The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

Annual report and accounts 2025-26

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 by the Department for Communities
on 10 July 2026

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is the independent regulator of charities in Northern Ireland, a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Communities.

Further information on our activities is available from:

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Performance report

The performance report outlines the Commission's vision, objectives and activities during 2025-26. It includes a summary of performance against key indicators, an overview of challenges and key risks faced in delivering its objectives and strategies and likely developments in the coming year.

1. Overview

Statement from the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive


As Chair and Chief Executive of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, we are pleased to present our Annual Report and Accounts for 2025–26. This report reflects on the past year and offers insight into how the Commission is continuing to mature and to develop its regulatory approach.

The year brought both challenges and opportunities, and throughout it we have sought to work constructively and thoughtfully alongside the charity sector. We are proud of what has been achieved within very constrained resources and grateful for the dedication of our Board of Commissioners, our staff and the many individuals, organisations and, of course, charities we have worked with.

Across Northern Ireland, charity trustees, beneficiaries, volunteers, supporters and staff continue to show remarkable commitment, resilience and compassion, often in difficult circumstances. Their work underpins our vision of well-run and trusted charities making a real difference in people's lives. We know that regulation, while essential to public trust and confidence, can sometimes feel demanding, particularly during financially difficult times. That is why we strive for an enabling and proportionate approach - one that listens, provides clear and practical guidance, and supports charities to meet their responsibilities with confidence.

During 2025–26, we took important steps to improve our guidance and communications, making them easier to access and use. This included publishing blogs on key topics such as the importance of following data protection law in your trustees' annual report. We launched our new website with "quick guide" resources and short animated explainers, as well as beginning preparations for the introduction of a registration threshold.

We also consulted publicly on a new strategic plan for 2026-29, welcomed a new Chair to our stakeholder forum, held a very successful annual public meeting and updated our processes to integrate the much-anticipated Scheme of Delegation into our work.

Further detail on this as well as other important developments across registration, casework, annual reporting and enquiries is set out in this report. We hope it demonstrates our continued commitment to partnership, transparency and a strong charity sector as well as giving a flavour of our role, our development and our plans for the future.

Gerry McCurdy

Chief Commissioner

Frances McCandless

Chief Executive

Statement of the Commission’s vision, objectives and activities

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (“the Commission”) is the independent regulator of Northern Ireland charities, as created by the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

The Commission is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC). The working relationship between the sponsor department and the Commission is extremely important, requiring close co-operation between both parties. The Commission does, however, exist as an independent regulatory body.

Our vision

Well run and trusted charities making a difference in peoples’ lives.

Our purpose

Enabling charities to do things right through proportionate regulation, best practice and advice.

Our objectives

The objectives of the Commission are set out in the 2008 Act.

- **Public confidence** - To increase public trust and confidence in charities.
- **Public benefit** - To promote awareness of the need to demonstrate public benefit.
- **Accountability** - To enhance accountability to donors, beneficiaries and the public.
- **Charitable resources** - To promote the effective use of charitable resources.
- **Compliance** - To ensure proper management and administration of charities.

Our activities

The main objective of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 is to introduce an integrated system of registration and regulation, as well as support for and supervision of, registered charities.

The Commission works to develop and implement the structures and processes through which charities can demonstrate their contribution to society and the public can be assured that charitable resources are being properly applied.

Following publication of the Independent Review of Charity Regulation in January 2022 and the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, the Commission's focus is on the following strategic aims:

- Aim 1: Progressing charity registration to enhance accountability.
- Aim 2: Progressing our development as an enabling regulator.
- Aim 3: Continuing to develop proportionate regulation.
- Aim 4: Operating as an effective and efficient public body.

To achieve these, the Commission's activities during 2025-26 included the following:

- The ongoing maintenance and population of an accurate and up-to-date public register of charities.
- Identifying and investigating apparent wrongdoing in charities and taking appropriate remedial or protective action.
- Implementing an annual reporting programme for all registered charities, making accounts available to the public.
- Supporting charities in implementing proper governance processes and policies and, where appropriate, providing legal consents for trustees to make changes to their charity.
- Providing a range of guidance and online tools to support charities and those who run them.

The Board and Senior Management Team

The Board


Chief Charity Commissioner, Gerard McCurdy


Deputy Chief Commissioner, Aoife Hamilton


Legal Commissioner, Patricia Kelly


Charity Commissioner, Kieran Donaghy


Charity Commissioner, Alan Hunter

Charity Commissioner, Leanne McCullough

Charity Commissioner, Hugh McKeag

The register of interests for the Board and senior management team is available on the Commission's website at: [Governance Framework | CCNI]

The Commission's Conflicts of Interest Policy sets out the measures required to prevent, identify, and manage conflicts of interest when carrying out official duties and responsibilities.

In line with this policy, Registers of Interest are maintained for both staff and Commissioners, with all declarations reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain accurate and up to date.

Additionally, conflicts of interest are a standing agenda item at every Board and committee meeting. All attendees are required to formally declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest at each meeting, ensuring transparency and compliance with governance requirements.

Senior Management Team

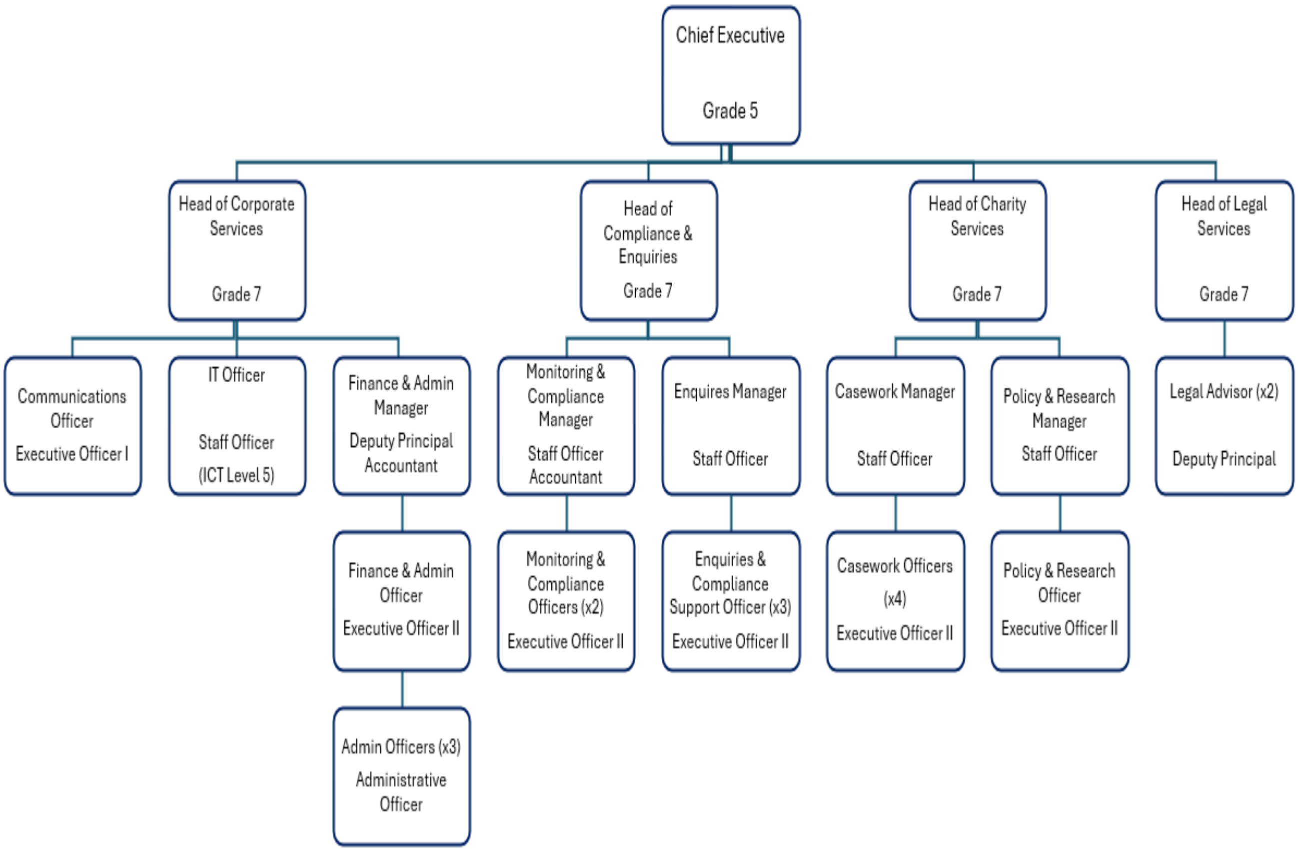

Chief Executive, Frances McCandless


Head of Charity Services, Punam McGookin


Head of Compliance & Enquiries, Rossa Keown


Head of Corporate Services, Aubrey McCrory

Organisation structure[1]



[1] Structure revised 19 January 2026 to include a new Head of Legal and additional Legal Advisor. Following open recruitment Job offers and acceptance late March 2026.

Highlights from the year

- ✓ **Stakeholder forum**: Elaine Armstrong, Chief Executive of the Cedar Foundation, was appointed as the new independent Chair of the Stakeholder Engagement Forum in April. Ms Armstrong said she was honoured to take on the role.

- ✓ **New guides:** June saw the Commission launch a new series of Running your charity guides designed to help charity trustees run their organisations effectively and in line with their legal duties.

- ✓ **Public consultation:** As part of developing a new three-year strategic plan, the Commission sought input from the public on all aspects of its future direction, opening with a public consultation in July.

- ✓ **Independent review of charity regulation:** July also saw the publication of a new report showing progress on implementing the Minister’s response to the recommendations from the Independent Review of Charity Regulation in Northern Ireland (January 2022).

- ✓ **SORP**: The new Charities Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (‘the SORP’) was published in October, ensuring charities’ financial reporting requirements are more proportionate to their size.

- ✓ **Trustees’ Week 2025:** To mark Trustees’ Week in November, a new Commission blog heard directly from charity trustees about their motivation, experience and why they believe others should consider becoming a trustee.

- ✓ **Public meeting:** The Commission’s annual public meeting took place in January, with guest speaker Matthew Smith KC, a leading charity law expert in practice at Maitland Chambers in London, delivering the keynote address.

- ✓ **New website:** February saw the launch of the Commission’s new website, marking a major step in ongoing work to improve how charities, trustees and the public access information and services.

- ✓ **Charity visits:** beyond regulatory activity, Commissioners and Staff visited charities in March to understand the challenges charities face.

Key issues and risks

During 2025-26 the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) supported the Board and the Accounting Officer in their responsibilities regarding the identification and management of risks, control and governance and associated assurances. The Accounting Officer in her 2025-26 Governance Statement details the Commission’s risk and control framework along with the various risks managed and the Committee’s oversight role.

For further details of these risks and information on the Commission’s risk and control framework, please see the *Corporate Governance report* section of this annual report.

Going Concern

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC), having been established by statute under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The Commission received its core resource and capital funding from the DfC during 2025-26, with an interim budget allocation letter received in April 2025 for that year, and a further budget letter in January 2026 to confirm additional in year funding. While the financial environment continued throughout the year to be challenging, the Commission is of the opinion that the going concern basis of preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts is appropriate. The Commission is not aware of any events which would impact upon the entity’s status as a going concern.

