accounting Officer for the Service, the Director of Public Prosecutions is responsible for ensuring that the public monies provided are used efficiently and effectively. All members of staff are Northern Ireland Civil Servants.

In May 2010 John Larkin QC was appointed as the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, as part of the devolved justice arrangements. The Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 provides for the Director and Attorney General to consult with each other from time to time on any matter for which the Attorney General is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly. In accordance with the 2002 Act the functions of the Director shall be exercised by him independently of any other person.

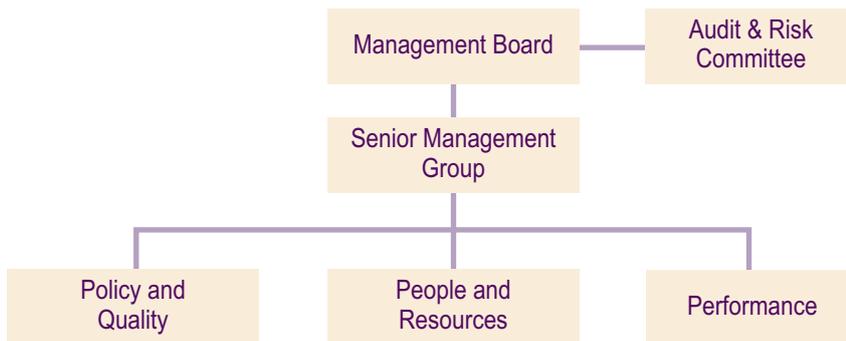
At present a number of prosecutorial matters are reserved to Parliament at Westminster. Duties in respect of these matters are performed by the Advocate General for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP, who is the Attorney General for England and Wales.

Management Structures

The PPS Management Board comprises the PPS Senior Management Team (Director, Deputy Director and Senior Assistant Directors) and two independent members. The Board is assisted by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), the remit of which is to provide assurances to the Director that governance arrangements within the Service are operating effectively. There are also four

sub-committees, which play key roles in the overall governance of the PPS (see organisation chart below). All sub-committees are chaired by a Management Board member and have clear terms of reference, covering the scope of any decision making and the reporting requirements for the Board.

PPS Board Structure 2014-15



Details of the Management Board's membership and key activities during 2014-15 are set out later in this report (see 'Governance Statement', page 49). Information regarding the remit of the ARC and the Board's sub-committees is also provided.

Corporate Governance

The PPS is committed to high standards in corporate governance. The policy of the PPS is to ensure that effective risk management processes are maintained which serve to improve the quality of decision making and the ability to deliver on strategic and operational objectives. The PPS risk management framework complements the current Corporate Plan, Annual Business Plans and financial management arrangements which together provide the systems to manage the Service's resources.

Inspection and Audit

The PPS is subject to review by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI), within the provisions of Part 3 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002.

Internal Audit provision within the PPS is provided by the Internal Audit Branch of the Department of Justice (DoJNI). An annual programme of audits is agreed with the PPS ARC, in consultation with the DoJNI's Head of Internal Audit. The internal audit service is provided in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Details of audit activity during 2014-15 are set out at page 60.

Complaint Handling

The PPS has a three tier process for handling complaints. In the first instance complaints are referred to the relevant Regional Office and will normally be considered by the Regional Prosecutor. The majority of complaints are satisfied at this early stage, and the matter goes no further. Where it is not possible to resolve a complaint at this initial stage, it can be escalated for consideration by a member of the senior management team.

There is also an Independent Assessor of Complaints (IAC) for the Public Prosecution Service. The role of the IAC is to review a complaint where the complainant is not satisfied with the way in which the PPS has decided to deal with the matter. The IAC can investigate only after the case has been considered by the PPS, and if it is not primarily prosecutorial in nature. The current post holder, Mr Alan Henry OBE, was appointed in June 2013.

Details of complaints received and dealt with during 2014-15 are presented at page 30.

Register of Interests

All members of the Management Board and ARC are required to disclose significant interests or anything which may conflict with their responsibilities as Board members. A register of interests is maintained by the Service and conflicts of interest are declared at each Management Board and ARC meeting. Access to the register can be arranged by email request to info@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk.

Pension Liabilities

The treatment of pension costs and liabilities is disclosed in the Remuneration Report and Notes 1.7, 2 and 14.1 to the accounts.

Disabled Persons

The PPS follows the NICS Code of Practice on the Employment of Disabled People and aims to ensure that disability is not a bar to recruitment or advancement.

Equal Opportunities

The PPS is committed to pursuing the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy whereby all staff have equality of opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work.

Payment of Suppliers

PPS is committed to the prompt payment initiative which sets out a target for public sector organisations to pay 95% of external supplier invoices within 10 working days of receipt. For the year to end March 2015, PPS paid 92% of invoices within 10 working days (30 days 97%). The equivalent figures for 2013-14 were 93% and 97% respectively.

PPS payment processing is carried out by Account NI (www.accountni.dfpni.gov.uk).

Managing Attendance

The PPS manage sickness absence in line with NICS Sickness Absence Policies.

The Minister for Finance and Personnel has set sickness absence targets for all NICS Departments covering the period 2010 to 2015. The PPS target for 2014-15 was 7.5 working days lost per whole time equivalent member of staff. The outcome for the year (based on estimated

NICS data) was an average of 8.2 days lost per member of staff. The outcome for 2013-14 was an average of 8.1 days.

Provision of Information to Staff

Information on matters of interest to staff is provided by a wide variety of means, including staff roadshows, staff briefs, the HR connect portal, the PPS Intranet and team meetings.

The PPS has agreed consultation arrangements with the recognised trade union, the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA).

Personal Data Related Incidents

During the year, there were five incidents where PPS data was compromised. Full details are set out at page 57.

National Fraud Initiative

The PPS participates in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), an exercise that matches electronic data within and between public sector bodies to prevent and detect fraud.

PPS participation in the NFI during 2014-15 resulted in a fee of £1,323.

External Audit

The PPS's accounts are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C & AG) as head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The C & AG and his staff are wholly independent of the PPS and he reports his findings to the Assembly. The C & AG's certificate is set out at page 63.

The audit of the financial statements for 2014-15 resulted in a notional audit fee of £42,000 and is included in the programme costs in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

As Accounting Officer I have taken appropriate steps to make myself aware of relevant audit information and to establish that the C & AG is aware of that information. To my knowledge there is no relevant audit information of which the C & AG is unaware.



Barra McGrory QC
Accounting Officer
23 June 2015

Strategic Report

PPS Function and Role

The PPS is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police in Northern Ireland, it also considers cases investigated by other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not to prosecute and to have responsibility for the conduct of criminal proceedings. A range of additional services are available which have been designed to enhance the effectiveness of the Service, including the provision of prosecutorial and pre-charge advice and an enhanced service to victims and witnesses.

PPS Structures

The PPS is a regionally based organisation. There are four regions, each coterminous with one or more court divisions. Each of the four regions is headed by a Regional Prosecutor (Assistant Director). The Regional Prosecutor has overall responsibility for decisions as to prosecution and for the conduct of all prosecutions in that region, with the exception of those cases which are considered by prosecutors in Headquarters.

There are also a number of other sections within the Service, each headed by an Assistant Director, which deal with specialised areas of work. These include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

Corporate Services is responsible for the organisation's support services such as Finance, Human Resources and ICT, as well as the Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU) (see Organisation Chart, Annex A).

Regional Offices

The PPS has six regional offices, known as 'Chambers'. These are located in Belfast (which serves as the headquarters of the PPS), Ballymena, Lisburn, Londonderry, Omagh and Newry. An additional Belfast office, Linum Chambers, accommodates the various Corporate Services functions, as well as the Belfast office of the VWCU. A second VWCU office is located in Foyle Chambers.

Caseload

A total of 45,383 cases were received in 2014-15 compared with 47,339 in 2013-14.

Prosecution Decisions

Prosecutions are instituted or continued only where the public prosecutor is satisfied that the Test for Prosecution is met. The Test for Prosecution is met if:

- The evidence which can be adduced in court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction – the Evidential Test; and
- Prosecution is required in the Public Interest – the Public Interest Test.

The Test for Prosecution is the key element in the Code for Prosecutors issued under Section 37 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. The Code gives guidance on the general principles to be applied in determining in any case whether criminal proceedings should be brought, what charges should be preferred and how prosecutions should be conducted. It also sets out the standards of conduct that the PPS requires from prosecutors including external counsel instructed on behalf of the Director.

The Evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during 2014-15. Of the 53,981 persons subject to a prosecutorial decision during 2014-15, more than seven-tenths (71%) were issued with a decision for prosecution or for diversion from the courts.

Conduct of Prosecutions

Normally prosecutions in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts, and appeals at the County Court, are conducted by public prosecutors. Generally, external counsel represent the PPS at the Crown Court, High Court and the Court of Appeal. In performing this role members of external counsel are essential to the effective delivery of PPS services.

The PPS has established a panel scheme for the instruction of external counsel. Where possible, counsel instructed by the PPS are drawn from this panel. All panel members are required to comply with the policies and guidance of the Director in the conduct of prosecutions, the PPS Advocacy Standards and with the PPS Code of Ethics.

During 2014-15 the overall conviction rate in the Crown Court was 85.1%. The equivalent figure for the Magistrates' Courts was 79.8%.

Management of Risk

The PPS risk management policy sets out the framework for the management of risk and promotes a consistent approach across the Service.

During 2014-15 the Management Board identified nine corporate risks that could, if not managed properly, have reduced the Service's ability to deliver against its strategic priorities. These are set out below (see 'Governance Statement', page 49).

Change Management: The 'First Class Prosecution Service Programme'

The PPS continues to progress its major change initiative, the First Class Prosecution Service (FCPS) Programme, which was implemented by the Management Board in 2014.

In implementing the new initiative, the Board recognised that the PPS was working in a very dynamic situation, having experienced significant changes over recent years in terms of its governance and operating environment. Board members agreed that there was an opportunity for the PPS, as a relatively 'young' organisation, to improve and embed its change management arrangements.

As part of the programme, the Management Board identified a number of priority change issues which are being taken forward via four projects, as follows:

- Project 1 - Faster, Fairer Justice.
- Project 2 - Interface with Police.
- Project 3 - Communication.
- Project 4 - Service Effectiveness.

Further details of the four projects are set out below (see 'Overview of Performance for 2014-15').

Project Managers have provided regular updates to the FCPS Programme Board, which is chaired by the Senior Assistant Director for Resources and Change. It is anticipated that the work of the change projects will not extend beyond March 2016.

Working in Partnership: Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland

The PPS works in partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), the Youth Justice Agency and the Department of Justice (DoJNI), as part of the Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland (CJSNI). The PPS is represented on the Criminal Justice Board which comprises the Heads of these Services.

The Director is a member of the Criminal Justice Delivery Group which is chaired by the Minister of Justice. This was established by the Minister to improve engagement between the most senior leaders within the criminal justice system, and to provide strategic oversight to the work of the Criminal Justice Board.

Overview of Performance for 2014-15

PPS Corporate Plan

The PPS Corporate Plan is based around four strategic priorities which act as a framework to drive our planning outcomes and our approach to managing performance and risk. Within each priority area a number of objectives have been set out as the focus of our work programme and which will progress the delivery of our vision for the Service.

The strategic priorities and objectives were originally agreed as the focus for the Service's Corporate Plan over the three year period to 2013-14. However the PPS Management Board agreed to extend this Corporate Plan for a further year; that is, for 2014-15 the Service published an annual business plan based around these strategic priorities and objectives. This decision was taken to allow the PPS to align its future planning arrangements with CJSNI partners, including the Department of Justice. This decision recognised that, as an organisation, the PPS does not work alone and that our strategic objectives need to be aligned with the approaches our partners are taking to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system as a whole.

These strategic priorities and objectives are as follows:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

Delivering an efficient and effective prosecution service

- To promote the highest standard of prosecutorial decision-making and case preparation and prosecute in the most effective manner (Objective 1.1).
- To work with partners to improve our service delivery and reduce avoidable delay (Objective 1.2).
- To develop and embed our advocacy strategy (Objective 1.3).

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:

Building the confidence and trust of the community we serve

- To provide an enhanced service to victims and witnesses (Objective 2.1).
- To engage effectively with stakeholders and the wider community (Objective 2.2).

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:

Strengthening our capability to deliver

- To provide value for money through the improved management of resources and the development of our resource planning (Objective 3.1).
- To strengthen our accountability as a non-ministerial department by developing and maintaining a transparent and effective governance framework (Objective 3.2).

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:

Building the capability of our people

- To develop our staff and promote a culture of continuous improvement (Objective 4.1).

Key Performance Milestones and Delivery Targets for 2014-15

The PPS Annual Business Plan for 2014-15 set out how the PPS objectives were to be taken forward and included a range of performance milestones for the year, spanning the four PPS strategic priorities (see below for details).

The Annual Business Plan also included a total of thirty key delivery targets against which the performance of the Service was to be measured. Details of the Service's performance for the year are presented at Annex B.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

Delivering an efficient and effective prosecution service

Objective 1.1:

To promote the highest standard of prosecutorial decision-making and case preparation and prosecute in the most effective manner

Legal Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance Team

The Quality Assurance Team's work programme for 2014-15 included a number of thematic reviews. These focused on a variety of matters, including cases of domestic violence and abuse, No Bills granted in the Crown Court, unsuccessful Crown Court cases, and diversions in cases involving sexual offences and other specified offences.

During 2014-15 the Service also maintained an administrative quality assurance service to conduct free-standing administrative reviews and to manage those parts of legal thematic reviews which concerned operational processes. Reviews carried out during the year included an assessment of case file maintenance, the preparation and presentation of Bills of Indictment and the preparation and service of Serious Crime Prevention Orders.

All quality assurance reports set out recommendations for service improvement and have been considered by the Service's Policy and Quality Sub-Committee.

Dip Sampling

A key component of the PPS's legal quality assurance arrangements is the dip sampling of cases by Regional Prosecutors and Assistant Directors. All cases for dip sampling are selected independently by statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

During the year, 855 cases were dip sampled. An analysis of the findings has shown the quality of decision-making to be high, with 98.2% of decisions assessed as being 'within the range' a prosecutor could reasonably take, as specified in the Code for Prosecutors.

In addition senior managers have reviewed a range of serious cases where there has been an unsuccessful outcome to ensure that any lessons learned have been considered. This has included 'No Bills' in the Crown Court, as well as cases in which a request for review has resulted in a change to the original decision.

PPS Prosecution Quality Standards

A working group was established in 2014 to develop new PPS Quality Standards. This was with a view to strengthening the existing quality assurance and monitoring framework. In taking this forward, members of the working group considered quality standards in place in other jurisdictions, including England and Wales.

The new PPS 'Prosecution Quality Standards', which have now been agreed, cover the main areas of the PPS's work, including the provision of advice to investigators, the taking of prosecution decisions, the preparation of cases, the presentation of cases at court and the services we provide to victims and witnesses. A range of quality indicators apply to each standard. Where appropriate the standards will also be supported by service delivery measures which will be informed by the dip sampling of cases, carried out by senior prosecutors and our Quality Assurance Team.

The new standards were published in May 2015, following a public consultation exercise.

Policy Development

A revised policy on Prosecuting Cases of Rape was published in July 2014. This updated policy statement included information on the Victim and Witness Care Unit.

A major review of the PPS Code for Prosecutors was also taken forward during 2014-15. Key changes within the document, which was released for public consultation in June 2015, include the following:

- Revision of the procedures for review of a decision not to prosecute.
- Updated guidance to reflect our approach to the giving of reasons to victims of crime.
- Reference to the Attorney General's Human Rights guidance.
- An outline of current arrangements for dealing with victims and the provision of victim services, for example reflecting the role of the VWCU and the requirements of the Victim Charter.

A number of other policy statements were to be published for consultation during 2014-15, including policies in relation to the handling of cases involving youth offenders and guidelines for diversion. However publication of these documents was deferred, pending legislative changes and/or the implementation of related initiatives within the criminal justice sector. These policies will now be published in 2015-16.

Guidance to Prosecutors

During the year, guidance was issued to prosecutors on a wide range of legislative, policy and case handling issues, including hate crime case law, the prosecution of cases involving electronic communications, the Victim Charter and human trafficking and exploitation.

Arrangements are in place for all significant judgments delivered by the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court and European Court of Human Rights to be made available to Policy Section to ensure that any learning points are identified and passed on to relevant staff.

Case Management

A new Policy on Case Management was progressed during 2014-15 and will be launched in mid-2015. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that risks to a successful outcome in difficult and complex cases are identified at an early stage. The policy also outlines a number of measures to improve strategic planning in such cases, for example through the introduction of prosecution strategy documents which will outline all actions to be taken by police, prosecutors and external counsel. The roles and responsibilities of the prosecutor/decision-maker, their regional prosecutor and prosecuting counsel are clearly defined within the new policy.

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI)

The Chief Inspector has published a number of reports which focused on the work of the PPS and/or its interface with partner agencies. Among these were:

- Serious and Organised Crime (November 2014).
- Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland (Report of the Independent Inquiry, November 2014).
- Police Use of Discretion and Penalty Notices (January 2015).
- The Care and Treatment of Victims and Witnesses in the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland, incorporating the use of Special Measures: A follow-up review of inspection recommendations (March 2015).

The Service has considered all findings and, where appropriate, has liaised with partner agencies to ensure that recommendations are addressed.

Objective 1.2:

To work with partners to improve our service delivery and reduce avoidable delay

Tackling Avoidable Delay

Faster, Fairer Justice Programme

The PPS is participating in the 'Faster, Fairer Justice' Programme which provides the strategic context and framework for the range of initiatives which are underway. The work is wide-ranging and covers a number of different strands.

Key issues under consideration include:

- Encouraging earlier guilty pleas: Encouraging those persons who are guilty of an offence to admit their guilt at an earlier stage in proceedings.
- Reform of committal proceedings: Abolishing the use of oral evidence in committal proceedings and allowing the direct transfer of certain cases to the Crown Court.
- Alternatives to prosecution: Dealing with less serious offending where it is not considered proportionate to proceed with a court prosecution.
- Statutory case management: Providing the judiciary with enhanced case management powers.
- Vulnerable and Intimidated Witness Working Group: Development of a Registered Intermediaries Scheme.

Other initiatives relate to extending the use of video links and summons issue by prosecutors.

Not all of the initiatives will require legislation. However, for those that do, it is intended to legislate in a Faster, Fairer Justice Bill. Royal Assent is anticipated for 2015.

It should be noted that the Director has made submissions to the Minister of Justice urging more radical legislative change to the administration of criminal justice than the changes proposed in respect of committal proceedings, early guilty plea and sentence and judicial case management. The Director has also outlined his views to the Assembly's Justice Committee during its deliberations on the proposed legislation, most recently in November 2014.