2. Performance Analysis

Performance summary

In 2025–26, the Commission not only met but exceeded most key performance commitments set out in its DfC approved Business Plan, particularly in relation to charity registration, engagement with the sector, timeliness of risk assessing concerns about charities, compliance monitoring and internal efficiency. By year end, 75% of key performance indicators (6 out of 8) were achieved, albeit many of the regulatory targets had to be reduced from the previous period due to lack of resources. Of the 84 actions set out in the 2025–26 Business Plan, 93% (78 out of 84) were completed, with remaining actions relying on external factors or longer-term change.

The year under review was the final year of the Commission's 2023–26 Strategic Plan. Across that period, the Commission successfully delivered 79% of its strategic KPIs (19 out of 24) and 87% of planned actions (251 out of 287). This reflects sustained delivery against a challenging programme of regulatory change following the Minister's 2022 response to the Review of Charity Regulation, undertaken alongside the phased development and implementation of new legislative requirements and ongoing pressures on capacity.

The Independent Review listed 52 recommendations with 63 related actions for the Commission to progress itself, with 19 recommendations (and 20 related actions) requiring joint Commission and DfC working, and the remaining 22 were for others to progress. To date the Commission has progressed 25 recommendations and their related actions with a further 22 recommendations embedded within the Commission's regulatory approach to improve the delivery of services and the operation of the regulatory framework going forward.

During 2025-26, a number of business plan actions were progressed, supporting delivery of recommendations from the Independent Review. In total three recommendations for the Commission to progress were completed, including reviewing and improving guidance for charity trustees on financial reporting, strengthening communication with the courts and legal profession on use of statutory powers, and completing arrangements for a Partnership Agreement with the sponsor department.

A further four recommendations are now assessed as being embedded within the Commission's day-to-day regulatory approach.

Further information on the Commission's performance during 2025-26 across the business plan's four strategic aims is set out in the section below. All percentages shown have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Service Performance and Impact: Analysis and Learning

Strategic Aim 1: Progressing charity registration to enhance accountability

Progressing charity registration is central to the Commission's statutory purpose and to maintaining public confidence in the charity sector. The register of charities is a public resource enabling users to search for charities and access key information, including trustees, activities, areas of operation and annual accounts and reports. This supports the public in making informed decisions, from accessing services and making donations to understanding how funds are used.

During 2025-26, activity focused not only on sustaining registration throughput, but on improving the quality, completeness and accuracy of the information held on the register. By the end of the reporting period, the register recorded 7,119 charities, reflecting continued progress in formalising the charitable sector in Northern Ireland. In terms of specific performance, results for the year included:

KPI - *64%* of new applications for charitable status received processed within six months of receipt (target *60%)*

- 198 new applications for charitable status received and 167 registration decisions made.
- 1 registration decision review requested, and completed.
- 93% were processed within six months of receiving a 'complete' application.
- 386 new expressions of intent received from organisations alerting the Commission to their existence, so they could be called forward to apply for registration in due course.
- 349 letters issued to call organisations forward to apply for registration.
- 3,820 page views of the *Registration support* webpage.

- 341 views of the online registration tutorial.
- total number of charities on the deemed list awaiting a call forward reduced to 82.
- 246 post registration closures.

Earlier engagement with organisations preparing to register remained an important feature of the Commission’s approach during the year. Expressions of intent received from organisations enabled the Commission to plan call-forward activity and support better quality applications through promoting use of online registration support materials to help charities better understand regulatory expectations before applying. During the year this included 341 views of the registration tutorial and 3,820 page views of registration support webpages. Post registration survey feedback indicates 75% of applicants who responded reported an increase in understanding after reading guidance.

This upstream engagement supports more efficient processing, as does the Minister’s Scheme of Delegation. In the first full year of the scheme’s operation, registration efficiency has increased from 75% of complete applications being processed within six months in 2024-25 when all decisions were made via Schedule 1 Committee[2], to 93% in 2025-26. This result was achieved against the backdrop of staff turnover and some resourcing going into induction and training new staff.

Targeted work to address long standing deemed charities made a significant contribution to improving register accuracy. Positive regulatory engagement was taken in relation to at least 30 deemed organisations, reducing by a fifth (22%) the number of charities awaiting call forward on the deemed list by the final quarter of the year. This progress further addresses historic accountability gaps and ensures that organisations operating as charities are either properly registered or appropriately removed from the public record.

Post registration activity also contributed to strengthening the integrity of the register. The Commission received 246 closure notifications during the year. While substantially higher than in the previous year, this increase does not indicate a sudden rise in charities ceasing to operate. Rather, it reflects engagement activity that prompted trustees of long inactive organisations to formally notify the Commission of closure, ensuring the register more accurately reflects current charitable activity.

[2] 71% of complete applications were processed within six months in 2023/24

Preparatory work for the introduction of a charity registration threshold also progressed during the year. Subject to legislation and commencement, charities with annual income of £20,000 or less and assets of £100,000 or less will no longer be required to register, though trustees may choose to do so if they consider it in the charity's best interests.

Preparation focused on updating guidance, model governing documents, supporting materials and internal procedures, alongside early development work to adapt the online registration system to incorporate threshold information at key points of the submission process and to support future deregistration requests. Engagement with the Commission's stakeholder forum, helper groups and critical friends helped shape guidance and communications, supporting a proportionate and well understood transition.

Overall impact

Taken together, registration activity during 2025–26 demonstrates a regulatory system that balances timeliness with scrutiny, supports charities to engage earlier and more effectively, and continues to improve the reliability of the public register. This strengthens transparency and accountability across the sector and provides a stable foundation for future reform in line with the Minister's policy on a registration threshold.

<u>Strategic Aim 2: Progressing our development as an enabling regulator</u>

Supporting charity trustees to understand and meet their legal duties is central to the Commission's role as an enabling regulator. During 2025–26, the Commission strengthened how it provides guidance, engagement and digital services to make compliance more accessible, proportionate and effective. This supported trustees to operate their charities with greater confidence and accountability. The Commission also received and progressed an increased number of casework applications, facilitating the better administration of over 300 charities by year end. In terms of specific performance, results for the year included:

KPI – 50 *engagement events/activities during the year* (target 40)

- 550,755 website hits[3] (cumulative).
- views of webpages ranged from 34,156 for *Register of charities*, 17,038 *Annual reporting*, 3,820 *Registration support,* 2,848 *Running your charity to* 1,564 *Concerns about charities*.
- 6,751 telephone/email enquiries were processed.
- 30 new and updated pieces of guidance published.
- 4 stakeholder forum meetings and 1 helper groups event held.

Enabling charities to operate effectively

In addition to guidance and engagement, the Commission supported charities through the delivery of statutory decisions and administrative functions, enabling organisations to make necessary changes and continue operating effectively within the regulatory framework. These activities form an important part of the Commission's enabling role, ensuring that charities can adapt, govern themselves effectively and continue delivering services to beneficiaries.

The Commission's casework team manages applications and notifications from charity trustees seeking approval to make legal changes or to carry out specific actions or transactions. These processes are central to ensuring charities are well governed, comply with their legal obligations and have appropriate, up-to-date governance arrangements in place. During 2025–26, the Commission received 335 casework applications and notifications and completed 323 cases. These included 38 statutory decisions requiring formal approval by the Commission and 285 administrative cases such as closures, mergers and name changes. Overall casework applications and notifications received reflect an increase of 20% on the previous year. The figure completed in the context of the Scheme of Delegation represents more than doubled compared to the previous year, rising by 143%.

As a result, 323 charities were able to operate more effectively after the Commission made statutory decisions or administrative functions were carried out. This related, in part, to a combined charitable income of £100,919,975.

[3] The statistics for webpage views in this section are from 1 April 2025 to 24 February 2026. A new Commission website went live in February, following which the website analytics tool required some time to be updated to track the new site.

Making it easier for trustees to comply

A key focus during the year was simplifying and improving access to guidance so that trustees can more easily understand and apply regulatory requirements in practice. The Commission published 30 new or updated pieces of guidance (up from 13 the previous year), including a new modular suite of "Running your charity" guidance, replacing a single, longer document. Feedback from the sector welcomed the new format.

The new modular format better meets trustee needs in terms of content, accessibility, tone and ease of use. Following feedback from Critical Friends, amendments were made to the description of charity trustees to clarify they are not just the office holders, language around person with significant control was changed to avoid confusion with company law and wording informing charity trustees that if they are disqualified after becoming a trustee they should resign their position was inserted.

To support different learning preferences and improve accessibility, the Commission introduced short avatar vlogs aimed in particular at those new to their roles, helping to build capability across the sector:

- I'm a new charity trustee – what are my first steps?
- A new charity Board – getting it right.
- The charity Chair.
- The charity Secretary.
- The charity Treasurer.
- The safeguarding lead at a charity.

Expanding reach through digital services

High levels of interaction with the Commission's digital services demonstrates the increasing reliance of trustees and the public on accessible, authoritative regulatory information through digital platforms. During the year there were 550,755[4] interactions with the Commission's website, an increase of over 8% on the previous year, with various links to key Commission annual reporting and registration material on YouTube.

[4] The statistics for webpage views in this section are from 1 April 2025 to 24 February 2026. A new Commission website went live in February, following which the website analytics tool required some time to be updated to track the new site.

The launch of a new Commission website in February 2026 delivers a key Ministerial review recommendation and represents a significant step forward in accessibility and usability. Developed using structured feedback from users, key enhancements include a combined search across the website and charity register, more intuitive access to core user portals (including My Charity Login and registration applications), a broader range of digital inclusion tools and improved navigation to statutory guidance. The site also incorporates page-level feedback functionality to collect feedback on an ongoing basis through an embedded “smiley face” mechanism. This enables the Commission to assess satisfaction and evolve the website in response to user needs. In the first month a total of 108 interactions demonstrated very high user satisfaction, with several enhancements identified to more effectively support the needs of different users.

Direct engagement to improve understanding and practice

Direct engagement with charities and stakeholders remained an important part of the Commission’s enabling approach. The scale of telephone and email enquiries (6,751 during the year) handled through NI Direct, further reflects the ongoing demand for regulatory support. While operational challenges affected call handling performance during the year, actions taken to address these issues and planned improvements will support restoration of service standards.

Through a programme of 50 engagement events, including the annual public meeting and targeted charity visits, the Commission worked directly with trustees to build understanding of legal duties and promote good governance. These included hosting a well-attended annual public meeting in January 2026 and undertaking a series of charity visits to gain a better understanding of charities’ work on the ground. Visits included North Down Community Network (NDCN), Wave Trauma Centre in Belfast and The Women's Centre, Derry.

Commission staff also met a number of helper groups (Greater Shantallow Community Partnership, Rural Community Network Downpatrick, NICVA and County Armagh Community Development) to share learning and gather their perspectives on regulation.

The Stakeholder Forum met four times during the year and remained an important channel through which the charity sector could engage directly with the Commission on key issues and priorities affecting both the sector and charity regulation. It also played an ongoing role in ensuring the views of the sector informed the development of the Commission's work as an enabling regulator. This included providing valuable feedback on the development of the new website, Commission use of avatar animations, letters used by the Concerns team, the high-level plan for the introduction of the registration threshold and proposed guidance.

The network of 23 helper groups remained an important source of independent support for charities, working closely with the Commission to assist organisations preparing for registration or completing annual returns. There was one helper group meeting held during the year.

The Commission also engaged with other UK and international charity regulators. A key issue discussed during the year was the emerging challenges and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence. The Commission was also in contact with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), community development officers from Belfast City Council, Chartered Accountants Ireland and Age Sector Network Exchange to support shared learning and promote effective regulation.

Work also continued in collaboration with sector partners, such as NICVA, UK Finance and the Charity Finance Group, to try and address ongoing challenges faced by charities in accessing and managing banking services. This work included 13 meetings of the banking forum and three quarterly meetings with the Charity Finance Group. These engagements provide valuable opportunities to address emerging issues, reinforce key regulatory messages and support trustees in applying guidance to real-world situations. Visits to charities in the final quarter of the year also enhance the Commission's understanding of the operational context in which charities work, informing a more proportionate and responsive regulatory approach.

Engagement with stakeholder forum members and helper groups further strengthens this two-way relationship. The stakeholder forum met four times during the year and provided input into key areas of the Commission's work, including website development, communications approaches and preparations for the registration threshold. Helper groups continued to play a vital role in supporting charities on the ground, particularly those preparing for registration or completing annual returns.

This ongoing dialogue ensures that the Commission’s regulatory approach is informed by sector experience, while also enabling consistent communication of expectations and standards.

Supporting proportionate and transparent financial reporting

The Commission contributed to the development of a new Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), published in October 2025. The SORP-making body, appointed by the Financial Reporting Council, is made up of the Commission, the Charity Commission for England and Wales (CCEW) and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), with the Charities Regulator - Republic of Ireland as observer.

During the year representatives from the Commission attended three SORP committee meetings. Through its role on the SORP-making body, the Commission helped shape an accounting framework that balances simplicity and clarity with accountability. In finalising the new accounting framework, which followed a consultation earlier in the year, the SORP-making body worked to balance the need for simplicity and clarity for charities with the importance of transparency for donors, interested third parties and consistency of information available to the public.

Overall impact

Taken together, the Commission’s work during 2025–26 demonstrates a more accessible and responsive regulatory system. By improving guidance, expanding digital services and strengthening engagement with the sector, the Commission has made it easier for trustees to understand and meet their legal responsibilities.

Strategic Aim 3: continuing to develop proportionate regulation

During 2025–26, the Commission focused resources where they were most needed while supporting trustees to comply with their legal duties. This included further developing the Commission's risk assessment approach to better prioritise regulatory activity and reallocating a fifth of casework capacity to enquiries. These actions ensured regulatory effort was targeted and proportionate within available resources, while operating in line with the Scheme of Delegation. In terms of specific performance, results for the year included:

KPIs – 151 Annual Monitoring Returns (AMRs) of charities legally required to report to the Commission reviewed (target 150) 29% of enquiry cases concluded within 12 months of receipt of concern (target 40%)

- 7,012 annual returns due during the year and 6,271 annual returns received (including early and late filers) (81%) – (broadly consistent with the previous year).
- 4,846 annual returns submitted by their deadline. (69%) — (broadly consistent with the previous year).
- 966 charities in default by more than six months at year end (up over a quarter from 752 the previous year).
- 100% of initial compliance assessment undertaken within 30 days (up from 63% the previous year).
- 2,368 emails received via the monitoring and compliance email address (increasing more than fourfold).
- 148 concerns about charities received, eight of which related to charity accounting (broadly stable on previous year).
- 165 enquiries case recommendations brought before a Schedule 1 Committee of Commissioners for decisions.
- 78% of concerns about charities received an initial risk assessment within 30 days (broadly consistent with previous year).
- One statutory inquiry opened.
- 170 enquiries cases closed.

A more targeted and active regulatory approach

This was the second full year of mandatory annual reporting. The Commission saw filing levels stabilise following the significant increase reported in the previous year. While on time filing remained broadly consistent at 69%, the number of charities in long-term default increased by over a quarter, reflecting the legacy of non-compliance that arose between the McBride judgment and the Charities Act (NI) 2022 remedy coming into effect in 2024-25. The number of charities more than six months overdue increased from 194 in February 2020, prior to the McBride judgment, to over 900 at the beginning of the 2025-26 business year. Some charities have multiple outstanding returns but are counted once overall.

During the second full year of mandatory annual reporting, over 6,200 returns were received, representing four fifths (81%) of returns due (if early and late filers are included). While a tenth of those who submitted (n=852/12%) were late, persistent levels of non-submission remain. In total 966 charities were more than six months overdue at year end, and as such their Trustees were non-compliant with their legal obligations.

In response, a key development during the year was a shift from primarily focusing on a relatively small sample monitoring approach to a broader more targeted regulatory intervention. In contrast to the previous year, when no regulatory letters were issued to charities in long-term default, the Commission undertook direct intervention. A targeted engagement programme focused on charities with the longest overdue status. The primary objective was to determine whether these charities remained operational. Activities included direct telephone contact with trustees where email engagement was unsuccessful. Staff also undertook open source research to assess charity activity and engaged with helper groups to help determine whether certain charities remained active.

As a result, regulatory guidance letters were issued to 89 trustees in relation to 23 charities. Before year end 3,389 letters were issued to the trustees of 804 charities overdue by more than six months to remind trustees of their legal reporting responsibilities. Trustees were also advised that continued non-compliance may lead to further regulatory action. This represents a step change in regulatory approach, using targeted action to address areas of highest risk.

Targeted engagement with these charities delivered tangible results. Returns were secured from 373 organisations that had been overdue, some for several years, bringing £16.8 million in previously unreported income and £16.5 million in expenditure into the public domain.

At the same time, the 151 annual returns subject to basic compliance checks identified 81 matters. These led the Commission to issue 16 pieces of regulatory and 27 pieces of self-regulatory guidance, the remainder reflected incomplete statutory trustee annual report content - and no further action was taken following proportionality assessment. As a result 43 charities were able to operate more effectively, relating, in part, to a combined charitable income of £7,667,202.

Closure notifications more than tripled year-on-year. As mentioned previously this does not indicate a sudden increase in charities ceasing to operate, but rather reflects improved engagement with trustees of inactive organisations. As a result, the register now more accurately reflects the active charity population.

Embedding a proportionate compliance model

The Commission continued to embed a risk-based approach to compliance, focusing intervention where it was most needed. The overall volume of compliance checks remained consistent with the previous year, but outcomes improved.

While the number of issues identified through compliance checks reduced slightly, follow up improved with a high level of compliance achieved where regulatory guidance was issued. This reflects a more effective approach to resolving issues and improving trustee practice in line with the Scheme of Delegation. Performance also improved markedly in the timeliness of compliance activity, with 100% of initial assessments completed within 30 days, compared to 63% in the previous year. This provides greater clarity and certainty for charities and supports more timely regulatory intervention where required.

Risk-based enquiries: progress and constraints

The Commission's enquiries function continued to operate on a risk-based footing, supported by an updated risk assessment framework and revised operational procedures. During 2025–26, the Commission's enquiries team received 256 cases, comprising:

- Concerns about charities: 148 (64 closed during the year)
- Serious incident reports: 100 (100 closed)
- Matters of material significance: 8 (6 closed)

The reallocation of casework resource during the year further strengthened the Commission's ability to prioritise higher-risk cases. Initial responsiveness remained strong, with 78% of concerns risk assessed within 30 days, broadly consistent with the previous year. However, performance against the 12-month case completion KPI declined from 36% to 29% against a target of 40%.

This reflects the increasing complexity of cases and the structure of the decision-making framework, where key powers remain reserved to Commissioners. As a result, improvements in throughput are less pronounced than in other areas where delegation has enabled faster decision-making. Despite this, the Commission maintained a proportionate and graduated regulatory response, resolving most cases during the year through guidance. As a result of investigating and bringing concerns to a close during the year over sixty charities were able to operate more effectively, relating, in part, to a combined charitable income of £66,142,319.

The Commission also took more formal action where required, including the opening of a statutory inquiry into the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in response to safeguarding concerns. The opening of the inquiry followed the Church's announcement regarding safeguarding failings, reflecting the serious nature of the concerns. The inquiry formalises the process for the Commission to work closely with the charity's trustees to ensure the safeguarding and governance issues identified are addressed and appropriate remedial steps put in place.

Overall impact

Taken together, performance during 2025–26 demonstrates a regulatory system that is becoming more targeted, active and evidence-led. There has been a clear shift from passive monitoring to more focused intervention, supported by improved risk assessment and operational processes.

This has delivered measurable improvements, including faster compliance handling, significantly increased engagement, a more accurate public register and stronger reporting of risk. At the same time, ongoing challenges remain, particularly in relation to legacy non-compliance and the timeliness of complex enquiries. This highlights where further development and resourcing is required going forward.

Strategic Aim 4: Operating as an effective and efficient public body

During the year the organisation continued to demonstrate strong corporate governance and organisational performance. Assurances on governance included clean audit reports from internal and external audit. These confirm risk and control frameworks remain robust and reflect sound financial management and compliance with a range of statutory undertakings, see Corporate Governance section for further details. In terms of specific performance, activity levels for the year included:

KPI –	98% resource and capital budget spend (target manage the organisation within 1% budget) 1.34% staff sickness absence (target manage within 3%) 100% of suppliers within 10 days (target 90%)

- 7 ongoing pieces of litigation.
- No decisions appealed to the Court of Appeal.
- Legal advices provided 94 times (internal).
- 2 legal challenges (one to the Charity Tribunal and one appeal to the High Court on a point of law regarding a Tribunal decision). Both were ongoing at year end.
- 4 complaints about the Commission received covering nine issues. Three complaint issues upheld and six not upheld.
- 38 information requests received under freedom of information or data protection legislation and 33 were responded to during the year. Of the responses issued, information was disclosed fully or partially in 27 cases, was not held in two cases and the request was refused in four cases.
- A report on progress was provided to the Equality Commission. No complaints were received about implementation of the Commission’s Equality Scheme.

During the year, the Commission secured approval for its office relocation business case, enabling detailed planning to progress and lease negotiations to advance in partnership with Land and Property Services. This represents an important step towards securing accommodation that is better aligned to organisational needs, including the Commission’s commitment to hybrid and future ways of working.

In terms of managing staff resources business case approval was received to enhance the Commission’s legal team as part of implementing a key Independent Review recommendation. Before year end two staff appointments had been made. Progress was also made in delivering the Commission’s People Strategy. This included investment in direct training, alongside a programme of in-house learning and peer development.

Initiatives such as fortnightly programme briefings and cross-team induction supported improved communication, knowledge sharing and organisational cohesion. These efforts contributed to a further rise in the staff engagement index to 65%. However, perceptions of resourcing and workload declined by 10%, reflecting pressures associated with the sponsor department’s change agenda and level of resources.