FCPS Programme – Faster, Fairer Justice Project

Internally a project team is working to scope the impact of the various Faster, Fairer Justice initiatives, under the umbrella of the FCPS Change Programme.

Work carried out during the year has included an exercise to test the operation of Prosecutorial Fines. An analysis of the results of this research will inform any draft guidance. The team has also scoped the provisions needed for prosecutors to issue a summons. The power to issue a summons will bring greater efficiencies as it will no longer be necessary to attend before a Lay Magistrate to have a summons signed prior to issue. Difficulties around summons service, and the need to re-issue those that go unserved, can cause delay in the criminal justice system and it is anticipated that allowing prosecutors to both issue and re-issue summonses will help improve timeliness.

Other work has focused on the impact of changes in committal proceedings and consideration of NICTS's proposed Single Jurisdiction reforms.

Statutory Time Limits

PPS is working with DoJNI and other partners to ensure that relevant preparations are made for the introduction of new Statutory Time Limits (STLs) in the youth court, the aim of which is to help speed up processing times for criminal proceedings against young people. A key issue for the project team has been the identification of the new procedures to support the introduction of STLs, and any changes needed to our ICT systems.

Indictable Cases Pilot

The Ards Indictable Cases Pilot (ICP) commenced on 2 January 2015 and extends to all indictable cases arising in PSNI 'C' District, which aligns with the Petty Sessions Districts of Ards and Downpatrick.

The aim of the ICP is to deliver a more efficient and effective investigative and prosecutorial process that reduces avoidable delay in all indictable cases. This extends to all cases; from those in which early admissions are made to those contested on all issues at trial.

The effectiveness of the new ICP process is based on the following key principles:

- Early engagement between PSNI and PPS; for PPS to provide structured pre-charge and prosecutorial advice together with guidance in relation to evidential requirements and agreed file submission timeliness.
- Early engagement between PPS and defence to agree a basis of plea where relevant, to effectively challenge a continuing 'not guilty' plea where the strength of the evidence indicates that a contrary course is likely to be taken at trial and to engage in effective case management.

- Securing agreement with PSNI regarding the use of 'proportionate evidence' required to prove the case to the required evidential standard.
- Assisting judicial case management.
- Assisting in ensuring clear sentencing judgments that are explicit as to the credit gained or lost as a result of the timing of the plea.

To date, the ICP has demonstrated improvements in timeliness at all stages of the investigation and prosecution processes, albeit on the basis of a small number of cases. A mid-point evaluation is scheduled for June 2015, when the longer term benefits and resource requirements will be considered for potential rollout.

FCPS Programme - Interface with Police Project

The Interface with Police Project has tackled a number of key issues for the PPS and PSNI, including an agreed programme to develop Service Level Agreements (SLAs), the improvement of police file quality and the definition and development of performance reports to assist in managing the PPS/police relationship.

Decision Information Requests

The time taken for decision information requests (DIRs) has been identified as a key issue in delay, particularly in more serious cases; over half of the indictable prosecution decisions issued by PPS during 2014-15 required one or more DIRs¹. The PPS continues to work with PSNI to achieve a reduction in the volume of such requests, particularly in indictable cases. The introduction of PSNI 'Gatekeepers' (at Inspector rank), whose role is to review case material prior to submission to PPS, is seen by both organisations as an important measure in improving file quality. The progress of this initiative is being monitored jointly.

PPS / PSNI Review Clinics

PPS and PSNI have held a series of 'review clinics' in the PPS's Belfast Office, initially on a trial basis. The aim of the clinics is to provide a more streamlined process for dealing with cases involving lower-level offending, which would typically be dealt with by way of a PPS diversionary disposal, use of police discretion or a decision for no prosecution. This approach has the potential to speed up the decision-making process in these case categories. The clinics also provide an opportunity for police and PPS to discuss evidential matters, such as any requirements for forensics, CCTV or other material.

A decision as to the rollout of the clinics to other PPS regions will be taken over the coming months.

Youth Engagement

The PPS has worked with the YJANI, PSNI and other partners in developing a new 'Youth Engagement' initiative. The underlying idea is that if the young person is provided with more support early in the process to help them to make a properly informed decision about the offer of a diversion, it should be possible to avoid cases being taken to court that do not need to be there. The pilot, which was conducted in PSNI's A and B Districts, ran until May 2013.

Following an evaluation of the scheme, a key recommendation was that the arrangements should be rolled out across Northern Ireland. In order to facilitate the rollout, which was completed during the final quarter of 2014-15, a number of inter-agency training events were held in the PPS's Ballymena, Foyle and Lisburn Regional Offices.

¹ A Decision Information Request (DIR) is issued by PPS to police where the evidence and information contained in an investigation file is incomplete and a further written report or action from the police is required.

Expediting Prosecution Cases

Performance Sub-Committee

While the PPS is working in partnership within the Faster, Fairer Justice Programme, the Service has also maintained an internal focus on service delivery, and in particular improvement in the time taken to issue prosecution decisions.

The Performance Sub-Committee, chaired by the Deputy Director, has taken the lead on corporate performance issues. The timeliness of indictable cases has been a key focus for the Sub-Committee. Since its inception in September 2012, there has been a marked improvement in the average time taken for the issue of indictable prosecution decisions, with a fall from 212 days in 2012-13 to 156 days in 2013-14. This improvement has been sustained during 2014-15, with an average of 158 days. Excluding time required for DIRs, such decisions were issued in an average of 112 days, an improvement on the previous year (117 days). The Sub-Committee has also monitored the implementation of the Performance Action Plan. Initiatives taken forward during 2014-15 included the rollout of the Prosecutor Activity Sheet (PAS). The data recorded via the PAS has improved the performance and resource information available to senior managers.

Timeliness of Decisions - Targets

The PPS's Annual Business Plan for 2014-15 included 10 timeliness targets, covering the issue of indictable prosecution decisions, summary prosecution decisions, diversionary decisions and no prosecution decisions. All 10 targets were achieved (see Annex B).

Objective 1.3:

To develop and embed our advocacy strategy

Advocacy

Advocacy Standards

The PPS must ensure that quality is at the heart of its advocacy. Advocacy Standards, modelled on those in place in England and Wales, have been adopted by the Service.

Training plays an important role in maintaining the quality of our advocacy. During 2014, 10 Public Prosecutors attended the Law Society's Advanced Advocacy Course, which included sessions in May, June and September. A further group of prosecutors will attend in 2015.

Steps have also been taken to explore the development of formal quality review systems. A new Advocacy Monitoring Unit, comprising two experienced prosecutors, was established on the basis of a 12 month pilot in early 2014. The focus of the pilot, which commenced in the PPS Eastern Region, was on in-house advocacy. Advocacy Monitors attended the full range of Magistrates' Court business, including the conduct of remands, guilty pleas and contested hearings. A total of 18 prosecutors were assessed.

The findings of the pilot were highly positive. Of the 164 individual 'elements' of performance examined for the 18 prosecutors (for example, preparation for trial, trial advocacy and consultations with victims and witnesses), just under two-thirds of elements were assessed as exceeding the required standard, while the overall percentage meeting the standard was 96.3%.

Following the pilot, a workshop was held in the pilot area, which concentrated on the matters found to be most deficient in some of the assessments.

Although the pilot ended early due to operational financial pressures, a number of lessons were learned in terms of future monitoring arrangements. During the year ahead, the senior management team will consider how best to take this forward, given the current financial constraints facing the organisation.

Higher Court Advocates

The PPS is now using in-house prosecutors as advocates in the Crown Court. Four Higher Court Advocates (HCAs) have been appointed.

During the year a total of 183 Crown Court briefs were issued to the HCAs, an increase on 2013-14 (153).

Panel Counsel Scheme

In 2009 the Service established a Panel Scheme for the instruction of external counsel. A refresh of the scheme was taken forward in 2012, via an open competition, with new panels of junior and senior counsel appointed. These Panels have continued to operate successfully during 2014-15.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Building the confidence and trust of the community we serve

Objective 2.1:

To provide an enhanced service to victims and witnesses

Services to Victims and Witnesses

Victim and Witness Care Unit

Improving services and support is vital to building effective relationships between victims and witnesses, the PPS and the criminal justice system.

A key initiative in this area is the implementation of a new Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU) which has been developed with police and other partners, including the DoJNI and Victim Support Northern Ireland (VSNI). The purpose of the VWCU model is to improve the experience of victims and witnesses by, for example, providing a single point of contact and identifying particular needs at an early stage. The PPS Management Board recognises the importance of the VWCU initiative in terms of engaging with this key stakeholder group.

The VWCU, which is based in the PPS's Belfast and Foyle Offices, has now been rolled out across Northern Ireland. The Unit covers all Magistrates', Youth and County Courts. Over the last 12 months services have also been extended to the Crown Court using a phased approach. This will be completed by autumn 2015.

An interim evaluation of the Belfast office was conducted in spring 2013, which was intended to highlight any areas where processes and procedures needed to be amended or refined. A second phase of the evaluation was commenced during the final quarter of 2014-15, focusing on the

operation of the Foyle office. As part of the evaluation process it is also intended to consult with VWCU stakeholders, including relevant voluntary sector bodies such as VSNI and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the evaluation will be taken forward during 2015-16.

VWCU Launch Event

The official launch of the VWCU took place in May 2014. The launch was attended by members of the Unit, as well as senior PPS and PSNI managers and representatives from other stakeholder groups. The event was covered by both BBC and RTE.

Registered Intermediaries Scheme

Registered Intermediaries (RIs) are provided to assist witnesses and defendants who have communication difficulties, who may otherwise be unable to give their best evidence.

An RI pilot scheme commenced in May 2013 and was restricted to indictable only offences occurring within the Belfast District Council area and which were prosecuted in Belfast Crown Court. From November 2013 this pilot was extended to include all indictable only offences committed in Northern Ireland and prosecuted in any Crown Court.

An evaluation has now been undertaken by the DoJNI's Victims and Witnesses Branch on behalf of the Registered Intermediaries Project Team and the Vulnerable Individuals Steering Group, which provided oversight of the pilot. The primary aim of the evaluation was to review the pilot and to assess its effectiveness and overall value to the criminal justice process.

The evaluation has highlighted clear evidence that the RI scheme can give vulnerable people a voice, and that the RIs should be an integral part of the justice process. In particular, the pilot has shown that the RI scheme works well at the police investigative stage. However, with more limited experience at court, it was felt the full potential of the scheme had not yet been demonstrated. Therefore it was decided that a further phase of the pilot should be undertaken from April 2015, for a further 12 months. After this time, the pilot will be re-evaluated to inform key decisions in relation to the future direction of the scheme.

In response to feedback received during the evaluation process, it has been agreed to bring hybrid cases in the Crown Court within the scope of this next phase of the pilot.

Remote site live link

Remote site 'live links' have been implemented during the year. This enables witnesses who have been granted special measures to give evidence via live link (i.e. by video feed from outside the courtroom), from a remote site, rather than from within the court building.

Finalising a Live Link Protocol has involved significant inter-agency and stakeholder engagement with NICTS, Witness Service and the NSPCC.

The facility was trialled in the PPS's Eastern Region. There have been two cases in which witnesses attended Lisburn Chambers to give evidence directly to the courtroom in Lisburn Courthouse. The witnesses were between 14 and 17 years old and were accompanied by their parents. While in the building they were supervised by NSPCC staff. PPS has also been able to

use the live link facility to consult with a witness in England thereby saving significant time and expense of the witness travelling to Northern Ireland or the prosecutor and investigating officer travelling to England.

Feedback from witnesses, parents and NSPCC has been very positive regarding both the remote link facility and the contacts generally with PPS Lisburn staff and the VWCU.

Victims and Witnesses Policy

A planned revision of the PPS Victims and Witnesses Policy was deferred pending a review of the policy on the 'Giving of Reasons' (see below), and to allow for any lessons learned from the implementation of the VWCU. The revised policy, to be published in 2015-16, will also take on board the requirements of the Victim Charter.

Victim and Witness Task Force

The PPS is a member of the inter-agency Victim and Witness Taskforce (VWTF) and has contributed to the new five year 'Making a Difference' Strategy.

Hate Crime

The PPS has published detailed statistics in relation to the prosecution of cases involving hate crime during the 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years. In 2013-14 the PPS prosecuted 459 people in cases involving hate crime, an increase on the previous year. Figures for 2014-15 will be published in summer 2015.

The Service is working with the DoJNI to extend the coverage of these statistics, to include details of enhanced sentences imposed in cases aggravated by hostility.

In December 2014, PPS held a 'roundtable' event which focused on hate crime. The event involved hate crime advocates from both statutory and voluntary agencies, for example the DoJNI, VSNI, The Rainbow Project, Leonard Cheshire Disability and the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities. Discussions focused on information sharing and data provision, as well as how policy development in this important area might be shaped.

Arrangements for the 'Giving of Reasons'

It is the PPS's policy to provide detailed reasons for a decision not to prosecute to all victims and their families, irrespective of whether such a request has been made. The categories of cases covered under the policy include homicide, sexual offences, hate crime and those involving victims who are vulnerable on account of their age or mental or physical incapacity.

Following a review by CJINI in 2012-13, a pilot scheme was established to assess the level of demand for provision of more detailed reasons and to identify whether the existing policy needed to be extended.

Overall demand for detailed reasons during the pilot was low; only 3.6% of victims took up the PPS's offer, suggesting that an extension of the scheme was unnecessary. As part of the pilot evaluation, the PPS also consulted with representatives from VSNI, who stated that the existing policy was acceptable.

Further consultation with CJINI has taken place and it is anticipated that an agreed position can be reached in 2015-16.

Requests for Review

Information concerning the process by which a review of a prosecutorial decision can be initiated is contained in the PPS Code for Prosecutors.

During 2014-15 there were 128 requests for review of a prosecution decision, nine of which resulted in the original decision being changed.

Review by the Attorney General for Northern Ireland

In October 2013 the Director asked the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, John Larkin QC, to review the decision-making process that culminated in a decision by the PPS not to prosecute Gerry Adams TD for an alleged offence of withholding information.

In his review, the Attorney General looked at whether or not the PPS followed its own procedures, and whether the handling of the evidence was satisfactory.

The report was subsequently completed in December 2013, but could not be published until June 2015, following the conclusion of Liam Adams' two trials and appeal.

The review makes a number of key conclusions in relation to the decision-making process in this case, including:

- Prosecutors had correctly applied, in the first instance, the evidential test for prosecution to the available evidence. However the decision that the evidential test had not been met was 'perhaps premature' in circumstances where the evidence on the file was unclear as to the extent of Mr Adams' knowledge of the nature of the sexual abuse.
- To then consider the public interest test in circumstances where the clarification, referred to above, had not been obtained was not in accordance with the Code for Prosecutors which states that the public interest test should only be applied when the evidential test is met.
- The review recommends that it should be open to the PPS to make a public interest decision without first having to take all the steps necessary to ascertain whether or not the evidential test is met.
- The Attorney General invites the PPS to consider amending its Code for Prosecutors to enable a public interest decision to be taken, in exceptional cases such as those involving familial sexual abuse where the evidential test may or may not be met but further investigation is necessary before that can be determined.

Importantly, the review recognises that prosecutors can face difficult decisions in cases involving sexual abuse within a family where there is some degree of knowledge among family members and that it is unlikely to be in the public interest to prosecute them, particularly where they may be able to give evidence in support of the victim of abuse.

A revised Code for Prosecutors has now been issued for consultation (see page 19). This will allow prosecutors in some exceptional cases to consider whether the Public Interest Test will require a prosecution before the investigation of an offence is complete and in advance of considering the Evidential test. This reflects the approach suggested by the Attorney General.

Review by Sir Keir Starmer QC

In October 2014, the Director announced that the former Director of Public Prosecutions for England and Wales, Sir Keir Starmer QC, was to conduct an independent review of three interlinked cases involving sex abuse and terror-related charges.

The findings of the review, which encompassed all aspects of the prosecution of these cases by the PPS, were published in May 2015. The review found that there were shortfalls in the service provided by members of the PPS staff and external counsel. A total of 10 recommendations were made in the report, which focused on a number of operational issues, including:

- Improving our approach to case management and the identification of risks in difficult and complicated cases.
- Clearer delineation of roles within the prosecution team.
- The PPS Victims and Witnesses Policy to be reviewed, in particular with a view to improving communications and consultations with victims on major decisions.
- All PPS staff and counsel working on rape and serious sexual abuse cases to undergo further training on the PPS's Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Rape.

The Director has apologised to the three victims in these cases.

PPS has responded to the report in detail and will address the various recommendations via an action plan.

Witness Expenses

PPS is responsible for the payment of expenses to prosecution witnesses arising from their attendance at court in respect of proceedings to which they have been summoned. The rates of witness expenses payable are equivalent to those paid by the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales. Total PPS witness expenses for 2014-15 were £506.5k, which compared with £497.5k in 2013-14.

A planned review of court witness expenses has been completed and a revised scheme will be implemented during 2015-16.

Objective 2.2:

To engage effectively with stakeholders and the wider community

FCPS Programme – Communications Project

In 2013 the Director commissioned an independent review of the PPS's approach to external communication, encompassing the overall strategy for engagement with the public, the media and key stakeholders. The recommendations from this review are now being taken forward via the FCPS Programme. This will include the preparation of a new communication strategy for the organisation and an overhaul of the Service's intranet and website.

Work conducted during the year has included a series of internal workshops, the aim of which was to identify the communication needs of staff and their preferred communication channels.

Communications Unit

Following on from the review of external communication, PPS has established a Communications Unit. A new Head of Communications has been appointed to lead in the development of communications on behalf of the Service. The recruitment process for a number of other posts within the team has also been taken forward and the new staff members have now taken up their posts.

Outreach Programme

Over the course of 2014-15 a series of inter-agency and outreach events and activities were conducted across the PPS. These included:

- Meetings with victims and witnesses and victim and witness groups.
- Participation in multi-agency events and working groups.
- Presentations to voluntary organisations on the role of the PPS.
- Meetings with local elected representatives including MPs and MLAs, and accommodating visits by MLAs to PPS events.
- Media interviews.
- Participation in Business in the Community initiatives.
- Representation at the Belfast Pride and Mela Festivals.
- Participation in seminars and conferences locally, nationally and internationally which has included presentations by members of PPS staff.
- Provision of work experience to school and university students.

Over the course of 2014–15 a total of 309 activities and events were recorded, involving a total staff contribution of approximately 1,129 hours.

Public Confidence: Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey

In January 2015, the PPS commissioned questions for inclusion in the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey, which is carried out by NISRA's Central Survey Unit. A total of seven questions were included in the survey to gauge public awareness of the PPS and its role.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of those who had heard of the PPS were very or fairly confident regarding the fairness and impartiality of the Service. This compared with 71% in 2014 and 68% in 2013.