As mentioned under previous aims, the Commission continued to work closely with DfC on the development of a new Charities Bill. A public consultation on the draft Bill was launched by DfC at the end of 2025–26, marking an important step towards legislation needed to deliver remaining Independent Review recommendations. Alongside this, the Commission maintained overall oversight of delivery, continuing to manage progress through a shared tracker with the Department.

That approach provided a clear line of sight across activity and dependencies, supporting coordinated delivery. The effectiveness of these arrangements was independently assessed, with internal audit providing a satisfactory level of assurance on the governance and tracking of progress by the Commission.

This was the final year of the Commission’s 2023–26 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy. In addition to the launch of the new website, significant progress was made in strengthening the Commission’s digital infrastructure. This included procuring new online forms software and hosting arrangements, with contracts in place and Phase 1 substantially delivered by March 2026.At year end development was significantly progressed, with a small capital commitment remaining in 2026-27. This marks an important transition away from reliance on shared services with other charity regulators, giving the Commission greater control and flexibility over its digital services.

Digital systems supporting regulatory workflows were also enhanced to align with the Scheme of Delegation, improving the efficiency and governance of decision-making processes. Business continuity arrangements were strengthened to support more effective management of critical incidents, and exploratory pilot work was undertaken to assess the potential role of Artificial Intelligence in supporting future regulatory delivery.

Financial Performance

Budget

The Commission has a key performance indicator of achieving a budget spend within 98.% of overall budget, which for 2025-26 after additional in-year funding was set at £2,176k. The resource budget was £2,003k and the capital budget was £173k.

During 2025-26, the Commission reported spend monthly to sponsor department with 98% of total budget spent at year end, broken down as 99% of resource budget and 94% of capital budget.

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year excluding asset revaluations has increased by £111k from £2,007k to £2,118k. This is mainly due to an increase in salary costs compared to the previous year, specifically implementing increases in National Insurance contributions and annual pay awards which mirror that of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

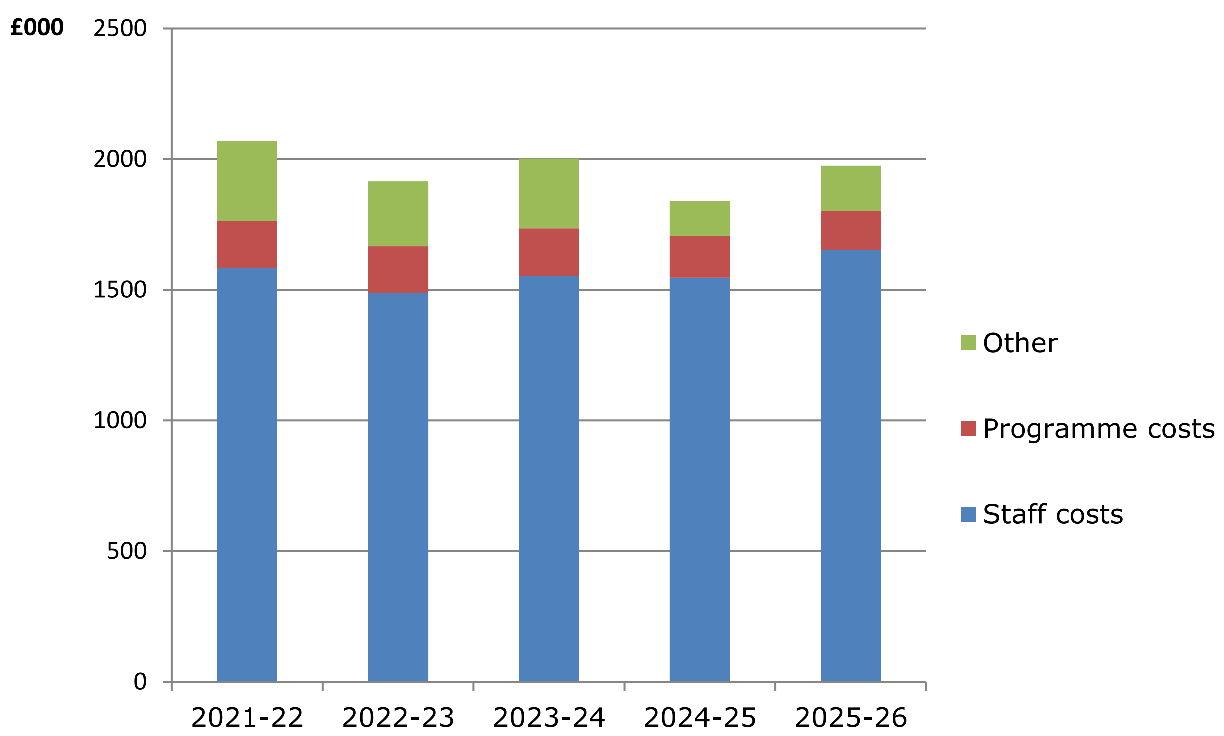
Statement of Financial Position

Non-current assets at the year-end were £462k, an increase of £28k on 2024-25.

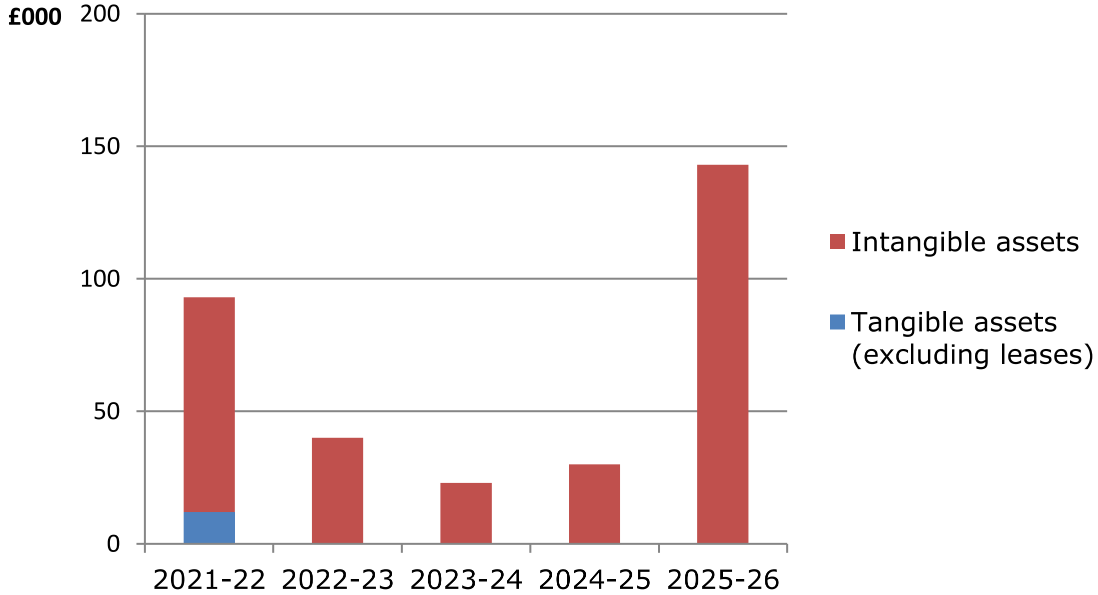
Financial results and position are set out in detail in the financial statements at page 81 and page 82 respectively.

Long-term expenditure trends

Resource expenditure over the last five years was as follows:



Capital expenditure over the last five years was as follows:



Complaints about our services

The Commission is committed to continuous improvement with complaints providing an important opportunity for people to share their views and, where appropriate, for the Commission to learn lessons.

The Commission's complaints policy sets out how to submit a complaint about its services and how such complaints are handled. This policy is available on the Commission's website at: [Complaints and services standards | CCNI]

During 2025–26, the Commission received four complaints, one of which was subject to a further review following the Commission's response, at the request of the complainant. The results were as follows:

- Complaint one: two issues considered -one upheld, one not upheld
- Complaint two: initially four issues considered - none upheld. On review three issues considered - one partially upheld, two not upheld
- Complaint three: one issue considered - upheld
- Complaint four: two issues considered – none upheld.

Where a complaint was upheld, the Commission issued an apology and committed to improving services for the future, as well as taking appropriate action to resolve the issue where possible and learn any relevant lessons.

Complaints and outcomes are reported regularly to the Board. The monitoring of complaints is an important part of quality assurance, providing a way for any common issues or trends to be identified and resolved. It also allows the Commission to determine how successfully it has dealt with the complaints.

Sustainability

The Commission recognises the importance of sustainability and the Northern Ireland Executive's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. As a small arm's-length body, the Commission has applied a proportionate approach to sustainability, focusing on measures that are practical, within its control, and aligned with its scale of operations and the wider policy set by the Northern Ireland Civil Service Office Estate Strategy[5].

As the Commission occupied shared office accommodation it did not have direct control over energy consumption during the year. However, it sought opportunities to minimise its environmental impact, identifying new office accommodation that has a Net Internal Area (NIA) 50% smaller than currently occupied. This will contribute to the NICS Office Estate Strategy KPI of reducing office footprint NIA by 43% by 2028.

During the year, the Commission continued to operate on a digital first basis, following the transition from paper-based working implemented during the pandemic. Hybrid working arrangements and the routine use of video conferencing for some committee meetings have reduced the need for commuting by 50% annually. This has contributed to a much lower operational carbon footprint, with business travel spend reduced by 234% in the past six years.

The Commission continued to support its sponsor department and the wider public sector in contributing, where proportionate, to Executive sustainability objectives through using procurement frameworks which reflect sustainability criteria in award criteria.

Open Data

The Commission publishes the *register of charities* using the Open Government Data License on data.nicva.org and www.opendatani.gov.uk, in line with the Department of Finance's Open Data strategy for the Northern Ireland public sector.

Equality and diversity

The Commission's *Equality Scheme and Action Plan* demonstrates our commitment to promoting equality, diversity and accessibility across our work.

In keeping with this commitment, the Commission undertakes a range of activities during the year aimed at ensuring equality and good relations are integrated into all our activities. During 2025-26, these activities included the following:

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[5] https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/NICS%20Office%20Estate%20Strategy%20%28for%20publication%29.pdf

- Ongoing implementation of internal systems to monitor the Commission's integrated *Equality Scheme and Action Plan* and how the Commission works with charities and the public.
- Annual equality awareness training for all staff, with a focus on providing reasonable adjustments, on 14 October 2025.
- Planning a joint training session for charities as employers in 2026-27.
- Carrying out 17 initial equality screenings on changes to manuals and guidance for the registration threshold and other updated guidance.

The Commission's *Equality Scheme and Action Plan is* available to view on www.charitycommissionni.org.uk.

3. Future focus

Looking ahead, the Commission will continue to strengthen its role as an enabling and externally focused regulator to deliver proportionate and risk-based regulation. We will concentrate our efforts on areas of greatest public interest and risk, improving communication and accessibility so that charities, trustees and the public can better understand regulatory expectations and decisions.

Over the next three years, we will prioritise delivery of a modernised registration and regulatory framework, including implementation of a registration threshold, supported by improved digital systems and a strengthened risk framework. This will enable more efficient regulation, clearer processes for charities, and more effective targeting of regulatory resources, consistent with practice across other UK and international charity regulators.