The results of the survey, which were published in April 2015, have been considered by senior managers and will help to inform the development of PPS policy.

Complaint Handling

Complaints Dealt with in 2014-15

All complaints about the service provided by the PPS (i.e. non-prosecutorial complaints) are monitored centrally and are used to identify areas for improvement in service delivery.

In August 2014, PPS published a revised policy for the handling of complaints. Key changes included:

- A new process for early / informal resolution.
- Introduction of a 'web form' to facilitate the recording of complaints via the PPS website.
- Clarification as to how the PPS will deal with complaints from defendants.
- A revised appeals process.

During the year, a total of 89 complaints were received by the PPS. In terms of outcomes, eight complaints were upheld and four were partially upheld.

Independent Assessor of Complaints

The Independent Assessor of Complaints (IAC), Mr Alan Henry OBE, will publish his annual report in July 2015, covering complaints received during 2014-15. As part of his review of the year's activity, the IAC carried out an audit of all complaints dealt with by the Service.

The Director will respond to the recommendations outlined in the IAC's annual report, which will be available via the PPS website at www.ppsni.gov.uk.

Working Arrangements with Partner Agencies

Participation in CJSNI Working Groups

PPS is involved in a wide range of inter-agency working groups, all designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System, and to ensure that all key interests are represented and considered during policy development and implementation.

Proceeds of Crime

During the year the PPS has continued to build effective working relationships with those criminal justice investigative agencies which have a particular focus on proceeds of crime issues, including restraint and confiscation. Representatives from PPS actively participate in regular meetings of the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF), including the Strategy Group and the various sub-groups within the OCTF.

During 2014-15 a total of 59 confiscation orders have been granted by the courts, with a value of just over £2 million. This compared with the total of 51 orders granted during 2013-14, with a value of £2.1 million.

The PPS has also expanded its network of contacts to assist in obtaining mutual legal assistance from other jurisdictions. Obtaining essential evidence in this way contributes to the effective investigation and subsequent prosecution of all types of offences. Such co-operation is also paramount in effecting the restraint and confiscation of assets representing the proceeds of crime, particularly where the criminality has been conducted in more than one jurisdiction or where the proceeds of crime have been transferred to another jurisdiction.

Training

During the year PPS has delivered a programme of training to PSNI and other key stakeholders, including voluntary sector partners such as Nexus and NSPCC.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Strengthening our capability to deliver

Objective 3.1:

To provide value for money through the improved management of resources and the development of our resource planning

Financial Management

Savings Delivery Planning

The Budget 2010 settlement, covering the period 1 April 2010 - 31 March 2015, reduces PPS current expenditure year on year, resulting in an 8.4% reduction by year 4 of the Budget 2010 period. Taking into account estimated inflationary increases of 2-2.5% per annum the PPS budget experienced a reduction in real terms of over 18% by the fourth year.

This represented a challenging settlement which required the Service to review its expenditure and operational processes. The nature of the services provided means that remaining within budget is not solely within the control of the Service. The necessary costs arising from the delivery of prosecution services are demand-led and, to that extent, difficult to forecast.

The PPS published its final Savings Delivery Plan in February 2012 and performance against target is monitored on a bi-annual basis by the Department of Finance and Personnel. The bulk of the savings over the Budget period were delivered within the first three years of the period through procurement savings, including savings derived from the general procurement of goods and services, the use of external counsel and the introduction of a new fee scheme for the remuneration of counsel.

The PPS made the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) aware in 2011-12 that year four of the settlement would be unmanageable and the organisation would be unable to live within our spending control totals. DFP agreed to review PPS in-year funding in respect of 2014-15. The following paragraph was approved by DFP and included in the published PPS Savings Delivery Plan for 2011-15:

The PPS has a shortfall in the funding available in year four of the Budget 2010 period in comparison to the projected running costs of the Service for that year. The Department of Finance and Personnel are aware that this is largely driven by increases in payroll costs outside the control of the PPS and that this will be a factor in its consideration of any submitted bid for additional funding in 2014-15. This position will be kept under review over the Budget 2010 period.

The financial performance of the PPS during 2014-15 is outlined in more detail later in this report (see 'Financial Performance during 2014-15, page 39).

Incentivisation

The PPS is an approved recipient of incentivisation receipts under the DoJNI's Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme, and as such is eligible for 22.5% of funds recovered from confiscations secured on conviction under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. Incentivisation receipts totalled

£613k in 2011-12, £245k in 2012-13, £346k in 2013-14 and £718k in 2014-15. The funding received during 2014-15 has contributed to a number of initiatives, including PPS projects supporting advocacy monitoring, advocacy training and IT infrastructure improvements to enhance the delivery of successful outcomes in confiscation and restraint cases.

The realisation of cash has become increasingly difficult in the current economic environment and therefore these amounts are not easy to forecast. Depending on the timing of receipts, these funds can also be difficult to use effectively as they are not subject to automatic End of Year Flexibility.

Payment of Counsel Fees

The PPS introduced a new fees payment scheme for external counsel on 5 November 2012. The new scheme broadly aligns PPS fees with the DoJNI rates paid to the defence, and has brought with it the benefits of clearly evidenced value for money and greater predictability for this demanded area of spend. The large majority of fees are now paid promptly.

In the medium term it is intended that both defence and prosecution rates should align with those paid in England and Wales. Under the new Prosecution Fee Scheme the PPS has introduced rates payable in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts which are similar to England and Wales. This has led to the withdrawal of services from these courts by members of the NI Bar and PPS has implemented measures to ensure that all sittings are covered.

The DoJNI has been considering the review of the defence remuneration scheme during 2014-15 and PPS has been working closely with them to ensure the schemes progress in tandem to deliver fair remuneration to independent counsel, while delivering the required savings in overall costs. Both defence and prosecution schemes will be implemented during the first half of 2015-16.

Account NI

The purpose of Account NI is to provide an integrated Resource Accounting and Budgeting System for all NICS Departments. PPS joined Account NI on 2 July 2012.

Payment of Suppliers

PPS is committed to the Government prompt payment initiative which sets out a target for public sector organisations to pay external suppliers within 10 working days of receipt of approved invoices. PPS payment processing is now carried out by Account NI.

Details of Performance for 2014-15 are included at page 12.

Transformation Working Group

The Transformation Working Group (TWG) has been established by the Director to undertake a fundamental review of the delivery of the Service's functions, in light of the proposed budget settlements for 2015-16 and the next Spending Review period.

The aim of the TWG, which is chaired by the Senior Assistant Director for Resources and Change, is to produce proposals to enable the PPS to operate within this budget, whilst minimising the impact on front-line services and victims and witnesses.

Members of the TWG have liaised with key partner organisations, including NICTS and the Strategic Investment Board. To date a number of initial options have been developed for consideration by the Management Board, including associated resource and infrastructure requirements.

On the basis of Board approvals, TWG's role during 2015-16 will be to develop detailed implementation plans.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

During the financial year, there has been ongoing investment in ICT systems, including the Case Management System (CMS), which supports the PPS's business processes.

In order to support the enhanced services now being delivered via the VWCU, the Service has taken forward the development of a new 'online' Victim and Witness Information Portal. Victims and witnesses will be able to log on securely to the portal to obtain details of their case, such as forthcoming court dates. It was anticipated that the portal would be in place by summer 2014. However implementation is dependent on the progress of a wider UK initiative which has meant that the PPS's implementation date has had to be extended until June 2015.

Efforts are being made to exploit the benefits offered by digital working. The Causeway System already provides for electronic sharing of information between the main criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland. However, once a decision is taken to prosecute by the PPS, under current arrangements a paper file must still be printed and transported for use at court. A pilot is now underway in the PPS's Ballymena office to trial a new electronic case file application which is running on secure tablet PC devices. These devices, which are taken into court by PPS staff, should significantly reduce the requirement for paper files. The initiative should also generate financial savings due to a reduction in courier costs. The pilot is due to operate until July 2015 and, subject to evaluation, a decision will then be taken as to whether the system should be rolled out across the PPS regions.

In addition to these key projects a range of CMS and Causeway enhancements have been delivered, including the management of cases involving offences aggravated by hostility (hate crime), procedures to support the Youth Engagement Scheme, the provision of electronic victim personal statements from PSNI to PPS and improved reporting on criminal records across the jurisdictions within the UK. Changes have also been delivered to support the implementation of the VWCU's Foyle office.

Investment has also been directed towards key elements of the ICT infrastructure. These have included:

- A complete refresh of the PPS disaster recovery suite.
- A continued move from physical servers to 'virtual' servers.
- The upgrade of a range of software products.
- Replacement of out of date PCs.
- The implementation of a new email archiving system.

PPS Crown Room staff can now access PPS systems from court venues which has greatly improved the efficiency of PPS Crown Court processes.

During the year a five-year contract was awarded to a supplier to work in partnership with the PPS to deliver infrastructure support and development services.

Sustainable Development

PPS has initiated a review of its commitments and responsibilities in relation to Corporate Responsibility which includes the themes of People, Planet and Place.

As part of the 'green housekeeping' agenda the Service continues to promote and encourage the three key tenets of sustainability – reduce, re-use and recycle. This has seen an increase in support and contribution towards all three areas across the organisation.

The Service continues to explore all opportunities to maximise recycling including promotion of recycling initiatives, better segregation of waste, and also finding additional materials which are suitable for recycling.

This has led to a reduction in the proportion of waste going to landfill, and a corresponding increase in the proportion of waste being recycled.

Objective 3.2

To strengthen our accountability as a non-ministerial department by developing and maintaining a transparent and effective governance framework

Corporate Governance

Performance and Accountability Meetings

Performance and Accountability meetings (PAMs), led by the Deputy Director and SAD for Regional Prosecutions, are now held on a quarterly basis. The new PAMs framework commenced in July 2014 and involves all Regional Prosecutors and Assistant Directors and their key personnel. Issues discussed during PAMs include:

- The steps being taken to address any deficits in performance identified via the Service's key performance measures and other performance reports.
- Details of business plan objectives which are not being met or where there has been significant slippage.
- Matters which may impact on the future performance of the Region / Section (for example, resource changes or potential increases in workload).
- Key operational or legal matters, such as the conduct of high profile cases and legal quality assurance.
- Updates on any action points agreed at previous meetings.

Meetings of the Performance Sub-Committee are now aligned with the quarterly PAMs schedule.

Security Policy Framework

Information Assurance

The Service is committed to improving its information assurance capability and ensuring that arrangements are driven by the Cabinet Office Security Policy Framework (SPF), the Data Protection Act and issues identified in PPS Information Risk Registers. An overarching Information Assurance and Risk Policy is in place that links all the Service's information assurance policies and procedures and sets out the governance structure.

The PPS successfully implemented the Government's new Protective Marking Scheme from April 2014, and reviewed all its information assurance policies in line with the new scheme. The re-accreditation process for PPS IT systems commenced in late 2014 with an IT Health Check and will be completed in 2015. During the year, all staff completed Information Assurance Training.

Business Resilience

There were no major business continuity incidents during the year. During 2014-15 the PPS worked to develop the business continuity capability of the new Victim and Witness Care Unit.

Disability Action Plan

The Service's Disability Action Plan (DAP) covered a one year period to 31 March 2015. The plan set out a range of actions through which the Service would seek to implement its disability duties in areas such as victim and witness services, partnership working, communication and staff training. Issues addressed during 2014-15 included the implementation of new guidelines on prosecuting cases involving electronic communication, a review of the court witness expenses policy and autism awareness training. Several matters, such as a planned review of current information leaflets, were deferred until 2015-16. This was mainly due to the availability of resources.

Equality Scheme

A new PPS Equality Scheme, which sets out how the Service proposes to fulfil its obligations under s.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, was approved by the Equality Commission on 28 March 2012.

The Service has also published a detailed Equality Action Plan. Key objectives achieved or partially achieved during 2014-15 included the implementation of the VWCU's Foyle Office, and publication of PPS hate crime statistics. Outstanding issues, such as the publication of an updated Victims and Witnesses Policy and implementation of the Victim and Witness Information Portal, will be addressed during 2015-16.

The Annual Progress Report on s.75 of the NI Act 1998 and s.49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) was sent to the Equality Commission in August 2014.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Building the Capability of our People

Objective 4.1

To develop our staff and promote a culture of continuous improvement

Staffing Levels and Recruitment

The agreed staffing complement of the Public Prosecution Service is 565. As at 31 March 2015, there were 563 staff employed within the PPS, including 5 temporary staff. The table below provides a breakdown of staffing within the Service by grade.

It should be noted that the whole time equivalent staffing figure at 31 March 2015 was 521.5.

The Service's 2014-15 recruitment programme involved the use of external recruitment and elective transfers. A total of 40 persons have been recruited during the year. A total of 47 staff left the PPS as a result of elective transfers, promotion, retirement and temporary contracts coming to an end.

PPS Staff Complement by Grade*

Substantive Grade**	Position at:	
	31/3/14	31/3/15
Senior Assistant Director / Assistant Director (UG5)	10	10
Senior Public Prosecutor and equivalent grades (6/7)	74	73
Public Prosecutor and equivalent grades (Deputy Principal)	125	121
Staff Officer	30	33
EO1 / EO2	96	98
Administrative Officer / Administrative Assistant	235	228
Total	570	563 ***

* Excludes Director and Deputy Director. ** Excludes temporary promotions.

*** The staff complement of 563 (as at 31/3/15) includes 205 males and 358 females. The 12 senior management positions as at 31/3/15 (including the Director and Deputy Director) comprised 9 males and 3 females.

Managing Attendance

The PPS manage sickness absence in line with NICS Sickness Absence Policies. E-learning packages on Managing Sickness Absence have been available for all staff throughout the year.

The Minister for Finance and Personnel has set sickness absence targets for all NICS Departments covering the period 2010 to 2015. The PPS target for 2014-15 was 7.5 working days lost per whole time equivalent member of staff. The outcome for the year (based on estimated

NICS data) was an average of 8.2 days lost per member of staff. While not meeting the NICS target, the estimated outturn for the year places the PPS as the best performing NICS Department. The outcome for 2013-14 was an average of 8.1 days.

The Minister also set targets to reduce the average duration of long-term sickness and the PPS target for 2014-15 was set at 46 days. The provisional end of year figures show the PPS average duration at 46.5 days, narrowly missing achievement of the target. Nevertheless the PPS was also the best performing NICS Department in terms of this measure.

Voluntary Exit Scheme

The NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) was launched by the Minister for Finance and Personnel on 2 March 2015. The purpose of the scheme is to deliver pay bill reductions for departments in line with the 2015-16 budget allocations agreed by the NI Executive.

The VES covers all NICS employees, including those on secondment to other organisations. Applications of interest were accepted up to 27 March 2015.

Since 31 March 2015, applications for the Voluntary Exit Scheme have been processed by the Department of Finance and Personnel. During June some staff have been offered the opportunity to exit under the scheme, however these offers are conditional on funding becoming available to allow the scheme to proceed during 2015-16.

We will continue to liaise closely with DFP's Corporate HR in operating the scheme. A priority will be to maintain effective employee relations, engaging with trade unions and providing staff with the information they need.

Learning and Development

The 2014-15 corporate training plan was built around the training needs that were identified in meetings between the Training Unit and senior management. The 2014-15 plan was delivered within the specified timescales and available training budget.

During the year the Training Unit has worked with the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) to deliver generic NICS training and with external providers to deliver the required line of business training.

Working within the NICS

As a non-ministerial department, PPS is fully engaged with the NICS on HR matters and is represented on a range of committees and working groups. The SAD for Resources and Change is a member of the HR Directors' Group and the Finance Directors' Group which comprise senior officials from across the NI Departments.

During the year PPS has implemented the new NICS performance management system and competence framework, as set out in the 2014-15 NICS Annual People Plan.

Health and Safety

PPS is committed to adhering to the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and all subordinate legislation to ensure that staff and service users enjoy the benefits of a safe

environment. Throughout the year a range of health and safety assessments were carried out, not only on an individual level, but in relation to buildings and various facets of the work within the PPS. A number of relatively minor accidents were also investigated over the course of the year.

During 2014 the PPS participated in a NICS-wide Well-being at Work Survey. A number of cross-departmental working group meetings have subsequently been held in order to develop and implement a NICS Stress Survey Action Plan. These meetings have included a workshop facilitated by the Health & Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI).

FCPS Programme – Service Effectiveness

A range of initiatives, focusing in particular on performance management and the delineation of structures and roles, have been taken forward by the Service Effectiveness project team. Key developments during the year have included new induction materials and revised performance agreements.

Internal Communication

Staff Roadshows

A number of roadshows were held across the PPS regional offices during 2014-15. The roadshows, led by members of the PPS senior management team, covered a wide range of corporate issues including the FCPS Change Programme, performance management and the role of the new TWG.

Staff Brief

The PPS Staff Brief, launched in June 2011, is published every quarter and used as the basis for team meetings throughout the PPS. Staff also have an opportunity to raise issues for inclusion in the Brief and to provide feedback.

Information on matters of interest to employees is also provided by a number of other means such as the 'HR Connect Portal', the PPS intranet, the issue of circulars and regular team briefings.

TUS Consultation

The PPS has agreed consultation arrangements with the recognised trade union, the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA), and meets formally several times per year. In addition, trade union side is regularly consulted on matters relating to employees' terms and conditions.

Employee Volunteering Scheme

During the year the Service has continued to promote Business in the Community's Employee Volunteering Scheme. PPS staff members have participated in a number of individual projects. For example, staff from Newry Chambers spent a day painting in Praxis Care premises.

Business Improvement Team

During the year a number of efficiency and effectiveness reviews have been carried out by the PPS Business Improvement Team. Activity has included an evaluation of the Fraud and Departmental Section, the regional Premises Officer role and the VWCU. The Team has also provided ongoing consultancy support for the TWG and the various FCPS projects.

Financial Performance during 2014-15

Statement of Parliamentary Supply

As a non-ministerial department the PPS is financed directly from the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund through the supply process operated by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

Each year the PPS is given approval for its expenditure when the NI Assembly votes the Main and Supplementary Supply Estimates. As set out in the Statement of Assembly Supply, the Department was voted a Resource Estimate Provision of £37,272k for 2014-15 (£36,351k, 2013-14). Details of the PPS Estimates are available from the DFP website.

The PPS outturn for 2014-15 was £33,932k (£42,383k, 2013-14) as shown in the Statement of Assembly Supply. This was £3,340k lower than the net resource limit and £1,431k of this difference was in respect of the write back of an opening provision as per Note 14.

The net cash requirement of the Department, at £39,625k, was £2,547k less than the Assembly limit as set out in the Reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement (SOAS 4).

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure represents the total net administration and programme resources consumed. The net operating costs during 2014-15 were £33,932k (2013-14, £42,383k) as follows:

Staff Costs	£19,858k (2013-14, £27,416k including a £6.3M FET provision)
Other Administration Costs	£339k (2013-14, £339k)
Other Programme Costs	£14,727k (2013-14, £15,134k)
Income	£992k (2013-14, £506k)

Where relevant the PPS complies with the cost allocation and charging requirements set out in HM Treasury and Office of Public Sector Information Guidance and adheres to the guidelines on fees and charges contained within Managing Public Money NI.

Reconciliation of Resource Expenditure between Estimates, Accounts and Budgets

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Net Resource Outturn (Estimates)	34,204	36,134
Adjustments:		
Non Voted Expenditure in the resource account	-	6,249
Net Operating Costs (Accounts)	33,932	42,383
Adjustments:		
Voted Expenditure outside budget	(42)	(42)
Resource Budget Outturn (Budget)	33,890	42,341
of which:		
Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL)	33,748	35,917
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)	142	6,424

Statement of Financial Position

The Department was in a net equity position of £3.3M at 31 March 2015 (£(3.2)M 2013-14). Total Assets comprised property, plant and equipment, intangibles, trade receivables and cash of £10.6M (£11.0M 2013-14). The Department had net liabilities and provisions of £7.3M (£14.2M, 2013-14). During the year investments were made in fixed assets of £237k (£459k, 2013-14) as set out in notes 6 and 7.

The PPS as a government department is funded from the Assembly and is not subject to risks in relation to going concern.

Contingent Liabilities requiring Disclosure

Note 15 details contingent liabilities disclosed.

The Department has no further contingent liabilities required to be disclosed under Assembly Reporting Requirements.

Future Developments

The main factor influencing the future financial performance of the PPS will be the need to operate within a reduced future baseline. The PPS is considering a range of savings initiatives which will be agreed by the Management Board during 2015-16.



Barra McGrory QC
Accounting Officer
23 June 2015

Remuneration Report

Scope of Responsibility

The salaries of the Director and Deputy Director are set in line with the Judicial Appointments Scale as determined by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The Non-Executive Directors are remunerated on the basis of a per diem rate. This was uplifted by 1% from 1 August 2013 to £510 per day in line with the recommendations of the Senior Salary Review body. In addition they are entitled to travel and subsistence expenses at NICS rates incurred while on departmental business.

The Non-Executive Director's remuneration is paid through the Public Prosecution Service payroll and Employers' National Insurance and PAYE accounted for at source.

2. Remuneration Policy

The Public Prosecution Service became a Non Ministerial Department at the point of devolution on 12 April 2010. The majority of PPS staff underwent assimilation to NICS terms and conditions with a small minority choosing to remain under the same conditions applicable to the Northern Ireland Office.

The remuneration of senior civil servants is set by the Minister for Finance and Personnel. The Minister approved a restructured SCS pay settlement broadly in line with the Senior Salaries Review Board report which he commissioned in 2010. The commitment to a Pay and Grading Review for SCS was the second phase of the equal pay settlement approved by the Executive.

3. Service Contracts

Civil service appointments are made in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, which requires appointment to be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition but also includes the circumstances when appointments may otherwise be made.

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.

4. Salary and Pension Entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the senior management of the department.

2014-15 Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements (audited information)

	2014-15					2013-14				
	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (to nearest £1,000)*	Total £'000	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)	Restated Pension Benefits (to nearest £1000)*	Restated Total £'000
Statutory Appointments										
Mr Barra McGrory QC <i>Director of Public Prosecutions</i>	175-180	-	-	68,000	240-245	170-175	-	-	65,000	235-240
Pamela Atchison <i>Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions</i>	140-145	-	-	(12,000)	125-130	135-140	-	-	(71,000)	60-65
Officials										
Ian Hearst <i>Senior Assistant Director of Resources and Change Management - appointed 5 August 2013 (temporarily promoted from 1 April 2013 - 4 August 2013)</i>	85-90	-	-	36,000	120-125	80-85	-	-	31,000	110-115
Stephen Herron <i>Senior Assistant Director of Regional Prosecutions - appointed 5 August 2013</i>	80-85	-	-	50,000	130-135	75-80 (80-85 full year equivalent)	-	-	61,000	135-140
Non Executive Directors										
Christopher Welford	10-15	-	-	-	10-15	10-15	-	-	-	10-15
David Hughes Hallett	5-10	-	-	-	5-10	10-15	-	-	-	10-15
Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Remuneration (£'000)	175-180					170-175				
Median Total	24,728					24,468				
Ratio	7.2					7.1				

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

Note: Pension Branch advised that there was an error on the Pension Benefits calculated for 2 of the senior staff in 2013-14. Correct figures have now been provided and the prior year pension benefits for Pamela Atchison have been restated from £22,000 to (£71,000) and for Stephen Herron from £3,000 to £61,000.

Salary

Salary includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weightings or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any gratia payments.

The SAD Regions was one of 58 recipients who were awarded special payments totalling £4.869M (including employers national insurance and pension costs) during 2014-15 in response to a Fair Employment decision on 19 March 2014, see notes 14.2 and 16.

The specific amount is not disclosed as a result of legal advice on confidentiality provided by the Departmental Solicitors Office.

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. The PPS does not provide any benefits in kind to staff.

Bonuses

Bonuses are based on performance levels attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. Bonuses relate to the performance in the year in which they become payable to the individual. The bonuses reported in 2014-15 relate to performance in 2014-15 and the comparative bonuses reported for 2013-14 relate to the performance in 2013-14.

Pay Multiples

The Public Prosecution Service, in line with all government bodies, is required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

The banded annualised remuneration of the highest-paid director in PPS in the financial year 2014-15 was £175-180k (2013-14, £170-175k). This was 7.2 times (2013-14, 7.1) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £24,728 (2012-13, £24,468).

The median salary within the PPS work force remained fairly steady during 2014-15 and hence the pay band multiples did not change materially.

Total remuneration for this purpose includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

PENSION BENEFITS

The Director of Public Prosecutions and Senior Assistant Director for Finance and Resources were members of the nuvos Pension Scheme. All other senior managers of the PPS are members of the Classic Scheme.

Pension Entitlements (audited information)

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/15 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/15	Restated CETV at 31/3/14 (or appointment date as appropriate)	Real increase CETV	Employer contribution to partnership pension account
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	Nearest £100
Statutory Appointments Barra McGrory QC <i>Director of Public Prosecutions</i>	10-15 Lump sum nil	2.5-5 Lump sum nil	183	124	37	-
Pamela Atchison <i>Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions</i>	50-55 Lump sum 155-160	(2.5) - 0 Lump sum (2.5) - 0	1,127	1,136	(12)	-
Officials Ian Hearst <i>Senior Assistant Director of Resources and Change Management - appointed 5 August 2013 (temporarily promoted from 1 April 2013 - 4 August 2013)</i>	10-15 Lump sum nil	0-2.5 Lump sum nil	179	147	16	-
Stephen Herron <i>Senior Assistant Director of Regional Prosecutions - appointed 5 August 2013</i>	15-20 Lump sum 55-60	0-2.5 Lump sum 5-7.5	253	211	28	-

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) 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.

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 scheme membership. The rate will be 2.32%. CARE pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases in 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 members for the period covering 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016 are as follows:

Scheme Year 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016

Pay band – assessed each pay period		Contribution rates – Classic members	Contribution rates – classic plus, premium, nuvos and alpha
From	To	From 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016	From 01 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 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 period.

Compensation for loss of office

The PPS did not have any payments made under compensation for loss of office in 2014-15 (2013-14 Nil).



Barra McGrory QC
Accounting Officer
23 June 2015

Part 2: Resource Accounts



Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

For the Year Ended 31 March 2015

Under the Government Resources and Accounts (Northern Ireland) Act 2001 the Department of Finance and Personnel has directed the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) to prepare for each financial year resource accounts detailing the resources acquired, held or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by the Service during the year.

The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the PPS, and of the net resource outturn, the application of resources, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

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

- Observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts; and
- Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis.

The Department of Finance and Personnel has appointed the Director of Public Prosecutions as Accounting Officer of the PPS. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding PPS assets, are set out in Managing Public Money NI issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Governance Statement

1. **Introduction**
2. **The PPS Governance Framework**
3. **The Management Board**
4. **Committees of the Board**
5. **Risk Management**
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7. **Effectiveness of the PPS Governance Framework**
8. **External Review**
9. **Internal Audit**
10. **External Audit**
11. **Significant Control Issues**
12. **Conclusion**

1. Introduction

As the Accounting Officer for the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), I am responsible for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Service's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and departmental assets for which I am personally responsible.

This Governance Statement is a key feature of the PPS's annual report and resource accounts. It provides details of how I, as the Accounting Officer, have ensured the effective management and control of resources during 2014-15 and the action taken to ensure effective risk management and a high standard of corporate governance.

2. The PPS Governance Framework

The PPS was established on 13 June 2005 by the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. The Act creates the PPS and defines its statutory duties and commitments and the legislative framework within which it provides its services.

Since the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly in April 2010, the PPS has been designated as a non-ministerial government department. Funding for the PPS is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly through the bi-annual Estimate process (main and supplementary). All members of staff are Northern Ireland Civil Servants.

The PPS governance framework aligns with the key principles set out in the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP's) guidance, 'Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice NI' (2013). The Management Board has approved a corporate governance framework document which provides detailed information on the system of direction and control within the PPS. A copy of this document is available on the PPS website at www.ppsni.gov.uk.

The PPS's corporate governance arrangements comply fully with DFP's guidance, except in one regard. The guidance states that in non-ministerial departments, there should be an agreement as to which Minister(s) should answer for the department's affairs in the Assembly (paragraph 1.4). However, under current arrangements there is no agreement as to which Minister from within the NI Executive should answer for the PPS in the Assembly. Assembly Questions, which cannot be answered by any other Department, are therefore dealt with via correspondence with the MLA concerned.

3. The Management Board

The PPS Management Board supports me in my leadership of the PPS and in reaching decisions on the strategic direction of the Service. The Board's objectives are to: ensure the Service achieves its strategic vision and aim; ensure accountability for the Service's performance; and provide assurances that the PPS is managed effectively.

During 2014-15, the Management Board met on eight occasions. Members of the Board and individual attendance at Board meetings during the year were as follows:

Board Member / Title	Attendance (Out of eight meetings)*
Barra McGrory QC Director (Chair of Management Board)	8
Pamela Atchison Deputy Director	8
Ian Hearst Senior Assistant Director (SAD) Resources and Change	8
Stephen Herron SAD Regional Prosecutions	8
Christopher Welford Independent Board Member	8
David Hughes Hallett Independent Board Member	8

* Excludes an additional planning meeting held on 30 January 2015, at which all members were in attendance.

The Management Board carries out its business according to an agreed operating framework which sets out the Board's objectives and remit, membership, responsibilities and procedures. This operating framework was last reviewed by the Board in April 2015.

All members of the Management Board are required to disclose significant interests or anything which may conflict with their responsibilities as Board members. A register of interests is maintained by the Board Secretariat. The Deputy Director and SAD for Regional Prosecutions have declared an interest in the outworkings of the Fair Employment Tribunal decision from March 2014 (see page 62). Both members left the room for the duration of any discussions on this matter.

Priority Issues for the Board during 2014-15

The Service's budget has been a key issue for the Board during 2014-15.

During the year, a series of discussions by the Board have focused on the Service's funding position in 2015-16. In December 2014 a detailed paper was submitted on the Board's behalf in response to DFP's consultation on Budget 2015-16. The paper sought to explain: the inadequacy of the PPS's baseline being rolled forward into 2015-16; the limitations placed on the Service, for example as a demand-led organisation; the savings initiatives already introduced during the first three years of the Budget 2010 period; and the additional measures which could help to bridge the anticipated budget shortfall from 2015-16. Following discussions with DFP, the baseline for 2015-16 was set at £33.8 million. The final resource budget allocation for 2014-15 was £37 million.

The Board has also commenced the necessary planning for 2015-16 and the Budget 2015 period. The Transformation Working Group (TWG) was established by the Board in October 2014 to undertake a fundamental review of the delivery of the Service's functions, in the light of the likely budget settlements for 2015-16 onwards. This review was to include the development of options for the future operation of the Service, identifying the necessary resource (budget and staffing levels) and infrastructure (accommodation, ICT requirements etc.) to support these different options. On the basis of Management Board approvals, the TWG was also tasked with the development of detailed transformation / implementation plans.

The SAD for Resources and Change, as Chair of the TWG, has provided regular progress reports to the Management Board. An initial checkpoint meeting was held with the Board on 30 January 2015 where the views of members were sought regarding future PPS structures and associated staffing levels. A new outline structure was subsequently signed off by the Board in June 2015. Board members acknowledged that many of the necessary changes would only be achievable in the medium term.

At the Management Board meeting in January 2015, the SAD Resources and Change reported that the baseline position of the PPS for 2015-16 remained under-funded, and that bids for additional resources would have to be made to DFP in-year.

Corporate Planning

On an annual basis the Board members meet to discuss the business plan for the Service for the year ahead. This is an opportunity to agree key milestones and to ensure that these are aligned with the available funding. The planning meeting for 2015-16 was held in January 2015.

The PPS had intended to produce a new Corporate Plan for the three year period from 1 April 2015. However this position changed and at the Board's meeting in December 2014 it was agreed to extend the 2011-2014 Corporate Plan for a further year; that is, for 2015-16 the Service would publish an annual business plan only, based around the existing strategic priorities and objectives, with a new Corporate Plan taking effect from 1 April 2016.

This decision was taken in light of the fact that 2015-16 was to be a standalone year in budget terms. Commencement of the next corporate planning cycle in April 2016 will allow the Service to align its plans with the next Spending Review period. It will also allow the PPS to align its future planning arrangements with the DoJNI and other CJSNI agencies; the DoJNI had confirmed that they also intended to reflect the revised budget period for planning purposes.

The Service's Annual Business Plan for 2015-16 was published in April 2015.

Quality of the Data Used by the Board

At present the Board receives standing information for each meeting on key areas such as finance, human resources and performance. Briefing papers on other material issues are provided as they arise. All papers are issued a week in advance of any Board meeting to allow members to review and, where appropriate, to raise questions in advance. The relevant business area can then be requested to attend to support discussions or be required to produce more detailed information in advance of the meeting.

All statistical and financial information is provided by professionally qualified teams within Corporate Services. For example, all casework and performance statistics are provided by statisticians from NISRA, seconded to the PPS. Data is extracted from the PPS Case Management System (CMS), the bulk of which are received via Causeway from CJSNI partners. Financial information is provided in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual, Managing Public Money NI and guidance from the Department of Finance and Personnel, issued primarily as Dear Finance Director or Dear Accounting Officer letters. All transaction records are provided from the Account NI shared service system. Accordingly the Board considers that it can take assurance as to the quality of the data it uses to inform decision-making.

Board Evaluation

I consider that the Management Board operated effectively during 2014-15, fulfilling its role as set out above.

The Board undertakes an annual evaluation of its performance. The most recent evaluation was conducted in January 2015 and was structured around six key themes, including: Board size and structure; leadership; decision-making; performance monitoring and financial management; risk management and governance; and delegation and communication.

All members were satisfied with the overall compliance of the Board in each of these areas, including:

- The membership of the Board;
- The organisation of agendas; and
- The financial, performance and other management information provided.

The frequency of Board meetings was raised as an issue and it was agreed to review the position in the new financial year.

4. Committees of the Board

Audit and Risk Committee

The Management Board is assisted by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The ARC consists of three independent non-executive members, Christopher Welford (Chair), David Hughes Hallett and Majella Meegan. Christopher Welford and David Hughes Hallett also sit on the Management Board.

The ARC functions in accordance with best practice contained in the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) (March 2014). It operates under agreed terms of reference which are reviewed annually. Meetings are attended by representatives of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and by the Head of Internal Audit. The remit of the ARC is to provide assurances to the Director that governance arrangements within the Service, including the management of risk, are operating effectively.

During the financial year, the ARC met on four occasions and dealt with a wide range of issues relating to internal control, risk management, governance and accountability. These included the consideration of:

- Risks reported by way of the corporate risk register;
- Corporate reputational risk;
- The quarterly statements of assurance;
- Internal audit work plans and reports;
- Information assurance;
- The annual report and resource accounts for 2013-14; and
- The NIAO's External Audit Strategy and Report To Those Charged with Governance.

During the year the ARC received regular updates from the Head of Internal Audit. The Committee also examined progress against previous audit reports and were satisfied that recommendations were being adequately addressed.

A report on key issues discussed at ARC meetings was provided for each Management Board meeting by the ARC Chair. The ARC also completed its annual report for 2014-15, summarising the work of the committee and providing its opinion on the comprehensiveness and reliability of the assurances available to support the Board and, particularly, to support me in my accountability obligations.

Board Sub-Committees

The Board has four sub-committees, which play key roles in the governance of the PPS. These are as follows:

- The Senior Management Group (SMG), comprising the Deputy Director (as Chair) and the SADs, meets on a monthly basis. SMG's purpose is to ensure there is effective co-ordination and decision-making across the full range of PPS operational and policy issues, as well as effective communication between the Management Board, the PPS senior management team and all Board Sub-Committees. The SMG met on seven occasions during 2014-15.

- The People and Resources Sub-Committee, chaired by the SAD for Resources and Change, considers the key financial and resource issues impacting on the Service. The Sub-Committee met on ten occasions during 2014-15.
- The Policy and Quality Sub-Committee, chaired by the Deputy Director, is responsible for considering the key legal policy issues impacting on the PPS. The Sub-Committee met on six occasions during 2014-15.
- The Performance Sub-Committee, chaired by the Deputy Director, supports the Board in meeting key organisational performance standards and targets. The Sub-Committee met on five occasions during 2014-15.

All sub-committees have clear terms of reference, covering the scope of any decision-making and the reporting requirements for the Board. The key areas progressed by the Sub-Committees during 2014-15 were as follows:

- The Senior Management Group considered a range of matters including the corporate risk register, strategic financial, performance and resource issues, the briefing of Counsel and the development of a revised Counsel Fee Scheme.
- The People and Resources Sub-Committee examined a range of human resource issues, (for example, applications for Alternative Working Patterns) and provided oversight in terms of budgetary monitoring, procurement, health and safety and equality and diversity matters. The Sub-Committee maintained a particular focus on the Service's capacity and resource planning and received regular updates from the PPS Business Improvement Team.
- Matters considered by the Policy and Quality Sub-Committee included the monitoring of progress against the Quality Assurance Team's annual work programme and the examination of legal policy guidance (for example, the new PPS Prosecution Quality Standards). The Sub-Committee has also monitored the implementation of the PPS Corporate Governance Action Plan (October 2013) which had been developed in response to CJINI's review of the Service's corporate governance arrangements (April 2013).
- Matters considered by the Performance Sub-Committee included case progression in indictable cases, performance against corporate performance measures and the implementation of a new Performance Monitoring Framework, centred on quarterly Performance and Accountability Meetings (PAMs). At its June meeting the Sub-Committee agreed to meet on a quarterly basis in order to align Sub-Committee meetings with the production of key performance data and the PAMs schedule.
- At each meeting of the Management Board the respective Sub-Committee Chairs provided members with an overview of the main issues discussed. Full minutes of all Sub-Committee meetings were also circulated to Board members.