A core area of focus will be working with our sponsor department to support the development and implementation of legislative reform, including the Charities (Amendment) Bill. These changes are intended to modernise and strengthen the regulatory framework for charities in Northern Ireland. Progress will be dependent on legislative timelines and available resources, and delivery will be aligned annually through business planning to ensure realistic and achievable outcomes.

During the 2025–26 financial year, the Commission conducted a public consultation on its draft Strategic Plan 2026–29, seeking views on all aspects of its future direction, including:

- our vision, mission, and values
- our key aims and strategic priorities
- the outcomes we want to achieve

We would like to thank everyone who shared their views. Their feedback played a vital role in developing a plan that reflects the needs of charities and the communities they serve. Drafting reflected a more strategic and outcome focused approach which aligns with the practice of our peer charity regulators.

Subject to approval from the Department for Communities (DfC), we aim to publish and implement the strategic plan early 2026-27.

At the time of writing, we have drafted a business plan for the year ahead. However, in light of the lack of an overall Government budget, for the first time in its history, the Commission is operating without a balanced budget. We remain mindful of ongoing budget constraints and pressures across the public sector, including on the Commission. Limited resources place unavoidable constraints on our capacity and affect the pace at which change can be delivered, in particular the pace at which we can progress our enquiries caseload. With the resources available to us, we will continue to pursue a clear and achievable approach to supporting charities through proportionate regulation and a sustained focus on accountability and good governance.

Frances McCandless
Chief Executive, Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

Accountability report

4. Corporate governance report

Directors' report

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is the regulator of charities in Northern Ireland, a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Communities.

The Chief Charity Commissioner is Gerard McCurdy and the Chief Executive is Frances McCandless.

The Board of the Charity Commission comprises a Chief Charity Commissioner, a Deputy Chief Charity Commissioner and five Charity Commissioners. Legislation determines that at least one Commissioner must be a barrister or solicitor of at least seven years standing.

The Register of interests for the Commission Board can be viewed at: [Governance Framework | CCNI]

During 2025-26, there were no notifiable data incidents. The Commission takes its data processing responsibilities extremely seriously and as a statutory body maintains appropriate data management procedures in accordance with the law, including vetting and security.

Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under Schedule 1, Section 8(2), of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Department for Communities, with the approval of the Department of Finance, has directed the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Commission and of its income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position 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 for Communities, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis.
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis.
- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer of the Department for Communities has designated the Chief Executive of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland as Accounting Officer of the Commission.

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 accounting records and for safeguarding the Commission’s assets, are set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland published by the Department of Finance.

As the Accounting Officer of the Commission, the Chief Executive confirms that:

- As far as she is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the entity’s auditors are unaware.
- She has taken all steps that she ought to have taken to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the entity’s auditors are aware of that information.
- The annual reports as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable.
- She takes personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

Governance statement 2025-26

Introduction

As a regulator, the Commission is committed to operating to the highest standards of corporate governance. Arrangements to meet that commitment are detailed in a formal corporate governance framework which brings together a variety of related policies and procedures. The Commission's Board is accountable to its sponsor department, the Department for Communities, and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

In this statement, the Board and Accounting Officer outline how they have discharged their responsibilities to manage and control the Commission's resources throughout the financial year ended 31 March 2026. It is for the Accounting Officer, with Board support and input, to decide the format and content of this governance statement.

The Commission's assessment of its governance is informed by various internal and external opinions including those of auditors, other stakeholders, such as service users, staff, fellow regulatory bodies, the Charity Tribunal and the courts.

In developing this statement, the Accounting Officer has considered a range of guidance so as to tailor the disclosure to the organisation and its features during 2025-26.

Scope of responsibility

The Commission is the independent regulator of charities in Northern Ireland. The Commission is a non-departmental public body (NDPB), established by Royal Assent to deliver the legislative requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 as amended. It is sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC). The Commission's strategic aims in 2025-26 were:

- Progressing charity registration to enhance accountability
- Progressing our development as an enabling regulator
- Continuing to develop proportionate regulation
- Operating as an effective and efficient public body.

The purpose of the governance framework

The Commission's governance framework is designed to allow the organisation to operate as an accountable, efficient and effective public body and to manage risk to a reasonable level. It is impossible to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The framework is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, the impact should they be realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

A governance framework has been implemented within the Commission since establishment and is published on the Commission's website.

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's governance framework

Board

The Board provides strategic leadership and directs the Commission's strategic planning, financial and operational management, governance and risk assessment to ensure that statutory obligations are met. The Board provides strategic direction, challenge and oversight to the Senior Management Team which is responsible for operational management and performance. The Board comprises a Chair, a Deputy Chair and up to five Charity Commissioners, all on a part-time basis. At least one Charity Commissioner must be a barrister or solicitor of at least seven years' standing. Appointments of Charity Commissioners, who constitute the Board, are required to be made by the Minister for Communities in accordance with the Northern Ireland Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to public bodies issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

The Board acts independently of senior management in line with a formal Partnership Agreement which was agreed during 2025-26. It is the responsibility of the Board members to ensure the Commission continues to act within the law, fulfil the aims and objectives set by its sponsor department and approved by the Minister, and deliver the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources.

Following a decision by the Minister in February 2025 the Scheme of Delegation to allow staff to take a range of decisions under the Charities Act (NI) 2008 was implemented in 2025-26. Some categories of decision making remain with Commissioners under this scheme.

During the year the Board undertook its responsibilities by:

- agreeing a business plan for approval by DfC.
- ensuring the sponsor department was kept informed of developments, changes in assumptions and policy which were likely to impact on the strategic direction of the Commission or on the attainability of its targets.
- ensuring any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds were complied with and that the Board operated within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with the sponsor department through a review of the terms of the Partnership Agreement.
- receiving reports and assurance checks on the operation of the new Scheme of Delegation.
- receiving and regularly reviewing financial and performance management information in terms of budget updates and forecast spend at each Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Board meeting, and quarterly business plan progress reports, which provided positive assurance to the sponsor department that performance was being assessed and appropriate action was being taken to meet performance commitments, or take appropriate alternative action in an open and timely manner.
- demonstrating high standards of corporate governance at all times, including using an independent Audit and Risk Assurance Committee member and a Commissioner with accounting skills to help the Board address the key financial and other risks facing the Commission.
- reviewing Board performance and reviewing the Board's *Standing Orders, Operating Framework* and *Code of Conduct.*
- operating a live *Register of interests* on the Commission's website, with conflicts a standing agenda item at Board meetings.
- receiving reports at meetings from its Audit and Risk Assurance and Human Resources sub-committees and ensuring that the recommendations from these sub-committees receive properly proposed and recorded approvals by the Board itself.
- receiving reports from a Performance and Development committee overseeing the Chief Executive's performance.

- taking account of fraud awareness reports from the Department of Finance as appropriate and undertaking ongoing work on fraud, including reviewing the policy and the organisational bribery assessment.
- ensuring an effective risk management process is in place, annually updating the policy and setting a risk appetite, and reviewing the corporate risk register at each Board meeting following its prior assessment by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- reviewing its social media presence and considering the risks associated with various channels, including deciding to remove the Commission's presence on X.
- ensuring that effective implementation of UKGDPR continued throughout the year.
- signing off its Annual Report and Accounts for laying before the Assembly.
- ensuring the Commission implemented the relevant provisions in the Charities Act (NI) 2022.
- consideration of legal issues, ongoing litigation and related risks and feedback from its Legal Advisory Group.
- consideration of feedback from the Commission's Stakeholder Forum.
- approval of the Commission's annual equality report.

There were no changes to Board membership during 2025-26.

Attendance at Board meetings during the year:

Board member	Number of meetings attended
Gerard McCurdy, Chair	6 out of 7
Aoife Hamilton, Deputy Chair	6 out of 7
Patricia Kelly, Legal Commissioner	7 out of 7
Kieran Donaghy, Commissioner	7 out of 7
Hugh McKeag, Commissioner	6 out of 7
Alan Hunter, Commissioner	6 out of 7
Leanne McCullough, Commissioner	7 out of 7

Board performance and assessment of its own effectiveness

In 2025-26 the Board met seven times. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee met four times, and the Human Resources Committee met only once, due to resource constraints. The minutes of the Board and these committees are published regularly on the Commission’s website. A Performance and Appraisal Committee, which oversees the performance of the Chief Executive, met twice. Following the High Court ruling on the interpretation of the Charities Act (NI) 2008, committees continued to operate to make the statutory decisions under Schedule 1 of the Act which are not covered by the Scheme of Delegation.

Commissioners continued their development in this year by meeting with representatives of the sector to gain wider perspectives on the issues underlying regulation.

Commissioners were subject to annual appraisal and the results were reported to the sponsor department. During the year an effectiveness review of board performance was carried out via self-assessment. The assessment of performance was very positive. The Board confirmed through this process that they are satisfied with the quality of data they receive and are confident of their leadership role.

The Board ensures that the Commission is compliant with its responsibilities under s75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and considers an annual report to the Equality Commission each year. This judges the organisation’s compliance with its equality and good relations duties.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) supports the Board and the Accounting Officer in their responsibilities regarding issues of risk, control and governance, and associated assurances. During the period under review its oversight role included, but was not limited to, internal and external audit, the budgetary control system, the Commission’s financial statements and risk management. At each meeting the Commission’s Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Services report risks to the committee, which reviews and challenges assessments and planned actions, and identifies its own view on emerging issues and the organisational risk agenda. The committee, in turn, reports to the Board on governance matters and informs the Board of any emerging issues which are then discussed.

The committee undertook an annual self-assessment in November 2025 using the National Audit Office Checklist. In broad terms the committee was content with its approach. The committee also undertook an annual review of its *Terms of Reference* and meeting schedule, with the meeting schedule published for the first time.

The committee undertook reviews of a number of key policies as part of its annual schedule. This work included consideration of Finance Procedures, Risk policy, Fraud and Bribery, Business Continuity, Information Security, Gifts and Hospitality and Raising Concerns about the Commission. The committee also received regular updates on cyber security.

During this period the committee received independent assurance from Internal Audit which was provided by the Internal Audit function of the Department for Communities. Representatives of Internal Audit attended all four ARAC meetings during 2025-26.

The committee agreed an Internal Audit strategy which was supported in this year by an audit plan for 2025-26 that included two phases of audit work during the year. The areas audited during the year were in line with the agreed plan with one amendment. They included:

Phase 1 – engagement strategy implementation, customer contact handling, recruitment and Board Operating Framework.

Phase 2 – implementation of basic compliance check procedures on charity accounts, implementation of Independent Review recommendations, information security - role of the Information Asset Owner, procurement and the implementation of previously accepted audit recommendations.

The Head of Internal Audit (HIA) provides an objective evaluation of, and opinion on, the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Commission's framework of governance, risk management and control. Based on the work performed to deliver the 2025-26 internal audit plan, the HIA provided an overall satisfactory opinion on the Commission's arrangements. There were no category one recommendations.

During the year under review the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) attended all four committee meetings. The committee considered the *2024-25 NIAO Report to Those Charged with Governance* which indicated an unqualified audit opinion, without modification, on the 2024-25 financial statements. Having reviewed the accounting policies, the NIAO were content at their appropriateness. No significant issues were identified regarding regularity, and the audit did not identify any significant internal control weaknesses. The report made no recommendations. The Commission’s annual report and accounts were laid before the Assembly on 11 July 2025.