5. Risk Management

The PPS risk management policy sets out the framework for the management of risk and promotes a consistent approach across the Service. The Director, supported by the PPS Management Board, has overall responsibility for ensuring that an effective risk management process is

established and maintained and is responsible for agreeing the Service's Risk Management Framework and defining its risk appetite.

The SMG undertakes regular and detailed oversight of the key corporate risks and the Service's risk management capability. Regional Prosecutors and Assistant Directors (SCS Grade 5) and Corporate Services Business Heads are responsible for maintaining effective risk management arrangements within their own areas. The quarterly statements of assurance include an assessment of local risk management practice against the PPS risk management policy.

All risks set out at corporate level are owned by members of the Management Board.

Corporate Risk Profile

The Corporate Risk Register is aligned with the four strategic priorities of the PPS. During 2014-15 the Board identified nine corporate risks that could, if not managed properly, have reduced the Service's ability to deliver against its strategic priorities. These were as follows:

Strategic Priority	Risk Area
Efficiency and effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling avoidable delay in indictable cases. • The extent of the assurances provided via the legal quality assurance framework.
Public confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of services to victims and witnesses. • Communication with stakeholders and the public.
Capability to deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management of change. • Uncertainty regarding future funding. • Delivery of advocacy by external counsel.
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff engagement • Effectiveness of the performance management framework.

Staff engagement was identified as a new risk area for 2014-15. This was in response to the identification of potential risks associated with the Fair Employment Tribunal decision and implementation of the First Class Prosecution Service Change Programme.

During 2013-14 the Management Board had identified risks in respect of compliance with the recording of information on the Case Management System (CMS), future PPS accountability arrangements and contingency arrangements for the G8 Summit. Following a review of corporate risks for 2014-15, these issues were no longer considered to be a threat to delivery in key priority areas.

A corporate risk management workshop was held in January 2015, which was attended by all members of the Management Board. The purpose of the workshop was to provide for a discussion of our corporate risk framework and to carry out an annual assessment of the risks facing the organisation, to ensure that all key risks were identified for the incoming financial year. These discussions have informed the development of the 2015-16 corporate risk register.

During 2014-15 the risk management framework has been complemented by a range of other control measures:

- An Incident Management Plan and a Business Continuity Plan.
- An Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan.
- The PPS Fraud Working Group (FWG), which provides a forum for the exchange of information and experience on fraud issues, met on two occasions. Matters considered by the FWG included fraud and whistleblowing awareness, fraud risk assessments and review of policy guidance (for example, updating of the PPS Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy and Gifts and Hospitality Policy). Fraud Awareness Training has been provided to key personnel, including Business Managers and Corporate Services staff. No incidents of fraud were reported during the year.
- The Service has reviewed all new financial guidance issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel and provided briefing to the ARC, setting out the relevance of any changes to the PPS and the action taken as a result – for example, with regard to updating financial policy and raising staff awareness.
- The PPS procurement and purchasing procedures have been revised and updated to reflect changes in procurement policy, Central Procurement Directorate guidance and the purchasing and payment process required through Account NI. The procurement guidance is published on the PPS Intranet.
- Two PPS staff, including the Procurement Officer, have successfully completed the CIPFA Certificate in Public Sector Procurement and have delivered internal training for key staff, including Assistant Directors and Business Managers.
- The Procurement team, in conjunction with Delegated Purchasing Branches, complete quarterly expenditure analyses to monitor spend against contract and identify any emerging contract requirements. The Procurement Officer maintains the PPS contract database and prepares the contract procurement plan ensuring contracts are procured on a timely basis.
- The PPS Business Case Guidance and approvals process have been updated and training sessions have been completed for key staff.
- A register of interests has been maintained covering all senior staff. A register of gifts and hospitality has also been maintained covering all staff.

6. Information Security

Governance arrangements in the PPS conform to the requirements set out in the Cabinet Office Security Policy Framework. The SAD for Resources and Change has been appointed as Senior Information Risk Owner. All senior managers have been designated as Information Asset Owners to provide further assurance that information assets are properly managed. Information assurance is a standing item on the agendas of the Management Board and the ARC and senior managers are required to review information security compliance and to highlight any new assets or risks within their business areas in their quarterly statements of assurance.

The PPS Business Assurance Team co-ordinates the development of the information assurance framework and data handling and security arrangements across the Service. The team also has responsibility for all aspects of security within the PPS, including physical and personnel, IT Security policy and the accreditation of ICT systems in line with government requirements. The team also provides advice and guidance to key stakeholders, such as members of Panel Counsel.

In April 2014, the PPS implemented the new Government Protective Marking Scheme. Business Assurance issued new guidance documents to staff and reviewed all existing policies and procedures. All PPS staff completed an e-learning package on the new markings, in addition to a general Information Assurance e-learning programme.

The PPS is required to ensure that PPS information systems are formally assessed in accordance with HMG IA Standard Numbers 1 & 2 Information Risk Management. The PPS Risk Management Accreditation Document Set was previously reviewed in November 2012 and accreditation signed off until November 2014. The re-accreditation process commenced during 2014 and was completed in March 2015.

An IT Health Check to support the overarching accreditation process was undertaken in October 2014 with a particular focus on the PPS Disaster Recovery site. Actions required to mitigate the risks identified have been progressed.

A penetration test on a new complaints web application (hosted by IT Assist) was completed in August 2014 prior to implementation.

The PPS has previously worked with the Bar Library to increase the level of assurance that PPS data is being handled securely by external counsel. This has included a requirement for the encryption of removable media such as laptops used for PPS business. This level of assurance is being extended by the use of Criminal Justice Secure Email, subject to Panel Counsel members meeting the required encryption standard. These obligations have been embodied within the Terms of Engagement of counsel which were revised during the period.

Personal Data Related Incidents

During the year, there were five incidents where PPS data was compromised.

- A summons was sent to a defendant who was believed to be an in-patient in a mental health treatment facility. However the defendant had already been discharged and the letter could not be delivered. An issue arose because staff in the facility had to open the letter to ascertain its contents and identify a return address. There were two issues here. Firstly, there was a failure by a delivery partner to identify the defendant as vulnerable which would have resulted in the personal service of the summons. Secondly, no return address had been put on the letter which would have allowed staff to return the correspondence unopened. The PPS has subsequently reviewed its policy and a return address is now included on all correspondence of this kind. The Corporate Records Manager of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has informed PPS that she reported the incident to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). PPS also informed ICO of the incident.
- A 'review of prosecution decision' letter was sent to a victim with an incorrect address. This happened because a staff member had to create the letter manually, and this was not subsequently checked. The letter contained details of the alleged crime and the names of witnesses and defendants. New functionality was added to the PPS Case Management System in July 2014, to facilitate the creation of non-standard letters and which automatically adds the current known address. Given the time lapse, the small amount of data lost, the lack of evidence of further dissemination, and the fact that the issue has been addressed with a technical fix, it was not considered necessary to inform the ICO in this instance.

- A victim was sent a Prosecution Decision Notification in relation to his case. Unfortunately a second Prosecution Decision Notification in relation to a different case involving the same defendant was accidentally attached to the letter. This was as a result of human error. The data loss was contained quickly and the relevant data destroyed. There was little evidence of any material or reputational loss to the defendant, and therefore the incident was not reported to the ICO.
- A summons was accidentally issued to a person with the same name as the defendant. This was as a result of an error by PSNI linking the wrong subject to the crime. This was subsequently corrected by PSNI. Given that the loss was identified quickly, and there was little evidence of any material or reputational damage to the defendant, the incident was not reported to the ICO.
- A postal summons was issued to the parent of a youth defendant. However the address provided to PPS was incorrect and the householder at the address opened the letter in error. They immediately contacted the PPS and all documents were returned. Following an investigation, it was apparent that the summons should have been flagged for personal service, rather than postal service. This issue had previously been the subject of a Staff Instruction (August 2014) and a reminder has been issued to all Prosecutors.

7. Effectiveness of the PPS Governance Framework

As Accounting Officer, I have reviewed the effectiveness of governance and control systems within the PPS. My review has been informed by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the PPS, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, as well as the views of the Independent Board Members and comments made by external auditors in their management letter and other reports.

I have also been advised by the Management Board and the ARC and am assured that there are plans to address any weaknesses and to ensure continuous improvement of the controls currently in place.

Assurances as to the adequacy of the governance, management and controls have been provided by:

Independent Parties:

- The ARC, through feedback by its Chair at Management Board meetings and by review of the Committee's Annual Report.
- The Head of Internal Audit who has provided an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Service's system of internal control, and an opinion on significant control issues. Details of the audits completed during the financial year are set out below (see Section 9).
- Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland who provide an independent assessment of business efficiency and effectiveness through a programme of thematic reviews (see Section 8).
- DFP, covering the shared services available to PPS. At present this includes HR Connect (which provides transactional HR work and a payroll service for the PPS), Account NI and the Centre for Applied Learning. In addition, the Central Procurement Directorate has conducted all procurement over £30,000 on behalf of the PPS under a service level agreement.
- The work of the Independent Assessor of Complaints (IAC), Mr Alan Henry.

Management:

- The SAD for Resources and Change who is a member of the Management Board and acts as the Principal Establishment and Finance Officer (PEFO) for the Service. In this role the SAD is responsible for ensuring that proper controls are in place to safeguard public funds and departmental assets.
- The detailed statements of assurance which have been provided on a quarterly basis by senior managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework in their respective areas. Significant internal control issues highlighted during the year have been recorded at Section 11.
- The regular financial and performance reports provided to the Board and senior management.

Policy and Process:

- The PPS Quality Assurance Team which aims to provide an independent assessment of the quality of decision-making, case preparation and presentation within the Service. The work of the QA Team has been complemented by dip sampling by Regional Prosecutors and Assistant Directors. All cases found to be below the acceptable standard have been followed up by the SAD for Regional Prosecutions or Deputy Director.
- The PPS Business Improvement Team which has been commissioned to conduct a number of assignments during 2014-15, including reviews of Fraud and Departmental Section and the Victim and Witness Care Unit.

8. External Review*Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland*

During the year, CJINI published the results of a number of reviews, including Serious and Organised Crime (November 2014), Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland (Report of the Independent Inquiry, November 2014) and Police Use of Discretion and Penalty Notices (January 2015). PPS has engaged with inspectors during the course of these reviews and have responded to all recommendations.

Review by the Attorney General for Northern Ireland

In October 2013 the Director asked the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, John Larkin QC, to review the decision-making process that culminated in a decision by the PPS not to prosecute Gerry Adams TD for an alleged offence of withholding information. The report was subsequently completed in December 2013, but could not be published until June 2015, following the conclusion of Liam Adams' two trials and appeal.

Full details of the Attorney General's Report and the PPS response are set out at page 27.

Review by Sir Keir Starmer QC

In October 2014, the Director announced that the former Director of Public Prosecutions for England and Wales, Sir Keir Starmer QC, was to conduct an independent review of three interlinked cases involving sex abuse and terror-related charges. The findings of the review were published in May 2015.

PPS has responded to the report in detail and will address the various recommendations via an action plan (see page 28 for further information).

9. Internal Audit

PPS has established a robust assurance framework that includes primary assurance through line management structures on the achievement of objectives. This primary assurance is supplemented by secondary assurances provided through oversight of management activity, and by the DoJNI Internal Audit team operating to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. They deliver an agreed prioritised programme of systems based audits covering PPS systems over time. The Head of Internal Audit provides an Annual Report and his professional opinion on the level of assurance that he can provide based on the work done. The Head of Internal Audit forms his professional opinion on the basis of the internal audit work completed over a three year period. All priority issues have been addressed as part of the rolling programme and the Head of Internal Audit has provided overall satisfactory assurance.

Internal Audit Activity during 2014-15

During the financial year Internal Audit conducted a number of audit assignments on the following areas:

- PPS Procurement and Contract Management (Follow-up).
- Review of Complaint Handling.

The follow-up review of PPS procurement and contract management raised the overall level of assurance from limited to substantial. The original audit of procurement and contract management related to activity in the 2011-12 financial year. While no contracts were found to have been improperly let, the overall audit opinion was limited. The subsequent follow-up review, conducted during April and May 2013, was carried out on the basis of 2012-13 activity. The overall audit opinion remained at limited assurance, although it was recognised that progress had been hampered by a continuing vacancy in the key role of Procurement Officer. The appointment of a Procurement Officer in September 2013 has contributed significantly to the improvements in internal control over the procurement and contract management arrangements operating within PPS.

The review of complaint handling was commenced, but as yet has not been completed. This has been carried forward into 2015-16.

The original internal audit work programme for 2014-15 had included a review of services to victims and witnesses. However, with the agreement of senior management, a decision was taken to postpone this review. The main issue was the potential for significant overlap with other work to be undertaken in this area during the year. This included a CJINI follow-up review of the Care and Treatment of Victims and Witnesses and an internal review of the Victim and Witness Care Unit by the PPS Business Improvement Team. It is anticipated that the audit will be included in a future audit programme.

10. External Audit

PPS senior management has reviewed the Northern Ireland Audit Office's (NIAO) Report to those Charged with Governance which sets out the results of their audit work on the PPS Resource Accounts for 2014-15, and their recommendations for action.

No recommendations were raised after the conduct of the audit of the PPS Interim accounts for the 9 months to 31 December 2014.

Two Priority 1 issues (significant issues for the attention of senior management which may have the potential to result in material weakness in internal control) were reported by NIAO as a result of final audit testing:

- Errors were identified in the valuation of counsel fee accruals for larger cases where the conduct of the case spanned the year end. It is planned to move this valuation work to the PPS Central Fees Team during 2015-16 which should resolve the issue.
- A member of the Management Board received a payment in 2014-15 under the FET equal pay settlement and the NIAO felt that disclosure should have been more extensive in order to comply with the requirements of DFP guidance [FD (DFP) 04/15] and the spirit of paragraph 5.2.26 of FReM. However the level of disclosure by PPS was determined in light of legal advice from the Departmental Solicitor's Office that no further information could be given while maintaining the integrity of confidentiality clauses within the settlement agreements.

One Priority 2 issue (important issues to be addressed by management in their areas of responsibility) was raised.

- A recommendation was made that greater Internal Audit coverage of PPS would be helpful in supporting the Accounting Officer's review of the effectiveness of internal control. The work programme completed for 2014-15 was not as extensive as originally planned due to resource shortages within DoJNI Internal Audit. In addition one audit was postponed as there was a significant overlap with a review by CJINI (see 'Internal Audit', above). This will now be conducted in 2015-16. The planned audit programme for the coming year, which includes four audit assignments, has been agreed by the ARC.

Two Priority 3 issues, which NIAO consider to be issues of a more minor nature representing best practice, were also raised. These have been addressed by PPS.

For the 2013-14 financial year the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) certified the 2013-14 financial statements with a qualified regularity audit opinion. This was due to an excess vote incurred as a result of a breach of the resource based limit the Assembly had authorised. This had arisen as a result of a Fair Employment Tribunal ruling in March 2014 (see below). The effect of the ruling created a liability for PPS for salary, employer's national insurance and pension costs for all affected staff. As the ruling was not made until March, PPS was unable to bid for funding cover during any of the in-year monitoring rounds.

During their final audit stage NIAO raised one significant issue, in relation to the completeness of counsel fee accruals. A high number of financial errors were identified in the sample testing of the counsel fee accruals. The NIAO recommendation was that the PPS should ensure that their methodology for capturing accruals provided for the generation of a complete accruals figure. The Service was also asked to consider whether there would be value for money in enhancing the reporting capabilities of the counsel fees system to better assist in generating the accruals figure. This recommendation was partially accepted by PPS as the database was already being used for the calculation of accruals. However it is not consistently available for cases under the former fees scheme ('Scheme A') as it was only piloted prior to the implementation of Scheme B. In response the Finance Team is carrying out a full review of Scheme A cases to clear this legacy issue.

11. Significant Control Issues

Fair Employment Tribunal Ruling

On 19 March 2014 a Fair Employment Tribunal ruled on a case taken by fifteen PPS staff in respect of equal pay and indirect discrimination, on grounds of sex, age and religious belief. The respondents to the case were the PPS and DFP.

This claim arose out of the transfer of staff from Grade A of the Northern Ireland Office pay scale to Unified Grade 7 of the Northern Ireland Civil Service pay scale upon devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly in April 2010. Prior to devolution, staff were employed by DFP on secondment to the NIO. The claimants' comparators, with whom they were found to be performing equal work, were transferred to a higher grade (Unified Grade 6) under the agreed interface arrangements, which were determined by the NIO.

The Tribunal found in favour of the claimants. During the year, detailed work was carried out by DFP and the Government Actuarial Department to calculate the associated costs.

Due to the timing of the ruling PPS was unable to bid for funding cover during any of the 2013-14 in-year monitoring rounds. A bid for funding was made in the June 2014 Monitoring Round, supported by DFP, but was not approved by the Executive. However a bid was subsequently approved as part of the October monitoring round. This has enabled PPS to proceed with the settlement of the case.

12. Conclusion

The governance framework as outlined has been in place in the PPS throughout the year ended 31 March 2015 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Resource Accounts, and accords with DFP guidance.

It is my assessment that the PPS operates a system of governance and accountability which I can rely on as Accounting Officer to provide assurances that the public funds and other resources for which I am accountable are deployed effectively and appropriately.

During the financial year, with the exception of those matters highlighted at Section 11 above, no significant internal control weaknesses or issues have been identified, and no significant failures have arisen in the expected standards for good governance, risk management and control.