As usual, the committee met during the year with both sets of auditors without staff present.

The membership of the committee was unchanged during 2025-26. The term of the independent member, Caron Alexander, was extended for a further year.

Attendance at ARAC meetings during the year was as follows:

ARAC member	Number of meetings attended
Hugh McKeag (Chair)	4 out of 4
Caron Alexander, Independent Member of committee	3 out of 4
Alan Hunter	4 out of 4
Leanne McCullough	4 out of 4

Human Resources Committee

The Human Resources Committee supports the Board in its responsibilities regarding issues of staff resource and staff performance including, but not limited to, recruitment, staff structure, human resource policies and practice and legislative compliance.

The committee met once in 2025-26 in light of additional staff workload priorities arising from projects to enable future legislative change, office relocation and business plan delivery. During the year the committee considered: staff wellbeing and health & safety, accommodation, results of the staff survey, HR-related audit recommendations, the People Strategy and related action plan and training outcomes. The Committee reviewed its own Terms of Reference.

The membership of this committee was unchanged during the year. Attendance at Human Resources Committee meetings was as follows:

HR Committee member	Number of meetings attended
Kieran Donaghy (Chair)	1 out of 1
Patricia Kelly	1 out of 1
Aoife Hamilton	1 out of 1

<u>Schedule 1 Committees</u>

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has established Schedule 1 decision-making committees to support it in the discharge of its statutory functions under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. As per its standing orders the committee is composed of at least one Commissioner and one other person. The role of the committees is to discharge certain functions of the Commission through a committee rather than through the full Board acting in a Board meeting. The committees' decisions do not require ratification by the full Board of Commissioners.

There were 14 Schedule 1 committees during the year, attended by Commissioners as follows:

Board member	Number of Schedule 1 committees attended
Gerard McCurdy	6
Patricia Kelly	6
Aoife Hamilton	6
Kieran Donaghy	5
Alan Hunter	6
Hugh McKeag	6
Leanne McCullough	5

<u>Performance and Development Committee</u>

This committee's role is to oversee the performance of the Chief Executive. Membership is comprised of the Chairs of the Commission, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the HR Committee. It met twice during the year.

Risk and control framework

The Commission's approach to risk management and internal control is proactive and reflects reviews and assurances at various levels within the organisation. During 2025-26, the Commission continued to enhance the identification and consideration of risk within the organisation. It also assessed developments in sponsor department's approach concluding these were not proportionate given the Commission's size and resourcing. During the year a series of risks related to the delivery of the 2025-26 business plan were managed. The approach to risk continued to try to capture the risks of opportunities not fully realised.

The systems in place included:

- a risk policy that specifically required identification of risks, an assessment of their impact and an action plan that accorded ownership, was time bounded and monitored regularly.
- monthly review of the corporate risk register by Senior Management Team and sign off by the Chief Executive.
- signed monthly/quarterly assurance reports and statements by management along with monthly review of risks by middle management relating to various project and programme team risk registers.
- twice-yearly assurance statements to the sponsor department which were informed by business level assurance statements and agreed by the Board and ARAC.
- regular review of the corporate risk register with sponsor branch at liaison and accountability meetings.
- consideration and updating of the risk register (including a deep dive into one risk) as a standing item at ARAC and at subsequent Board meetings.
- annual fundamental review of the risk policy and organisational appetite linked to business plan objectives.
- assurance framework covering all policies and procedures subject to various monthly, quarterly and annual checks, which inform the overall assurance statement by the Accounting Officer.
- annual internal and external audit programmes, which are informed by a review of strategic business risks.

As part of the Commission's business planning processes, the Commission identified the inherent risk appetite for each objective. In addition, it assessed each policy and procedure for impact and likelihood using a risk matrix to provide an overview of key areas of risk, and levels of assurance checking were assigned for progression and monitoring.

Although the Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments Code of Good Practice (NI) 2025 is for central government departments, the Commission's own governance policies comply with the principles of this central government code. The *Commission's Board Operating Framework*, *Code of Conduct* and *Standing Orders*, in conjunction with its Partnership Agreement, set out the roles, duties, procedures and values of the organisation's governance function.

The Commission has in place a 'Raising Concerns about the Commission' policy, formerly known as Whistleblowing. A Commissioner, Kieran Donaghy, is designated with special responsibility for this issue. There were no issues raised under the policy during this year.

Sources of external assurance

During this year the Commission drew assurance from a number of external sources including NIAO.

Significant control/governance issues

The Commission's assessment of the risk environment was reconfigured at the start of the year, in line with the draft 2025-26 business plan which reflected core regulatory work, change management and governance. The Commission set its organisational risk appetite and from that point six risks related to delivery of the plan were articulated and managed through the corporate risk register.

At the outset of 2025-26, ARAC recommended, and the Board adopted, a corporate risk register which included five high and two moderate risks. The register reflected the Board's open appetite to risk given annual resource and capital budget constraints. In light of this, business plan targets were again adjusted down by 30-40% to provide capacity to prepare for legislative change while also undertaking proportionate charity regulation and one post had to be left unfilled throughout the year to achieve a balanced budget.

Over the course of the year risks were reviewed and at year end the register included two extreme, two high and two moderate risks. During this time assessment of specific risks noted:

- Inability to deliver statutory functions and objectives by year-end, the actions taken by the Board and management enabled the Commission to deliver a balanced budget and achieve the overwhelming majority of Business Plan targets and measures, albeit reflecting a deliberate reduction in service levels between 30 and 40%. Notwithstanding these mitigations, the risk of adverse media interest linked to reduced enquiry capacity materialised and remained at year-end. The enquiries key performance target, which had already been revised downward, was not achieved in the year. However, the revised and reduced number of priority Independent Review recommendations was delivered within the year.
- The risk that there could be ineffective implementation or underuse of the Scheme of Delegation remained a moderate risk during the year as the Commission focused on high volume decision-making initially and took steps to manage potential bottlenecks as a programme to update manuals was undertaken. No external challenges were raised with the Commission in relation to staff or other aspects of decision making under the scheme.
- Throughout the year, targeted action was taken to mitigate the risk of poor preparedness for the introduction of a registration threshold. A dedicated project team operated to minimise the risk of delays, and the backlog in registrations did not increase materially. As part of the mitigations, ARAC was regularly briefed on sponsor department plans for commencement of the legislation and on steps taken by the Commission to gauge expectations through the stakeholder forum and other engagements with the sector. As a result, this risk reduced to a moderate level by year end.
- Despite mitigating actions, the risk of growth in the enquiries backlog materialised as volumes exceeded organisational capacity to respond within target timescales. In the second half of the year, further mitigations were introduced, including a temporary staff member, changes to initial concerns assessment and preparation of a business case for additional resourcing aligned to decision-making under the Scheme of Delegation. This risk remained high at year-end.
- During the year ARAC undertook deep dives into the relocation risk, considering issues including timely sign off of the business case, availability of technical support, alternative temporary

accommodation and potential project slippage. By year end, slippage in relocation timescales had materialised due to factors outside the Commission's control. However, owing to the management of the project and the preferred accommodation option, the anticipated risk to staff retention had not materialised and no immediate impact on service availability or quality was observed.
- The risk arising from delays in upgrading online systems and strengthening cyber security and information management arrangements remained throughout the year. These presented associated implications for service delivery and information security. Progress in mitigating this risk included delivery of the new website and completion of the procurement of new online forms software, which were prioritised.

Through the year the Commission's risk management approach was kept under review, with ARAC completing an assessment of sponsor department's approach. Minor changes were made to the overall policy to encompass risk management in regulation of the charity sector.

As an outworking of previous inquiry work, one outstanding piece of litigation remained. A contingent liability has been recorded in the accounts.

Review of effectiveness of internal control

As Accounting Officer I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors, those within the organisation who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the organisation's internal control framework and comments made by external auditors in their *Report to Those Charged with Governance*.

I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and a plan to address any weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

In respect of 2025-26 I have been informed by Internal Audit on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls operating within the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. In the Internal Auditors’ report they have stated that, in their opinion, the Commission’s internal control systems were adequate and operated effectively thereby providing satisfactory assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of the Commission’s objectives.

The internal control systems have been in place for the year under review and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts. Having considered the corporate governance framework within which the Commission operated and in conjunction with assurances given to me by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, I am content that the Commission has operated a sound system of internal governance during the period 2025-26.

Frances McCandless
Chief Executive

Date: 22 June 2026

5. Remuneration and staff report

Remuneration policy

The Commissioners of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland are appointed by the Minister for Communities in line with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Board has corporate responsibility to appoint, subject to the Minister's and sponsor department's approval, such staff as the Commission considers necessary. In consultation with the sponsor department, the Board sets performance objectives and remuneration terms linked to these objectives for the Chief Executive, which give due weight to the proper management and use of public monies.

The pay remit for the Northern Ireland Civil Service, including senior civil servants (SCS), is normally approved by the Minister of Finance. Following approval of the 2025-26 Budget in the Assembly, on 19 May 2025, in which the Finance Minister outlined the overarching approach to public sector pay, the NI public sector pay policy guidance was published on 27 May 2025 in FD (DoF) 04/25.

Annual NICS pay awards are made in the context of the wider public sector pay policy. The 2024 pay award, due from 1 August 2024, was paid in May 2025. The 2025 pay award due from 1 August 2025 was paid in September 2025.

The pay of NICS staff is based on a system of pay scales for each grade, including SCS, containing a number of pay points from minimum to maximum, allowing progression towards the maximum based on performance and other eligibility criteria. The Commission employs only non-industrial grade staff, and its pay policy is to mirror that of the NICS. The Commission did not deviate from this in 2025-26.

Service contracts

The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Recruitment Code published by the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland specifies the circumstances when appointments may be made by exception to merit. While Commission staff are not civil servants, the Commission applies these principles and follows the Code as a matter of good practice when it makes appointments where appropriate. Executive members are appointed on terms consistent with the Code, and all have open ended appointments.

The Chief Charity Commissioner and Deputy Chief Charity Commissioner are appointed for a five year term of office. Five Commissioners are normally appointed for a three to five year term. All appointments are made by the Minister for Communities, who can also extend terms. In 2025-26 no Commissioners resigned and no new Commissioners were appointed. One Commissioner had their term extended for a second term in April 2026, from 1 June 2026 to 31 May 2031. The Chief Executive of the Commission, who is also the Accounting Officer, was appointed in April 2010 and this appointment is open-ended.

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

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioners and most senior members of the Commission.

Remuneration and pension entitlements (Audited information)

Single total figure of remuneration				
Commissioners	**Salary [1] (£'000)**		**Benefits in kind [2] (to nearest £100)**	
	2025-26	**2024-25**	**2025-26**	**2024-25**
Gerard McCurdy, Chief Charity Commissioner	20-25	25-30	-	-
Aoife Hamilton, Deputy Chief Commissioner (term began 01 June 2024)	10-15	5-10 (10-15 full-year equivalent)	-	-
Kieran Donaghy, Commissioner (term began 01 March 2019)	5-10	5-10	-	-
Hugh McKeag, Commissioner (term began 01 September 2019)	5-10	10-15	-	-
Patricia Kelly, Commissioner (term began 01 June 2021)	5-10	10-15	-	-
Alan Hunter, Commissioner (term began 01 February 2022)	5-10	10-15	-	-
Terence McGonigle, Commissioner (term began 01 September 2023, resigned 20 April 2024)	-	0-5 (10-15 full-year equivalent)	-	-
Leanne McCullough, Commissioner (term began 15 August 2024)	5-10	5-10 (5-10 full-year equivalent)	-	-

[1] *The salary figure above includes payments made to Commissioners for statutory decision-making duties carried out in the year.*

[2] *Commissioners are not permitted to receive benefits in kind under the Commission's governance framework.*

The table below shows the Salary bands in relation to additional statutory decision-making duties in Schedule 1 committees only, these figures are also included in the salary table above and are presented below for information purposes only.

Schedule 1	**2025-26 £'000**	2024-25 £'000
Gerard McCurdy, Chief Charity Commissioner	5-10	5-10
Aoife Hamilton, Deputy Chief Commissioner	5-10	0-5 (5-10 full-year equivalent)
Kieran Donaghy, Commissioner	5-10	5-10
Hugh McKeag, Commissioner	5-10	5-10
Patricia Kelly, Commissioner	5-10	5-10
Alan Hunter, Commissioner	5-10	5-10
Terence McGonigle, Commissioner	-	0-5 (5-10 full-year equivalent)
Leanne McCullough, Commissioner	5-10	0-5 (5-10 full-year equivalent)

The payments made to Commissioners for statutory decision-making duties in Schedule 1 committees are paid in relation to time spent for each of the meetings including preparation for meetings. This can vary from meeting to meeting and between Commissioners depending on the complexity of papers being reviewed, individuals' experience and knowledge, and nature of decision to be made.

Remuneration and pension entitlements (Audited information)

Single total figure of remuneration								
Senior Management	**Salary (£'000)**		**Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)**		**Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)**		**Total (£'000)**	
	2025-26	**2024-25**	**2025-26**	**2024-25**	**2025-26**	**2024-25**	**2025-26**	**2024-25**
Chief Executive Frances McCandless	95-100	90-95	-	-	25	70	120-125	160-165
Head of Charity Services Punam McGookin	60-65	60-65	-	-	19	40	80-85	100-105
Head of Compliance and Enquiries Rossa Keown	60-65	60-65	-	-	22	27	80-85	85-90
Head of Corporate Services Aubrey McCrory	60-65	60-65	-	-	21	35	80-85	95-100

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

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any severance or ex gratia payments. This report is based on the accrued payments made by the Commission and thus recorded in these accounts.

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.

Bonuses

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland does not operate any form of performance pay, bonus scheme, overtime or private office allowances.

Fair pay disclosures (Audited information)

Pay ratios

Reporting bodies are 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 remuneration of the highest paid director in the Commission in the financial year 2025-26 was £95,000-£100,000 (2024-25: £90,000-£95,000). The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation's workforce is disclosed below.

2025-26	**25th percentile**	**Median**	**75th Percentile**
Total remuneration (£)	30,777	31,097	42,570
Pay Ratio	3.2:1	3.1:1	2.3:1

2024-25	**25th percentile**	**Median**	**75th Percentile**
Total remuneration (£)	30,755	31,245	40,731
Pay Ratio	3.2:1	3.1:1	2.4:1

The 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile remuneration figures are based on annualised salaries for the last month of the financial year, adjusted for any non-consolidated payments made to staff during the year.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance related pay and any benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions. The values for the salary component of remuneration for the 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile were £30,777 (2024-25 £30,755), £31,097 (2024-25 £31,245) and £42,570 (2024-25 £40,731) respectively.

In 2025-26, 0 (2024-25, 0) employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director.

Remuneration ranged from £27,271 to £97,500 (2024-25, £24,952 to £92,500).

Percentage change in remuneration

The percentage changes in respect of the Commission are shown in the following table. It should be noted that the calculation for the highest paid director is based on the mid-point of the band within which their remuneration fell in each year.

	2025-26 v 2024-25	2024-25 v 2023-24
Highest paid director's salary and allowances	6.00%	3.00%
Average employee salary and allowances	6.04%	3.36%

The Commission does not pay bonuses therefore the table is based on salary and all allowances only.

Pension Benefits – Commissioners (Audited information)

No Commissioners received pension benefits. In the 2012-13 year, Department of Finance approval was given to provide pension benefits through membership of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme to the Chief Executive and staff. Details of the Commission's pension benefits and entitlements are detailed as follows.

Pension Benefits – Directors (Audited information)

Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/26 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/26	CETV at 31/3/25	Real increase in CETV	Employer contribution to partnership pension account
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	Nearest £100
Frances McCandless Chief Executive *(alpha scheme)*	45-50 plus lump sum of Nil	0-2.5 plus lump sum of Nil	802	738	16	-
Punam McGookin Head of Charity Services *(alpha scheme)*	20-25 plus lump sum of Nil	0-2.5 plus lump sum of Nil	462	441	13	-
Aubrey McCrory Head of Corporate Services *(alpha scheme)*	15-20 plus lump sum of Nil	0-2.5 plus lump sum of Nil	339	307	13	-
Rossa Keown Head of Compliance and Enquiries *(alpha scheme)*	15-20 plus lump sum of Nil	0-2.5 plus lump sum of Nil	209	186	11	-

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes

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

The alpha pension scheme was introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of members of the Classic, Premium, Classic Plus and Nuvos pension arrangements (collectively known as the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS(NI)]) also moved to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age did not move to alpha (full protection) 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 (tapered protection).

<u>McCloud Judgment and 2015 Remedy</u>

In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional protections put in place back in 2015 that allowed older workers to remain in their original scheme, were discriminatory on the basis of age. As a result, steps have been taken by the Department of Finance to remedy this discrimination.

The Department has now made regulations which remedy the discrimination by:

- ensuring all active members are treated equally for future service as members of the reformed alpha scheme only from 1 April 2022, and

- providing each eligible member with options to have their pension entitlements for the period when the discrimination existed between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) retrospectively calculated under either the current (reformed) scheme rules, or the older (pre-reform) legacy rules which existed before 2015.

This means that all active NICS Pension Scheme members are in the same pension scheme, alpha, from 1 April 2022 onwards, regardless of age. This removes the discrimination going forwards in providing equal pension provision for all scheme members.

The Department is now implementing the second part of the remedy, which addresses the discrimination which was incurred by affected members between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

Eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) will now be entitled to a choice of alternative pension benefits in relation to that period. i.e. calculated under the pre-reformed PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' rules or alternatively calculated under the reformed alpha rules. As part of this 'retrospective' remedy most active members will now receive a choice about their Remedy Period benefits at the point of retirement. This is known as the Deferred Choice Underpin (DCU). For those members who already have pension benefits in payment in relation to the Remedy Period, they will receive an Immediate Choice. There are a significant number of Immediate Choice Remediable Service Statement (RSS) packs to issue. This process involves complex calculations to provide members with individually tailored statements. Due to the complexity of the calculations and some prolonged work to finalise policy elements of the remedy, not all Immediate Choice packs will issue by 31 March 2026. The Scheme Manager has invoked the discretion allowed by the remedy legislation and has extended the timeline for issuing Immediate Choice RSS packs to 31 March 2027. The Pensions Regulator has been notified of this extension. Our priority remains to provide members with all the accurate information they need to make a choice. It can be noted that other Public Service Pension Schemes are also in a similar position. Further information on the remedy will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which, once published, are available at DoF Annual Report and Accounts

As part of the remedy involved rolling back all remediable service into the relevant legacy PCSPS(NI) arrangement for the 7-Year Remedy Period, the value of pension benefits for the 2025-26 pension disclosures for affected members continue to be based on the rolled back position.

Alpha

Alpha is a 'Career Average Revalued Earnings' (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate is 2.32%.

From 1 April 2015, all new entrants joining the NICS can choose between membership of alpha or joining a 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account).

Information on the PCSPS(NI) – Closed Scheme

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 were eligible to be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' legacy defined benefit arrangements (Classic, Premium and Classic Plus). From April 2011, pensions payable under these arrangements have been reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. New entrants who joined on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 will have chosen between membership of Premium or joining the Partnership Pension Account.

New entrants who joined on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the legacy PCSPS(NI) Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a Partnership Pension Account. Nuvos was also a CARE arrangement in which members accrued pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate of accrual was 2.3%.

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.

Partnership Pension Account

The Partnership Pension Account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Annual Benefit Statements

Active members of the pension scheme will receive an Annual Benefit Statement. The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. The normal pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. The Scheme Pension age is 60 for any pension accrued in the legacy **Classic, Premium,** and **Classic Plus** arrangements and 65 for any benefits accrued in **Nuvos**. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website: Civil Service Pensions (NI)

Pension Increases

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2025 was 3.8% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2026.

Employee Contribution Rates

Percentage rates for employee contributions were revised for all members from 1 July 2025 as a result of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Scheme: Consultation on Scheme Yield/Member Contributions as shown in the tables below:

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands) 1 April 2025 to 31 August 2025		Contribution rates – All members from 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025	Contribution rates – All members from 1 July 2025
From	**To**		
£0	£27,091.99	4.6%	4.65%
£27,092.00	£61,645.99	5.45%	5.65%
£61,646.00	£165,793.99	7.35%	7.55%
£165,794.00 and above		8.05%	8.25%

Salary bands were also updated from 1 September 2025 as follows:

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands) 1 September 2025 onwards		Contribution rates – All members
From	**To**	
£0	£28,716.99	4.65%
£28,717.00	£65,343.99	5.65%
£66,344.00	£175,740.99	7.55%
£175,741.00 and above		8.25%

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) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

HM Treasury provides the assumptions for discount rates for calculating CETVs payable from the public service pension schemes. On 27 April 2023, HM Treasury published guidance on the basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes. In their guidance of 27 April 2023, HM Treasury advised that, with immediate effect, the discount rate adopted for calculating CETVs should be in line with the new SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation, superseding the previous SCAPE discount rate of 2.4% above CPI inflation. All else being the same, a lower SCAPE discount rate leads to higher CETVs. The HM Treasury Guidance of 27 April 2023 can be found at
Basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes - GOV.UK. **As at the year-end** there have been no further changes to the SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation since the HM Treasury guidance was published.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is 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 (which therefore disregards the effect of any changes in factors).

Compensation for loss of office

There were no payments for compensation for loss of office in 2025-26(2024-25: Nil).

Staff report

The Chief Executive is remunerated at senior civil servant band 5. The remuneration of all other staff follows that of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Staff costs (Audited information)

	2025-26			2024-25
	Permanently employed staff £	**Other £**	**Total £**	Total £
Wages and salaries	**1,027,267**	**49,668**	**1,076,935**	1,024,750
Social security costs	**134,255**	**-**	**134,255**	97,364
Other pension costs	**351,358**	**-**	**351,358**	327,383
Sub Total	**1,512,880**	**49,668**	**1,562,548**	1,449,497
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	**-**	**-**	**-**	-
Total net costs	**1,512,880**	**49,668**	**1,56254,8**	1,449,497

During 2025-26, the Commission continued the employment of its permanent staff complement and provision of pension benefits through membership of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) to the Chief Executive and staff. Other staff costs comprise temporary agency staff.