Barra McGrory QC
Accounting Officer
23 June 2015

The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2015 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. These comprise the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and the related notes. I have also audited the Statement of Assembly Supply and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the information in the Remuneration Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is 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 Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. 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 Department's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Accounting Officer; 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 Statement of Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals and that those totals have not been exceeded. I am also 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 Statement of Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals for the year ended 31 March 2015 and shows that those totals have not been exceeded; and
- 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 Department's affairs as at 31 March 2015 and of its net operating cost, cash flows and changes in taxpayers' equity for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Department of Finance and Personnel directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Finance and Personnel directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001; and
- the information given in the Director's report and Strategic report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

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

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

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



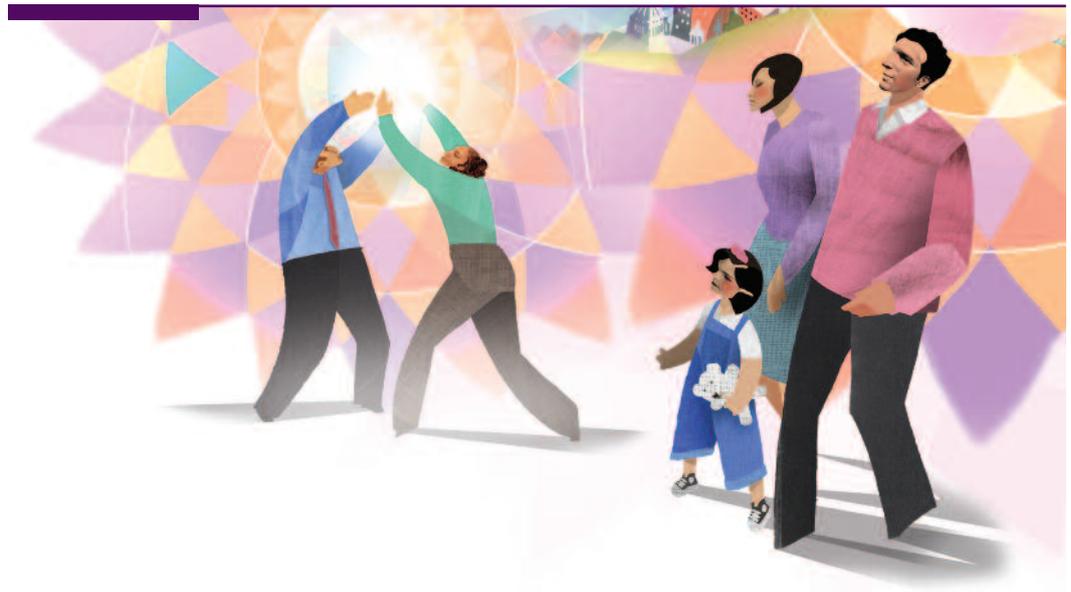
KJ Donnelly

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

June 2015

Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2015



Statement of Assembly Supply

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRM) requires the Public Prosecution Service to prepare a Statement of Assembly Supply (SOAS) and supporting notes to show resource outturn against the Supply Estimate presented to the Assembly, in respect of each request of resources.

Summary of Resource Outturn 2014-15

Request for Resources	Note	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
		Gross Expenditure	Accruing Resources	Net Total	Gross Expenditure	Accruing Resources	Net Total	Net Total Outturn compared with Estimate: saving/(excess)	Outturn Net Total
A	SOAS2	38,503	(1,231)	37,272	34,924	(992)	33,932	3,340	42,383
Total Resources	SOAS3.1	38,503	(1,231)	37,272	34,924	(992)	33,932	3,340	42,383
Non-operating cost Accruing Resources		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Net cash requirement 2014-15

	Note	Estimate	Outturn	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
				Net Total Outturn compared with Estimate: saving/(excess)	Outturn
Net cash requirement	SOAS4	42,172	39,625	2,547	37,455

Summary of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

In addition to accruing resources, the following income relates to the Department and is payable to the Consolidated Fund (cash receipts being shown in italics):

	Note	Income	2014-15 Forecast £'000 <i>Receipts</i>	Income	2014-15 Outturn £'000 <i>Receipts</i>
Total	SOAS5	-	-	-	-

Explanations of variances between Estimate and Outturn are given in SOAS2 and in the Financial Performance section of the Annual Report.

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Departmental Resource Accounts (Statement of Assembly Supply)

SOAS 1. Statement of accounting policies

The Statement of Assembly Supply and supporting notes have been prepared in accordance with the 2014-15 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). The Statement of Assembly Supply accounting policies contained in the FReM are consistent with those set out in the 2014-15 Consolidated Budgeting Guidance and Supply Estimates in Northern Ireland Guidance Manual.

SOAS 1.1 Accounting Convention

The Statement of Assembly Supply and related notes are presented consistently with Treasury budget control and Supply Estimates in Northern Ireland. The aggregates across government are measured using National Accounts, prepared in accordance with the internationally agreed framework 'European System of Accounts' (ESA10). ESA10 is in turn consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA93), which is prepared under the auspices of the United Nations.

The budgeting system and the consequential presentation of Supply Estimates and the Statement of Assembly Supply and related notes have different objectives to IFRS-based accounts. The system supports the achievement of macro-economic stability by ensuring that public expenditure is controlled, with relevant Assembly authority, in support of the Government's fiscal framework. The system provides incentives to departments to manage spending well so as to provide high quality public services that offer value for money to the taxpayer.

The Government's objectives for fiscal policy are set out in the Charter for Budget Responsibility. These are to:

- Ensure sustainable public finances that support confidence in the economy, promote intergenerational fairness, and ensure the effectiveness of the wider government policy; and
- Support and improve the effectiveness of monetary policy in stabilising economic fluctuations.

SOAS 1.2 Comparison with IFRS-based accounts

Many transactions are treated in the same way in National Accounts and IFRS-based accounts, but there are a number of differences. None of the differences are relevant to PPS in 2014-15.

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

SOAS 2 Analysis of net resource outturn by function

						2014-15 £'000 Outturn	2014-15 £'000 Estimate			2013-14 £'000
Admin	Other Current	Grants	Gross Resource Expenditure	Accruing Resources	Net Total	Estimate Net Total	Net Total Outturn compared with Estimate	Net Total Outturn compared with Estimate adjusted for virements	Prior- year Outturn	
RfR A: Increasing public confidence in the criminal justice system through independent, fair and effective prosecutions:										
1,761	33,163	-	34,924	(992)	33,932	37,272	3,340	3,340	42,383	
Departmental Expenditure in (DEL):										
A-1: Public Prosecution & Legal Services										
1,761	32,979	-	34,740	(992)	33,748	37,033	3,285	3,285	35,917	
Annual Managed Expenditure (AME):										
A-2: Public Prosecution & Legal Services										
-	142	-	142	-	142	179	37	37	6,424	
Non-Budget:										
A-3: Notional charges										
-	42	-	42	-	42	60	18	18	42	
Resource Outturn	1,761	33,163	-	34,924	(992)	33,932	37,272	3,340	3,340	42,383

PPS Net Resource Outturn was £34m against an estimated provision of £37m.

The underspend of £3m was partly as a result of a £1.4m AME provision not required in relation to an industrial tribunal decision in the previous year.

The remainder of the underspend is in Operating costs and is in relation to savings in counsel fee costs, staff costs and savings across a range of non-staff costs including accommodation.

Detailed explanations of the variances are given in the Financial Performance Summary.

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

SOAS 3 Reconciliation of outturn to net operating cost and against Administration Budget

SOAS 3.1 Reconciliation of net resource outturn to net operating cost

	Note	Outturn	Supply Estimate	2014-15 £'000 Outturn compared with Estimate: saving/ (excess)	2013-14 £'000 Outturn
Net Resource Outturn	SOAS2	33,932	37,272	3,340	42,383
Prior Period Adjustments		-	-	-	-
Non-supply Expenditure		-	-	-	-
Net Operating Cost		33,932	37,272	3,340	42,383

SOAS 3.2 Outturn against final Administration Budget

	Budget	2014-15 £'000 Outturn	2013-14 £'000 Outturn
Gross Administration Budget	2,322	1,761	1,999
Income allowable against the Administration Budget	-	-	-
Net outturn against final Administration Budget	2,322	1,761	1,999

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

SOAS 4 Reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement

	Note	Estimate £'000	Outturn £'000	Net Total Outturn compared with estimate: saving/(excess) £'000
Resource Outturn	SOAS2	37,272	33,932	3,340
Capital				
Acquisition of property, plant and equipment	6,7	353	237	116
Investments		-	-	-
Non-operating Accruing Resources				
Proceeds of asset disposals	5	-	-	-
Accruals to cash adjustment:				
<i>Adjustments to remove non-cash items:</i>				
Depreciation	4	(1,668)	(1,371)	(297)
New provisions, and adjustments to previous provisions	14	(179)	1,626	(1,805)
Other non-cash items	3,4	(60)	(82)	22
Changes in working capital other than cash	12,13	1,379	589	790
Changes in payables falling due after more than one year	13	-	-	-
Use of Provision	14	5,075	4,694	381
Excess cash receipts surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund	SOAS5.1	-	-	-
Net Cash Requirement		42,172	39,625	2,547

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

SOAS 5 Income payable to the Consolidated Fund

SOAS 5.1 Analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

In addition to Accruing Resources, the following income relates to the Department and is payable to the Consolidated Fund (cash receipts being shown in italics).

	Note	Forecast 2014-15		Outturn 2014-15	
		£'000 Income	£'000 <i>Receipts</i>	£'000 Income	£'000 <i>Receipts</i>
Operating income and receipts – excess Accruing Resources					
Other operating income and receipts – excess Accruing Resources	SOAS 7	-	-	-	-
Excess cash surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund	SOAS 4	-	-	-	-
Total Income payable to the Consolidated Fund		-	-	-	-

SOAS 6 Reconciliation of income recorded within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund

	Note	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Operating income	5	992	506
Adjustments for transactions between RfRs		-	-
Gross income		992	506
Income authorised to be Accruing Resources		(992)	(506)
Operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund	SOAS5.1	-	-

SOAS 7 Non-operating income - Excess Accruing Resources

	Note	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Principle repayments of voted loans			
Proceeds on disposal of property, plant and equipment		-	-
Other		-	-
Non-operating income – excess Accruing Resources		-	-

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year Ended 31 March 2015

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

	Note	Staff Costs	Other Costs	2014-15 £'000 Income	2013-14 £'000
Administration costs					
Staff costs	2	1,422			1,332
Other administration costs	3		339		339
Operating income	5			-	-
Programme costs					
Staff costs	2	18,436			26,084
Programme costs	4		14,727		15,134
Income	5			(992)	(506)
Totals		19,858	15,066	(992)	42,383
Net Operating Cost for the year ended 31 March 2015				33,932	42,383

Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of Property, Plant & Equipment	(769)	(654)
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of Intangibles	(233)	(3)
Net (gain)/loss on actuarial	208	277
Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure	(794)	(380)
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2015	33,138	42,003

All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2015

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

	Note	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	6	9,103	9,427
Intangible assets	7	394	242
Total non-current assets		9,497	9,669
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	12	1,142	1,300
Cash and cash equivalents	11	-	-
Total current assets		1,142	1,300
Total assets		10,639	10,969
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	13	(3,500)	(4,144)
Cash and cash equivalents	11	(269)	(372)
Total current liabilities		(3,769)	(4,516)
Non-current assets plus/less net current assets/liabilities		6,870	6,453
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	14	(3,540)	(9,652)
Other payables		-	-
Total non-current liabilities		(3,540)	(9,652)
Total assets less liabilities		3,330	(3,199)
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves:			
General fund		1,169	(4,644)
Revaluation reserve		2,161	1,445
Total equity		3,330	(3,199)



Barra McGrory QC
Accounting Officer
23 June 2015

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 March 2015

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

	Note	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating cost		(33,932)	(42,383)
Adjustment for non-cash transactions	4, 14	164	8,061
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	12	158	(179)
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables	13	(644)	(2,496)
<i>Less movements in receivables relating to items not passing through the SCNE</i>		(103)	158
<i>Less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the SCNE</i>		(75)	320
Use of provisions	14	(5,031)	(157)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(39,463)	(36,676)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds of disposal of property, plant and equipment		-	-
Proceeds of disposal of intangible assets		-	-
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	6	(90)	(745)
Purchase of intangible assets	7	(72)	(34)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(162)	(779)
Cash flows from financing activities			
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - current year		39,356	37,083
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - prior year		372	214
From the Consolidated Fund (Non-Supply)		-	-
Net financing		39,728	37,297
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the period before adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund		103	(158)
Receipts due to the Consolidated Fund which are outside the scope of the Department's activities		-	-
Payments of amounts due to the Consolidated Fund		-	-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the period after adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund		103	(158)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	11	(372)	(214)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	11	(269)	(372)

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2015

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Public Prosecution Service, analysed into 'general fund reserves' (i.e. those reserves that reflect a contribution from the Consolidated Fund). Financing and the balance from the provision of services are recorded here. The Revaluation Reserve reflects the change on asset values that have not been recognised as income or expenditure.

	Note	General Fund £'000	Revaluation Reserve £'000	Total Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2013		126	1,180	1,306
Changes in taxpayers' equity for 2013-14				
Net Assembly Funding – drawn down		37,083	-	37,083
Net Assembly Funding – deemed		-	-	-
Supply (payable)/receivable adjustment		372	-	372
Comprehensive expenditure for the year		(42,383)	-	(42,383)
Net gain/(loss) in revaluation of property, plant & equipment		-	654	654
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of intangibles		-	4	4
Non-Cash Adjustments:				
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	4	42	-	42
Non-cash charges – other notional charges	4	-	-	-
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension liability	14	(277)	-	(277)
Movements in Reserves:				
Transfers between reserves		393	(393)	-
Balance at 31 March 2014		(4,644)	1,445	(3,199)
Changes in taxpayers' equity for 2014-15				
Net Assembly Funding – drawn down		39,356	-	39,356
Net Assembly Funding – deemed		-	-	-
Supply (payable)/receivable adjustment	12	269	-	269
CFERS payable to the Consolidated Fund		-	-	-
Comprehensive expenditure for the year		(33,932)	-	(33,932)
Net gain/(loss) in revaluation of property, plant & equipment		-	769	769
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of intangibles		-	233	233
Non-Cash Adjustments:				
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	4	42	-	42
Non-cash charges – other notional charges	4	-	-	-
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension liability	14	(208)	-	(208)
Movements in Reserves:				
Transfers between reserves		286	(286)	-
Balance at 31 March 2015		1,169	2,161	3,330

The notes on pages 76 to 99 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Financial Statements

Notes to the Departmental Resource Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2014-15 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Public Prosecution Service for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Public Prosecution Service are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the FReM also requires the Department to prepare one additional primary statement. The Statement of Assembly Supply and supporting notes show outturn against Estimate in terms of the net resource requirement and the net cash requirement.

1.1 Accounting convention

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

The accounts are stated in sterling, which is the Department's functional and presentational currency. Unless otherwise noted, the amounts shown in these financial statements are in thousands of pounds sterling (£'000).

1.2 Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment comprise building fit-out costs, plant and machinery, computer equipment and assets under construction.

Consolidation of asset categories

The property, plant and equipment note requires the amalgamation of asset categories under the Plant and Machinery heading. The asset categories represented by this heading include:

- Furniture and fittings
- Office equipment
- Security equipment

1.3 Valuation of property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment are stated at the lower of replacement cost and recoverable amount. All property, plant and equipment are restated to current value each year by reference to indices compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Property is restated to current value using independent professional valuations, in accordance with IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment, every 5 years and in the intervening years by the use of indices provided by Land and Property Services (LPS), specific to the Northern Ireland property sector. The valuations are carried out by members of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) in accordance with procedures laid out in the RICS Appraisal and Valuation Manual. Costs classified as Buildings within the Public Prosecution Service relate to fit out costs of leased premises. These are depreciated over the term of the lease and there is no requirement for quinquennial revaluation in respect of these costs.

Assets under construction are shown at cost, and relate to assets which are incomplete but for which the Department has incurred a liability.

Expenditure on property, plant and equipment of over £1,000 is capitalised. Within the Department the grouping of a range of property, plant and equipment has also been undertaken in respect of some personal computers, printers, office furniture and equipment.

In compliance with IAS 16, subsequent expenditure on an asset which does not meet the criteria of enhancement or improvement is treated as revenue.

Upward revaluations are credited to the Revaluation Reserve and permanent reductions in the value of property, plant and equipment are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Any subsequent revaluation of assets is credited to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent that it reverses previous revaluation decreases recognised as an expense in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

1.4 Depreciation

All property, plant and equipment and intangible assets are depreciated at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives. Assets in the course of construction are depreciated from the point at which the asset is brought into use.

Estimated useful lives, which are reviewed regularly, are:

Asset category	Useful Life
Buildings : Fit out costs	Lease term – generally 15 - 25 years
Plant and Machinery	10 - 15 years
Information Technology	5 – 6 years
Assets under construction	No depreciation
Intangible assets	3 - 5 years

1.5 Realised element of depreciation from revaluation reserve

Depreciation is charged to expenditure on the revalued amount of property, plant and equipment. An element of depreciation therefore arises due to the increase in valuation and is in excess of the depreciation that would be charged on the historical cost of assets. The amount relating to this excess is a realised gain on disposal and is transferred from the Revaluation Reserve to the General Fund.

1.6 Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise development expenditure, software licenses and general information technology lasting more than one year and costing more than £1,000. Software licences are amortised over three to five years. Intangibles are revalued annually using indices provided by the ONS.

1.7 Pension costs

Past and present employees of the Department are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and the PCSPS (NI). Each of these defined benefit schemes is unfunded and non-contributory except in respect of dependants benefits. The Department recognises the expected cost of providing pensions on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment of annual contributions to the PCSPS and the PCSPS (NI) of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS and the PCSPS (NI).

The Public Prosecution Service has responsibility for the Broadly By Analogy (BBA) pension schemes of public appointments in respect of some retired Directors and Deputy Directors of Public Prosecution. A BBA pension arrangement entitles the recipient to benefits similar to the classic and nuvos schemes in both the PCSPS and PCSPS (NI). The Department and members are obliged to make contributions in line with the PCSPS scheme. Provision has been made for the future cost of benefits under this scheme.

Further details regarding the above schemes are contained in Notes 2 and 14.1 to the Accounts.

1.8 Financing and operating income

Financing

The Department is primarily resourced by funds approved by the NI Assembly through the annual Supply process. Resources are drawn down to meet expenditure requirements and are credited to the General Fund.

Operating Income

Operating income is income which relates directly to the operating activities of the Department. It principally comprises receipts from the Asset Recovery Incentive Scheme, recovery of court costs and fees and charges to other departments and public bodies. It includes both income classified as Accruing Resources and income due to the Consolidated Fund, which in accordance with FReM, is treated as operating income. Operating income is stated net of VAT.

Operating income may be split under the following headings depending in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure:

- Administration costs
- Programme costs

1.9 Administration and Programme expenditure

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure is analysed between administration and programme income and expenditure. The classification of expenditure and income as administration or as programme follows the definition of administrative costs set out by HM Treasury's Consolidated Budget Guidance. Broadly, administrative expenditure reflects the costs of running the Department while programme costs relate directly to service delivery activities.

1.10 Leases

Finance leases

Leases of property, plant and equipment where the Department holds substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are classified as finance leases.

Finance lease assets are capitalised at the commencement of the lease term at the lower of the present value of the minimum lease payments or the fair value of the leased asset. The corresponding lease commitment is included in the statement of financial position as a finance lease obligation. Depreciation on capitalised leased assets is charged in line with the depreciation policy for similar assets.

Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding obligation so as to achieve a constant rate of interest on the remaining balance of the liabilities.

Operating leases

Leases where substantially all of the risks and rewards are held by the lessor are classified as operating leases. Rentals are charged to the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

1.11 Provisions

The Department provides for legal or constructive obligations which are of uncertain timing or amount at the reporting date on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is significant, the estimated risk-adjusted cash flows are discounted using the real rate set by HM Treasury (currently 3.5 %).

1.12 IAS 37 Contingent liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities disclosed in accordance with IAS 37, the Department discloses for Assembly reporting and accountability purposes certain statutory and non-statutory contingent liabilities where the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit is remote, but which have been reported to the Assembly in accordance with the requirements of DFP's Managing Public Money Northern Ireland and Financial Reporting Manual.

Where the time value of money is material, contingent liabilities which are required to be disclosed under IAS 37 are stated at discounted amounts and the amount reported to the Assembly separately noted. Contingent liabilities that are not required to be disclosed by IAS 37 are stated at the amounts reported to the Assembly.

1.13 Foreign exchange

Transactions which are denominated in a foreign currency are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling on the date of each transaction.

1.14 Value Added Tax

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

1.15 Insurance

Departments do not generally insure. No insurance is affected against the following: fire, explosion, common law, third party and similar risks. Notional insurance premiums are not charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Instead, expenditure in connection with uninsured risks is charged as incurred.

1.16 Notional charges

Notional charges, in respect of services delivered to and received from other government departments/agencies, are included to reflect the full economic cost of services.

1.17 Staff Costs

Under IAS19 Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the costs of any untaken leave as at the year end. The cost of untaken leave has been determined using data from staff leave records. The PPS did not have any off-payroll engagements exceeding £58,200 per annum at 31 March 2015 nor were there any such arrangements at 31 March 2014, nor any during the year.

1.18 Financial Instruments

Recognition and de-recognition of financial assets and financial liabilities

A financial instrument is defined as any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. A financial instrument is recognised when, and only when, the Department becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial assets are derecognised when the Department no longer has rights to cash flows, the risks and rewards of ownership or control of the asset. Financial liabilities are derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires.

Financial assets

A financial asset is classified in this category if acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the short term (held for trading) or if so designated by management. Financial assets held in this category are initially recognised and subsequently measured at fair value, with changes in value recognised in the income statement in the line which most appropriately reflects the nature of the item or transaction.

Loans and receivables

Loans and receivables are non derivative assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. Loans and receivables are initially recognised at fair value less transaction costs and subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with changes in carrying value recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in a manner which most appropriately reflects the nature of the item or transaction.

Trade and other receivables

Financial assets within trade and other receivables are initially recognised at fair value, which is usually the original invoiced amount and subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective method less provisions for doubtful receivables. Provisions are made specifically where there is objective evidence of a dispute or inability to pay.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash in hand and current balances with banks which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to insignificant risk of changes in value and have an original maturity of three months or less.

For the purposes of the cash flow statement, cash and cash equivalents are as defined above net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Impairment of financial assets

The Department assesses at each reporting date whether a financial asset or group of financial assets are impaired. Where there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has arisen on assets carried at amortised cost, the carrying amount is reduced with the loss being recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between that asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the financial asset's original effective interest rate. The impairment loss is only reversed if it can be related objectively to an event after the impairment was recognised and is reversed to the extent that the carrying value of the asset does not exceed its amortised cost at the date of reversal.

Impairment losses are assessed individually for financial assets that are individually significant and individually or collectively for assets that are not individually significant. In making collective assessment of impairment, financial assets are grouped into portfolios on the basis of similar risk characteristics. Future cash flows from these portfolios are estimated on the basis of the contractual cash flows and historical loss experience for assets with similar risk characteristics.

Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and the carrying amount of the financial asset or group of financial assets reduced by establishing an allowance for impairment losses. If in a subsequent period the amount of the impairment loss reduces and the reduction can be ascribed to an event after the impairment was recognised, the previously recognised loss is reversed by adjusting the allowance. If a financial asset is deemed unrecoverable, the amount of the asset is reduced directly and the impairment loss recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent a provision was not previously recognised.

Financial liabilities

Trade and other payables

Financial liabilities within trade and other payables are initially recognised at fair value, which is usually the original invoiced amount, and subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Loans and other borrowings

Loans and other borrowings are initially recognised at fair value plus directly attributable transactions costs. Where loans and other borrowings contain a separable embedded derivative, the fair value of the embedded derivative is the difference between the fair value of the hybrid instrument and the fair value of the loan or borrowing. The fair value of the embedded derivative and the loan or borrowing is recorded separately on initial recognition.

1.19 Critical accounting estimates and key judgements

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRS requires the use of accounting estimates and assumptions. It also requires the Public Prosecution Service to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Department's accounting policies. We continually evaluate our estimates, assumptions and judgements based on available information and experience. As the use of estimates is inherent in financial reporting, actual results could differ from these estimates. The estimates and assumptions which have the most significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts are discussed below.

(i) Depreciation of property, plant and equipment

Depreciation is provided in the accounts so as to write-down the respective assets to their residual values over their expected useful lives and as such the selection of the estimated useful lives and the expected residual values of the assets requires the use of estimates and judgements. Details of the estimated useful lives are as shown in Note 1.4.

(ii) Impairment of property, plant and equipment

Where there is an indication that the carrying value of items of property, plant and equipment may have been impaired through events or changes in circumstances, a review will be undertaken of the recoverable amount of that asset.

(iii) Pension and other post-retirement benefits

The Department accounts for pension and other post-retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19. In determining the pension cost and the defined benefit obligation of the pension schemes a number of assumptions are used which include the discount rate, salary growth, price inflation, the expected return on the schemes' investments and mortality rates. Further details are contained in Notes 2 and 14.1.

1.20 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards adopted in the year ended 31 March 2015

The Public Prosecution Service has reviewed the standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards that became effective during 2014-15 and which are relevant to its operations. The adoption of these standards has not had a significant impact on the financial position or results of the Department.

1.21 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective

In addition, certain new standards, interpretations and amendments to existing standards have been published that are mandatory for the Department's accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2015, but which the Department has not adopted early. The Department considers that these standards are not relevant to its operations.

1.22 Going Concern

The PPS is a Non-Ministerial Department funded by the NI Assembly. While the liabilities of the PPS are relatively high the going concern concept applies to the activities of the Service and future funding will not be effected.

1.23 Comparatives

Comparative figures for the 2013-14 year are shown for those items listed in the primary schedules and associated notes, in compliance with the disclosure requirements of FReM unless otherwise stated.

1.24 Operating Segments

The PPS has only identified one operating segment under IFRS8 and have prepared the accounts accordingly.

2. Staff numbers and related costs

2.1 Staff costs

Staff costs comprise:	Permanently Employed Staff	Others	2014-15 £'000 Total	2013-14 £'000 Total
Wages and salaries	16,349	433	16,782	22,156
Social security costs	1,288	-	1,288	1,622
Other pension costs	1,648	-	1,648	3,497
Sub Total	19,285	433	19,718	27,275
Plus Inward Secondments	140	-	140	141
Less outturn Secondments	-	-	-	-
Total Net Costs	19,425	433	19,858	27,416
Of which:				
	Charged to Administration	Charged to Programme	Total	
Total Net Costs	1,422	18,436	19,858	
Total Net Costs	1,422	18,436	19,858	

The Public Prosecution Service is a non-ministerial department.

Note: In 2013-14 staff costs included £6,300k in respect of a legal provision. In 2014-15 £1,431k was released unused.

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS(NI)] is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme but the Public Prosecution Service is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 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 £4,967,433.25 (2013-14, £2,999,716.02) were payable to the PCSPS(NI) at one of four rates in the range 18% to 25% (2013-14, 18% to 25%) of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The difference between this amount and the amount disclosed above relates to pension costs recouped on seconded staff and pension contributions to the Broadly By Analogy schemes detailed below.

The scheme's actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A new full actuarial valuation of the scheme 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 new 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 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 £1,401 (2013-14, £3,678) 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 £150, 0.8% of pensionable pay (2013-14: £273, 0.8%), 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. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were £nil.

Two persons (2013-14, Nil) retired early on ill-health grounds and the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £2,434 (2013-14, Nil).

The Public Prosecution Service has responsibility for the Broadly By Analogy (BBA) pension schemes of public appointments in respect of some retired Directors and Deputy Directors of Public Prosecution. A BBA pension arrangement entitles the recipient to benefits similar to the classic scheme in both the PCSPS and PCSPS (NI). The scheme liabilities were calculated by the Government Actuary's Department in April 2015 and amount to £3.540m at 31 March 2015 (2013-14, £3.352m).

2.2 Average number of persons employed

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

	Permanent Staff	Others	2014-15 Total	2013-14 Total
RfR A				
Objective A	535	14	549	546
Total	535	14	549	546

2.3 Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes - exit package

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages by cost band
<£10,000	-	-	-
£10,000 - £25,000	-	-	-
£25,000 - £50,000	-	4 (2013-14: Nil)	4 (2013-14: Nil)
£50,000 - £100,000	-	-	-
£100,000- £150,000	-	-	-
£150,000- £200,000	-	-	-
Total number of exit packages	-	4	4
Total resource cost /£'000	-	142	142

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (Northern Ireland), a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year of departure. The compensation cost for these individuals is included in Staff Costs (Note 2.1). The PPS has been funded by Driver Vehicle Agency for compensation costs, this funding is included in 'Other Income' (Note 5.1). Ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table.

3. Other Administration Costs

	Note	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Rentals under operating leases:			
Hire of plant and machinery		-	-
Other operating leases		150	140
		150	140
Property running costs		67	77
Rates		82	80
Non-cash items:			
Depreciation and amortisation of non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment		-	-
Intangible assets		-	-
(Profit)/Loss on disposal of non-current assets		-	-
Permanent diminution		-	-
Auditor's remuneration and expenses		-	-
Provisions:			
Provided in year		-	-
Written back in year		-	-
Other notional		-	-
Total non-cash		-	-
Other expenditure		40	42
Total		339	339

4. Programme Costs

	Note	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Fees to independent counsel		4,993	5,282
Court related costs		1,170	930
Property running costs		1,510	1,615
Rates		755	745
IT and telephone maintenance and consumables		976	862
Postage, stationery, printing and publications		548	531
Training and professional subscriptions		322	256
Other current expenditure – RfR A		1,146	1,310
		11,420	11,531
Rentals under operating leases:			
Hire of plant and machines		8	47
Other operating leases		1,704	1,795
		1,712	1,842
Non-cash items:			
Depreciation and amortisation of non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment	6	1,219	1,369
Intangible assets	7	152	227
Permanent diminution	6,7	-	(1)
Impairment of non-current assets		-	-
(Profit)/Loss on disposal of non-current assets	6,7	40	-
Other fixed asset adjustments		-	-
Provisions:			
Provided in year	14	-	-
Borrowing Costs (Unwinding of discount)	14	142	124
Written back in year		-	-
Notional interest on loans		-	-
Consolidated Fund Standing Services		-	-
Auditor's remuneration and expenses		42	42
Other programme notional excluding auditor's remuneration		-	-
		1,595	1,761
Consolidated Fund Standing Services			
Programme costs (see below)		14,727	15,134
Less: programme income		(992)	(506)
Total		13,735	14,628

5. Income

The note analyses the income recorded in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, net of any transfers between Requests for Resources (see note SOAS6).

5.1 Analysis of operating income

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
<i>Programme income:</i>		
Other Income	149	-
Receipts from the Asset Recovery Incentive scheme	718	346
Recovery of court costs	37	34
Fees and charges to other departments	88	126
Total Programme Income	992	506
Total Income	992	506

6. Property, plant and equipment

	Buildings £'000	Plant & Machinery £'000	Information Technology £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Total £'000
2014-15					
Cost or valuation					
1 April 2014	13,886	1,234	3,240	-	18,360
Additions	40	4	121	-	165
Disposals	-	(15)	(1,287)	-	(1,302)
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Completed AUC	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	(37)	-	37	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-
Write-off PPE	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent diminution	-	-	-	-	-
Indexation (<i>Note a</i>)	1,156	8	-	-	1,164
Revaluation (<i>Note b</i>)	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2015	15,045	1,231	2,111	-	18,387
Depreciation 1 April 2014	(5,790)	(692)	(2,451)	-	(8,933)
Charged in year	(806)	(123)	(290)	-	(1,219)
Disposals	-	15	1,247	-	1,262
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	14	-	(14)	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-
Write-off PPE	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent diminution	-	-	-	-	-
Indexation depreciation (<i>Note a</i>)	(553)	(5)	1	-	(557)
Revaluation (<i>Note b</i>)	-	59	104	-	163
At 31 March 2015	(7,135)	(746)	(1,403)	-	(9,284)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	7,910	485	708	-	9,103
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	8,096	542	789	-	9,427
Asset Financing:					
Owned	7,910	485	708	-	9,103
Carrying Amount at 31 March 2015	7,910	485	708	-	9,103

Note a: Indexation relates to the changes in cost and the associated depreciation as a result of the application of indexation.

Note b: Revaluation arose due to the re-life of assets during the financial year.

6. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

2013-14	Buildings £'000	Plant & Machinery £'000	Information Technology £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Total £'000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2013	12,801	1,046	2,914	86	16,847
Additions	58	-	367	-	425
Disposals	-	-	(8)	-	(8)
Transfers	61	25	-	(86)	-
Completed AUC	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	(131)	152	(21)	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-
Write-off PPE	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent diminution	4	-	(2)	-	2
Indexation (<i>Note a</i>)	1,093	11	(10)	-	1,094
Revaluation (<i>Note b</i>)	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2014	13,886	1,234	3,240	-	18,360
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2013	(4,586)	(560)	(1,984)	-	(7,130)
Charged in year	(742)	(143)	(484)	-	(1,369)
Disposals (negative figure)	-	-	8	-	8
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-
Write-off PPE	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent diminution	(1)	-	-	-	(1)
Indexation depreciation (<i>Note a</i>)	(461)	(5)	9	-	(457)
Revaluation (<i>Note b</i>)	-	16	-	-	16
At 31 March 2014	(5,790)	(692)	(2,451)	-	(8,933)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	8,096	542	789	-	9,427
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	8,215	486	930	86	9,717
Asset financing:					
Owned	8,096	542	789	-	9,427
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	8,096	542	789	-	9,427

Note a: Indexation relates to the changes in cost and the associated depreciation as a result on the application of indexation.

Note b: Revaluation arose due to the re-life of assets during the financial year.

7. Intangible assets

	Development expenditure £'000	Information technology £'000	Software licences £'000	Total £'000
2014-15				
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2014	819	354	48	1,221
Additions	-	5	67	72
Disposals	(11)	(44)	(9)	(64)
Transfers	-	-	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Permanent diminution	-	-	-	-
Indexation (<i>Note a</i>)	10	3	1	14
Revaluation (<i>Note b</i>)	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2015	818	318	107	1,243
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2014	(617)	(314)	(48)	(979)
Charged in year	(105)	(37)	(10)	(152)
Disposals	11	44	9	64
Transfers	-	-	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Permanent diminution	-	-	-	-
Indexation depreciation (<i>Note a</i>)	(6)	(2)	-	(8)
Revaluation (<i>Note b</i>)	151	52	23	226
At 31 March 2015	(566)	(257)	(26)	(849)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	252	61	81	394
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	202	40	-	242
Asset Financing:				
Owned	252	61	81	394
Carrying amount				
At 31 March 2015	252	61	81	394

Note a: Indexation relates to the changes in cost and the associated depreciation as a result of the application of indexation.

Note b: Revaluation arose due to the re-life of assets during the financial year.

7. Intangible assets (continued)

	Development expenditure £'000	Information technology £'000	Software licences £'000	Total £'000
2013-14				
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2013	763	365	48	1,176
Additions	34	-	-	34
Disposals	-	(4)	-	(4)
Transfers	12	(12)	-	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Permanent diminution	3	-	-	3
Indexation (<i>Note a</i>)	7	5	-	12
Revaluation (<i>Note b</i>)	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2014	819	354	48	1,221
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2013	(463)	(248)	(34)	(745)
Charged in year	(147)	(66)	(14)	(227)
Disposals	-	4	-	4
Impairment	-	-	-	-
Permanent diminution	(2)	-	-	(2)
Indexation depreciation (<i>Note a</i>)	(5)	(4)	-	(9)
Revaluation (<i>Note b</i>)	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2014	(617)	(314)	(48)	(979)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	202	40	-	242
Carrying Amount at 31 March 2013	300	117	13	430
Asset Financing:				
Owned	202	40	-	242
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	202	40	-	242

Note a: Indexation relates to the changes in cost and the associated depreciation as a result of the application of indexation.

Note b: Revaluation arose due to the re-life of assets during the financial year.

8. Impairments

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Amount charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	-	(1)
Amount taken through the revaluation reserve	1,002	657
Total Impairment charge for the year	1,002	656

9. Capital and other commitments

9.1 Capital Commitments

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these financial statements:		
Property, plant and equipment	-	-
Intangible assets	-	-

9.2 Commitments under leases

9.2.1 Operating leases

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

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
<i>Buildings:</i>		
Not later than one year	1,834	1,834
Later than one year and not later than five years	7,334	7,334
Later than five years	7,891	9,725
	17,059	18,893
<i>Other:</i>		
Not later than one year	1	15
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-
Later than five years	-	-
	1	15
Total	17,060	18,908

9.2.2 Finance Leases

The Public Prosecution Service has no obligations under finance leases.

10. Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of the Public Prosecution Service are met through the Estimates process, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body of a similar size. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts for non-financial items in line with the Public Prosecution Service's expected purchase and usage requirements and the Department is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

11. Cash and cash equivalents

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(372)	(214)
Net change in cash and cash equivalents balance	103	(158)
Balance at 31 March	(269)	(372)
The following balances at 31 March are held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	(269)	(372)
Balance at 31 March	(269)	(372)

12. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	44	13
Amounts due from the Consolidation Fund in respect of supply	269	372
Other receivables	7	-
Prepayments and accrued income	449	434
VAT	373	481
	1,142	1,300
Amounts falling due after more than one year	-	-
Total	1,142	1,300

12.1 Intra-Government Balances

	Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Balances with other central government bodies	396	892	-	-
Balances with Local Authorities	-	-	-	-
Balances with Public Corporation & Trade Funds	-	1	-	-
Balances with NHS Bodies	-	-	-	-
Intra-Government Balances	396	893	-	-
Balances with bodies external to government	746	407	-	-
Total receivables at 31 March	1,142	1,300	-	-

13. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade payables	-	-
Other payables	-	33
Accruals and deferred income	3,339	4,025
Property, plant and equipment accruals	161	86
Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts to be paid to the Consolidated Fund:		
Received	-	-
Excess Accruing Resources	-	-
Amounts issued from consolidated fund but not spent at year end	-	-
	3,500	4,144
Amounts falling due after more than one year:		
Other payables, accruals and deferred income	-	-
Total	3,500	4,144

13.1 Intra-Government Balances

	Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balances with other central government bodies	431	415	-	-
Balances with Local Authorities	-	-	-	-
Balances with Public Corporation & Trade Funds	-	-	-	-
Balances with NHS Bodies	-	-	-	-
Intra-Government Balances	431	415	-	-
Balances with bodies external to government	3,069	3,729	-	-
Total payables at 31 March	3,500	4,144	-	-

14. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2014-15 Pension £'000	2014-15 Legal £'000	2014-15 Total £'000	2013-14 £'000
Balance at 1 April 2014	3,352	6,300	9,652	3,108
Provided in year	-	-	-	6,300
Actuarial loss/(gain)	208	-	208	277
Provisions not required written back	-	(1,431)	(1,431)	-
Provisions utilised in year	(162)	(4,532)	(4,694)	(157)
Borrowing costs (unwinding of discount)	142	-	142	124
Provisions moved to accruals	-	(337)	(337)	-
Balance at 31 March 2015	3,540	-	3,540	9,652

14.1 Pensions – Broadly By Analogy pension scheme £3.540m (2013-14, £3.352m)

The Public Prosecution Service is responsible for the Broadly By Analogy (BBA) pension schemes in respect of a number of its former public appointments. A BBA pension arrangement entitles the recipient to benefits similar to the classic scheme in both the PCSPS and PCSPS (NI). The Public Prosecution Service and members were obliged to make contributions in line with the PCSPS and the Department is responsible for paying accrued benefits. The scheme is no longer available to new entrants.

The BBA pension provision is unfunded, with benefits being paid as they fall due and guaranteed by the Department for service provided. There is no fund, and therefore no surplus or deficit. The scheme liabilities at 31 March 2015 were £3.540m (31 March 2014, £3.352m) as calculated by the Government Actuary's Department.

Present value of scheme liabilities

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Liability in respect of:		
Active members	-	-
Current pensioners	3,540	3,352
Total present value of scheme liabilities at 31 March	3,540	3,352

Liabilities are valued on an actuarial basis using the Projected Unit Method.

Assumptions

	2014-15 %	2013-14 %	2012-13 %	2011-12 %	2010-11 %
Inflation assumption	2.20	2.50	1.07	2.00	2.65
Rate of increase in salaries	4.20	4.50	3.95	4.25	4.90
Rate of increase for pensions in payment and deferred pensions	2.20	2.50	1.70	2.00	2.65
Rate used to discount scheme liabilities	3.55	4.35	4.10	4.85	5.60

Assumptions - Life expectancy at retirement

	2014-15 Years	2013-14 Years
Current Pensioners		
Exact Age:		
Female officers currently aged 60	31.3	31.2
Female officers currently aged 65	26.4	26.2
Male officers currently aged 60	29.1	29.0
Male officers currently aged 65	24.2	24.1

Analysis of movement in scheme liability

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Scheme liability at 1 April	3,352	3,108
Movement in the year:		
Current service cost (net of employee contributions)	-	-
Interest cost	142	124
Employee contributions	-	-
Actuarial (gain)/loss	208	(277)
Provisions not required written back	-	-
Benefits paid	(162)	(157)
Scheme liability at 31 March	3,540	3,352

Expense to be recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Current service cost (net of employee contributions)	-	-
Interest cost	142	124
Provisions not required written back	-	-
Total expense/(income)	142	124

Actuarial (gain)/loss to be recognised in the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

	2014-15 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Experience (gain)/loss arising on the scheme liabilities	(26)	45
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of the scheme liabilities	234	232
Total actuarial (gain)/loss	208	277

History of experience (gains)/losses

	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	2010-11
Experience (gain)/loss arising on the scheme liabilities:					
Amount (£'000)	(26)	45	(604)	70	(566)
Percentage of scheme liabilities at the end of year	(0.7%)	1.3%	(19.4%)	1.9%	(16.4%)

Estimate of contributions expected to be paid into the scheme over the year 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

The Public Prosecution Service does not anticipate having any future entrants to Broadly By Analogy pension schemes. On this basis during the financial year 2015-16 it is estimated that total contributions to the scheme will be £Nil.

Sensitivity Analysis

The sensitivity analysis of the main actuarial assumptions indicates the following:

- Increasing the discount rate by 0.5% would result in a corresponding decrease in liabilities of approximately £234,000 or 6.5%.
- Increasing the CPI inflation assumption by 0.5% would result in a corresponding increase in liabilities of approximately £234,000 or 6.5%.
- Increasing assumed life expectancies in retirement by around 1 year would result in a corresponding increase of approximately £111,000 or 3.0%.

The opposite changes in assumptions to those set out above would produce approximately equal and opposite changes in the liability. Similarly, doubling the changes in the assumptions would produce approximately double the changes in the liability.

The sensitivities show the change in each assumption in isolation. In practice the financial assumptions rarely change in isolation and given the interdependencies between them, the impacts of such changes may offset each other to some extent.

14.2 Legal Provision

On 19 March 2014 a Fair Employment Tribunal ruled on a case taken by 15 PPS staff in respect of equal pay and indirect discrimination, on grounds of sex and age. The respondents to the case were the Public Prosecution Service of Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

This claim arose out of the transfer of staff from Grade A of the Northern Ireland Office pay scale to Grade 7 of the Northern Ireland Civil Service pay scale upon devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland administration on 12 April 2010. Their comparators, with whom they were found to be performing equal work, were transferred under the interface arrangements to the higher paid Grade 6. The decision also had implications for comparable staff. The PPS made some broad assumptions over the potential total future settlement to all parties and a total cost of £6.3m was provided for in the 2013-14 accounts.

During 2014-15 the majority of these costs have been agreed and paid. £337k remains outstanding at 31 March 2015 and as this can be accurately estimated the liability has been reclassified from a provision to an accrual.

15. Contingent liabilities disclosed under IAS 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

Listed below are the Public Prosecution Service's contingent liabilities that have not been recognised as provisions because their existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events, not wholly within the Department's control.

<p>(i) Description of liability:</p> <p>Expected date of Settlement:</p> <p>Uncertainties and major assumptions:</p>	<p>Payment to PPS staff that have applied for the Voluntary Exit Scheme and have been successful.</p> <p>Settlement dates are unknown.</p> <p>These claims are currently being processed and it is not possible, at the balance sheet date, to quantify this potential liability reliably.</p>
<p>(ii) Description of liability:</p> <p>Expected date of Settlement:</p> <p>Uncertainties and major assumptions:</p>	<p>The final liability due under the Developer's Agreement for the PPS Headquarters is disputed with the landlord.</p> <p>Settlement dates are unknown.</p> <p>The Public Prosecution Service has paid all monies that they deem are liable to the supplier on the basis of legal advice. The supplier is seeking an additional final settlement which PPS do not believe is payable.</p>

16. Losses and special payments

16.1 Special Payments

	Number of cases	2014-15 £'000	Number of cases	2013-14 £'000
Details of cases				
Compensation payments	61	4,882	-	-
Ex-gratia payment	-	-	-	-
Total	61	4,882	-	-

The PPS made 61 special payments during 2014-15. 58 of these payments were made following a successful legal case taken by PPS staff in relation to their grading as outlined under Note 14.2. The remaining three payments are compensation in relation to Health and Safety cases.

17. Related-party transactions

The Public Prosecution Service has had a number of material transactions with other government bodies. Most of these transactions have been with the Department of Finance and Personnel.

During the year no Board members or other key manager or other related parties has undertaken any material transaction with PPS.

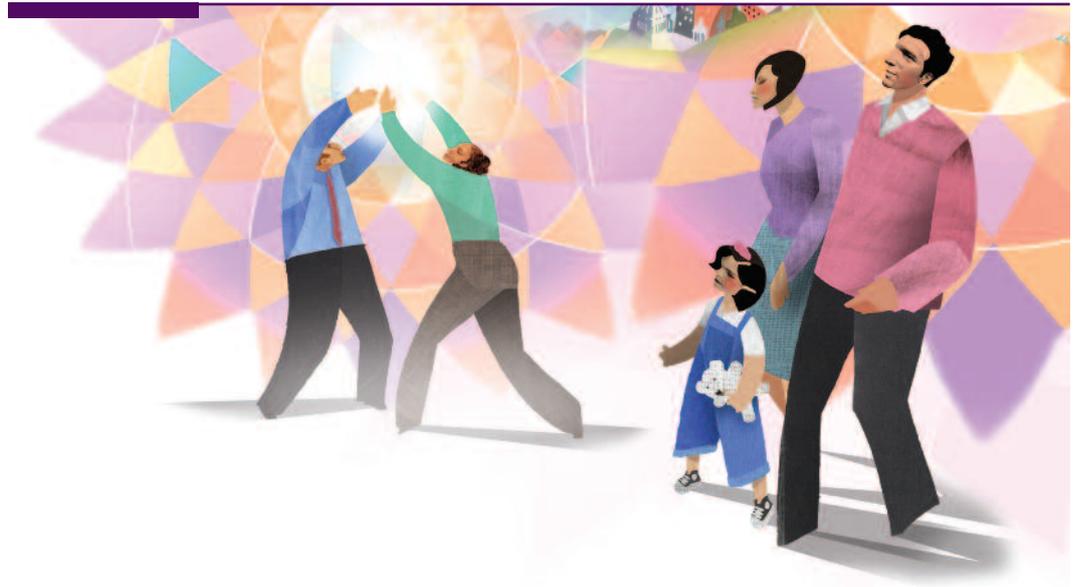
18. Events after the reporting date

Since 31 March 2015, applications for Voluntary Exit Scheme have been processed by the Department of Finance and Personnel. During June some PPS staff have been offered the opportunity to exit under the scheme however these offers are conditional on funding becoming available to allow the scheme to proceed during 2015-16. Due to this uncertainty there is no obligation on the department since the balance sheet date.

Date authorised for issue

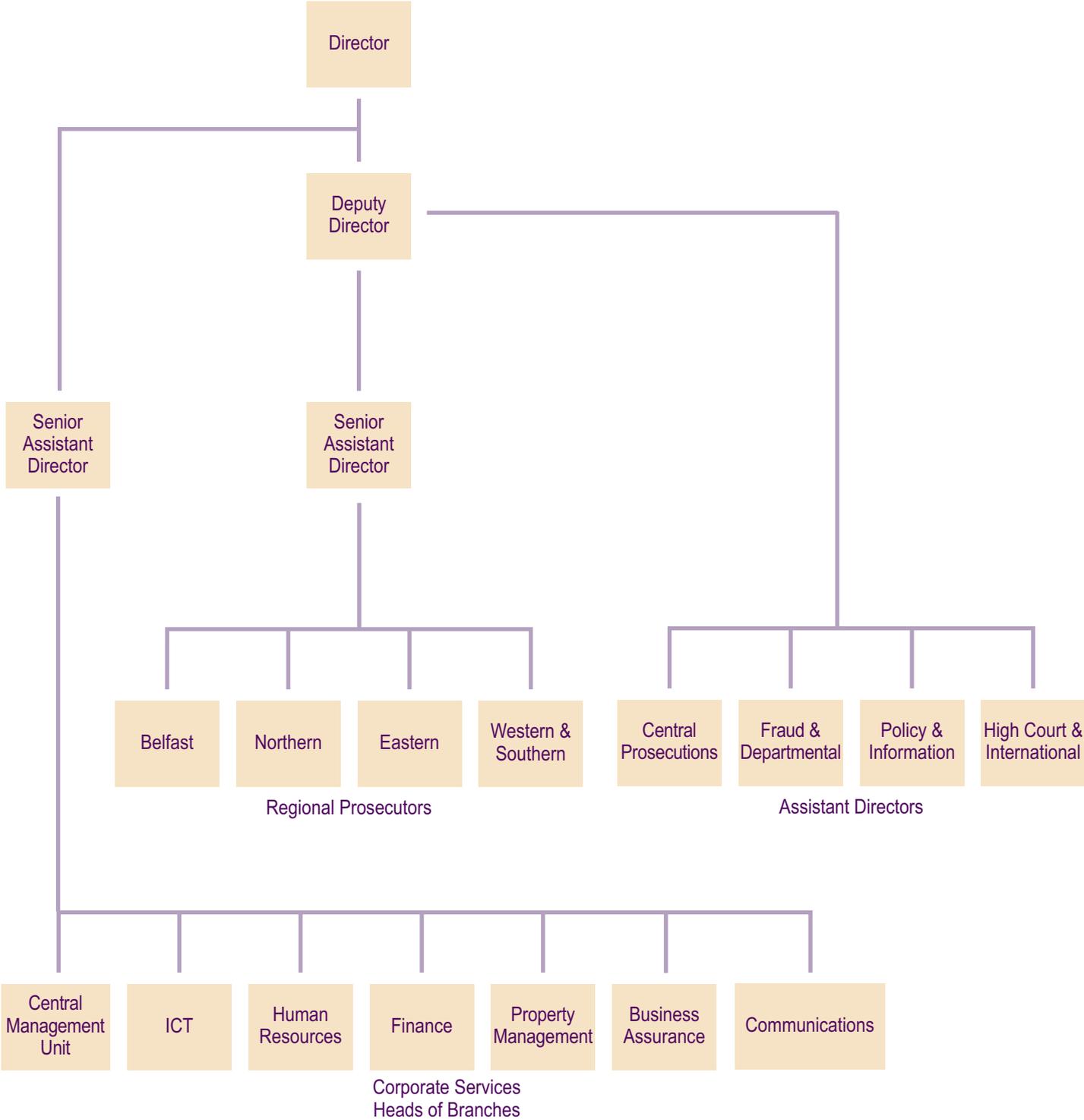
The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 23 June 2015.

Part 3: Annexes



Annex A:

PPS Organisation Chart



Annex B:

Performance against Key Delivery Targets 2014-15

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate 2013-14 performance where applicable.

Strategic Priority	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Target / Outcome
1	<p>Legal Quality Assurance Number of cases dip sampled during 2014-15.</p> <p>Percentage of decisions to prosecute, divert or not to prosecute within the range a prosecutor could reasonably take</p>	<p>Target: 720 (Minimum) Outturn: 855 (889)</p> <p>Target: 98.5% Outturn: 98.2% (98.5%)</p>
	<p>Cracked / Ineffective Trials* Percentage of Cracked Trials where all Charges were Withdrawn</p> <p>(i) Crown Court (ii) Magistrates' Courts</p>	<p>Target: Reduction on 2013-14 Outturn: 1% (1%) 41% (42%)</p>
	<p>Percentage of Ineffective Trials attributed to the Prosecution</p> <p>(i) Crown Court (ii) Magistrates' Courts</p>	<p>Target: Reduction on 2013-14 Outturn: 27% (22%) 54% (54%)</p>
	<p>Court Outcomes Number of defendants in the Crown Court subject to a 'No Bill' (All counts)</p>	<p>Target: Not to exceed 37 Outturn: 26 (38)</p>
	<p>Number of Acquittals by Direction in the Crown Court (Number of defendants - all counts)</p>	<p>Target: Not to exceed 9 Outturn: 21 (9)</p>
	<p>Review of Charges Percentage of 28 day charge cases where charge sheets are reviewed within 3 working days of first appearance at court</p>	<p>Target: 90% Outturn: 88.5% (91%)</p>

* Data supplied by the NICTS.

Performance against Key Delivery Targets 2014-15 (continued)

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate 2013-14 performance where applicable.

Strategic Priority	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Target / Outcome
1	Prosecutorial Decisions - Timeliness Percentage of:	
	Indictable prosecution decisions issued within (i) 100 days	Target: 50% Outturn: 62% (60%)
	(ii) 180 days	Target: 80% Outturn: 83% (83%)
	Summary prosecution decisions issued within (i) 15 days	Target: 65% Outturn: 74% (80%)
	(ii) 40 days	Target: 80% Outturn: 87% (90%)
	Diversory decisions issued within (i) 15 days	Target: 65% Outturn: 77% (81%)
	(i) 30 days	Target: 80% Outturn: 87% (89%)
	No prosecution (indictable) decisions issued within (i) 50 days	Target: 65% Outturn: 74% (74%)
	(ii) 150 days	Target: 80% Outturn: 91% (94%)
	No prosecution (summary / hybrid) decisions issued within (i) 15 days	Target: 65% Outturn: 72% (75%)
	(ii) 30 days	Target: 80% Outturn: 90% (90%)
	Preparation of Committal papers	
	Percentage of Committal papers available within 30 days	Target: Improvement on 2013-14 Outturn: 42% (31%)
	Advocacy Monitoring	
Percentage of Magistrates' / Youth Court sittings reviewed where prosecutor performance was assessed as satisfactory or better	Target: Establish baseline Outturn: 96%	

Performance against Key Delivery Targets 2014-15 (continued)

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate 2013-14 performance where applicable.

Strategic Priority	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Target / Outcome
2	<p>Victim and Witness Satisfaction** Percentage of victims and witnesses satisfied with the overall service provided by the PPS</p>	<p>Target: Improve on previous survey Outturn: 68% (70%)</p>
	<p>Public Confidence (NI Omnibus Survey 2015) Percentage confidence in:</p> <p>PPS provision of a fair and impartial prosecution service</p>	<p>Target: Improvement on 2014 Outturn: 74% (71%)</p>
	<p>PPS effectiveness in prosecuting people accused of committing a crime</p>	<p>Target: Improvement on 2014 Outturn: 67% (68%)</p>
3	<p>Better Payments Percentage of invoices paid within 10 working days</p>	<p>Target: 95% Outturn: 92% (93%)</p>
	<p>Complaints Percentage of complaints acknowledged within 5 working days</p>	<p>Target: 95% Outturn: 82% (58%)</p>
	<p>Percentage of initial complaints dealt with within 20 working days</p>	<p>Target: 95% Outturn: 46% (57%)</p>
4	<p>Attendance Management Average working days lost due to sickness and absenteeism (per whole time equivalent) staff member***</p>	<p>Target: 7.5% Outturn: 8.2% (8.1%)</p>
	<p>Training and Development Percentage of staff who identify a training need by 31 July 2014.</p>	<p>Target: 90% Outturn: not available</p>
	<p>Performance Management Percentage of staff with an agreed Personal Performance Agreement (PPA) by 31 July 2014.</p>	<p>Target: 90% Outturn: 24%</p>

** Based on the NI Victim and Witness Survey (DoJNI) conducted in 2013-14.

*** Estimated data for 2014-15.

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