Pension

The Northern Ireland Civil Service main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Commission is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.

The Public Service Pensions Act (NI) 2014 provides the legal framework for regular actuarial valuations of the public service pension schemes to measure the costs of the benefits being provided. These valuations inform the future contribution rates to be paid into the schemes by employers every four years following the scheme valuation. The Act also provides for the establishment of an employer cost cap mechanism to ensure that the costs of the pension schemes remain sustainable in future.

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is responsible for carrying out scheme valuations. The Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following the scheme valuation. The 2020 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in October 2023. The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027.

The Cost Cap Mechanism (CCM) is a measure of scheme costs and determines whether member costs or scheme benefits require adjustment to maintain costs within a set corridor. Reforms were made to the CCM which was applied to the 2020 scheme valuations and included the introduction of a reformed-scheme-only cost control mechanism which assesses just the costs relating to reformed schemes (alpha for the NICS) and introduced an economic check. Prior to the cost control mechanism reforms, legacy scheme (PCSPS(NI)) costs associated with active members were also captured in the mechanism. The reformed-scheme-only design and the economic check were applied to the 2020 scheme valuations for the devolved public sector pension schemes, including the NICS pension scheme. The 2020 scheme valuation outcome was that the core cost cap cost of the scheme lies within the 3% cost cap corridor. As there is no breach of the cost control mechanism, there is no requirement for the Department of Finance to consult on changes to the scheme. Further information can be found on the Department of Finance website https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-pension-scheme-valuations.

For 2025-26, employers’ contributions of £351,358 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements at a flat rate of 34.25% of pensionable pay, for all salaries (2024-25: £327,383 at 34.25%)

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account: a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers’ contributions of £0 (2024-25: £0) were paid to one or more of the panel of two appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2024-25: 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay.

The partnership pension account offers the member the opportunity of having a ‘free’ pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the member does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match member contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings.

Employer contributions of £0, 0.5% (2024-25: £0, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS pension schemes 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.

Commissioners’ costs (Audited information)

	2025-26			2024-25
	Permanently employed staff **£**	**Other** **£**	**Total** **£**	Total £
Commissioners’ remuneration	**76,521**	**-**	**76,521**	89,526
Social security costs	**6,680**	**-**	**6,680**	6,758
Total net costs	**83,201**	**-**	**83,201**	96,284

In addition to their salary, subsequent to the High Court ruling, commissioners are paid a fee for attendance at Schedule 1 Committee meetings to make statutory decisions. In 2025-26 the commissioners were required to work additional days over and above their contracted days, excluding Schedule 1 committee work, therefore additional remuneration was paid to them for this work. The costs above include the total remuneration received throughout the year.

Average number of persons employed (Audited information)

The average number of whole-time equivalent persons (including senior management but excluding Charity Commissioners) employed during the year was as follows:

	2025-26			2024-25
	Permanently employed staff	**Other**	**Total**	Total
Directly employed	**26**	**1**	**27**	27

Other employees relate to temporary agency staff.

Staff composition (Audited information)

At 31 March 2026 there were 26 staff employed and 0 temporary agency staff. The staff composition was as follows:

	Male	**Female**
Chief Executive (SCS)	-	1
Permanent staff	9	16
Other employees	-	-
Total staff composition	**9**	**17**

Sickness absence

The Commission has an attendance management policy, and the monitoring and management of employee attendance is based on this. Sickness absence in 2025-26 was 1.34% (2024-25: 2.97%) against a target of 3%, this was spilt 0.92% for short term absences and 0.42% for long term absences.

Staff turnover percentage

The staff turnover percentage in 2025-26 was 21.1% (2024-25: 20.0%) This is calculated using the number of leavers in the period divided by the average staff in post in the period. This calculation is based on guidance issued from the Cabinet Office. The figures used comprise permanently employed staff and exclude other staff which refers to temporary agency staff.

Staff policies

The Commission values and welcomes diversity and is committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace for all. The Commission has an equal opportunities policy and is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment practices and aims to ensure that no actual or potential job applicant or employee is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, race, community background or political persuasion, age, dependants, sexual orientation or trade union membership. The Commission is an Equal Opportunities Employer and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit. Panel members must have completed mandatory recruitment and selection training prior to participating on selection panels. This training includes specific learning on equality and diversity, relevant legislation and adjustments for disabled candidates. Unconscious bias training is available to all staff. The Commission continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998, which includes submission of an annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return to the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI).

A training and development policy is also in operation. Each employee shall have equal opportunity for training and advancement on the basis of ability, qualifications and performance. This maximises the effective use of human resources in both the organisation and the individual’s best interests. To retain existing employees with a disability or long-term health condition, or employees who have become disabled during the period of employment, the Commission facilitates training and progression. The Commission provides a range of reasonable adjustments to facilitate employees, including training and workstation assessments and adaptions, providing hybrid remote and flexible working arrangements and assessing job criteria and duties. The policy includes discretion for managers to consider a range of training and learning support as well as funding of additional learning to enable employees with disabilities to continue employment.

The Commission operates internal communication and consultation arrangements to exchange information and share ideas and has a people strategy in place. These comprise regular team meetings and weekly all staff briefings. These cover key corporate and operational policy developments such as health and safety or updated charity guidance. An annual staff survey exercise aligned with the NICS approach is undertaken. Staff are involved in project groups tasked with developing regulatory programmes. The Commission consults and engages with local and official representatives of the recognised trade union, NIPSA, through a Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee.

The recruitment policy sets out that applicants are given the opportunity to advise the Commission of any reasonable adjustments that they may require. Applicants with a disability who meet the essential requirements will be shortlisted.

To facilitate equality of opportunity the Commission offers a range of family friendly policies.

To help ensure that we are meeting our equality of opportunity obligations, the Commission monitors the composition of employees and applicants. This monitoring helps to identify if any of our policies, procedures or activities are operating to the detriment of any individual from any particular grouping within our diverse society. The Commission continues to meet its statutory obligations under Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998, which includes submission of an annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return, which assess the composition of the Commission and the Composition of applicants and appointees.

Compensation payments (Audited information)

No compensation payments were made in the 2025-26 financial year (2024-25: Nil).

Ex-gratia payments (Audited information)

No ex-gratia payments were made in the 2025-26 financial year (2024-25: Nil).

Exit packages (Audited information)

No exit packages were awarded in the 2025-26 financial year (2024-25: Nil).

Expenditure on consultancy

In line with the Department for Communities’ guidance on classification of expenditure, in the 2025-26 financial year, no external consultancy was undertaken (2024-25: Nil).

Expenditure on temporary staff

Total expenditure on temporary agency staff for 2025-26 was £49,668 (2024-25: £87,915).

Off-payroll engagements

There were no off-payroll engagements for 2025-26 (2024-25: Nil).

6. Assembly accountability and audit report

Assembly accountability disclosure notes

Regularity of expenditure

Losses and special payments (Audited information)

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has experienced no losses and has made no special payments during the financial year.

Remote contingent liabilities (Audited information)

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of IAS 37, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland had no remote contingent liabilities at 31 March 2026 (2024-25: Nil).

Notation of gifts (Audited information)

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland made no gifts over the limits proscribed in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland during the financial year.

This *Accountability report* was signed by the Accounting Officer of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 22 June 2026.

Frances McCandless
Chief Executive
Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

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

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2026 under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

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

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and of its total incoming resources and expenditure for the year then ended; and

- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and Department for Communities directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

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

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

My staff and I are independent of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern
In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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

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

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

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

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters
In my opinion the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Finance directions.

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

- The parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department for Communities directions made under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008; and

- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or

- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or

- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or

- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance’s guidance.

Responsibilities of the Commission and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

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

- maintaining proper accounting records;

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;

- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;

- ensuring the Annual Report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report is prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual; and

- assessing the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements
My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

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

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

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008;

- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's compliance with laws and regulations;

- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;

- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: expenditure recognition and posting of unusual journals;

- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;

- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;

- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate; and

- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by: performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;

    - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;

    - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;

    - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and

    - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business; and

    - applying tailored risk factors to datasets of financial transactions and related records to identify potential anomalies and irregularities for detailed audit testing.

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

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

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

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

29 June 2026

Financial Statements

7. Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

for the year ended 31 March 2026

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

	Notes	2025-26 £	2024-25 £
Revenue from contracts with customers	5	**-**	-
Other operating income	5	**-**	-
Total operating income		**-**	-
Staff costs	2	**1,562,548**	1,449,497
Commissioners’ remuneration	2	**83,201**	96,284
Depreciation and amortisation	3	**134,885**	166,766
Provision expense	3	**11,220**	3,600
Other operating expenditure	3	**326,458**	290,464
Total operating expenditure		**2,118,312**	2,006,611
Net operating expenditure		**2,118,312**	2,006,611
Finance Expense	10	**45**	91
Net expenditure for the year		**2,118,357**	2,006,702
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of property, plant, and equipment	6	**(987)**	(63)
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of intangible assets	7	**-**	(1,928)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		**2,117,370**	2,004,711

The notes on pages 85 to 103 form part of these accounts.

8. Statement of Financial Position

as at 31 March 2026

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

	Notes	2025-26 £	2024-25 £
Non-Current Assets:			
Property, plant, and equipment	6	**1,055**	3,216
Right-of-use assets	6	**9,500**	26,537
Intangible assets	7	**451,125**	403,714
Total non-current assets		**461,680**	433,467
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	9	**56,739**	9,003
Cash and cash equivalents	10	**98,243**	11,828
Total current assets		**154,982**	20,831
Total Assets		**616,662**	454,298
Current liabilities:			
Trade and other payables	11	**(144,900)**	(152,911)
Provisions	12	**(11,220)**	(2,620)
Lease liability	13	**-**	(18,955)
Total current liabilities		**(156,120)**	(174,486)
Total assets less current liabilities		**460,542**	279,812
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves			
Revaluation reserve		**88,855**	90,620
General reserve		**371,687**	189,192
Total equity		**460,542**	279,812

The financial statements on pages 81 to 103 were approved by the Board on 22 June 2026 and were signed on its behalf by:

Frances McCandless
Chief Executive
Date: 22 June 2026

Gerard McCurdy
Chief Commissioner
Date: 22 June 2026

9. Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 31 March 2026

The Statement of Cash Flows shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Commission 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 Commission. Investing Activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Commission's future public service delivery.

	Notes	2025-26 £	2024-25 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net Operating Expenditure		**(2,118,312)**	(2,006,611)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	3	**146,105**	170,366
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables		**(47,736)**	(4,446)
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables		**(69,160)**	(93,334)
Use of provisions		**(2,620)**	(4,212)
Adjustments to net operating expenditure		**-**	(1)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		**(2,091,723)**	(1,938,238)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Lease interest	13	**(45)**	(91)
Purchase of intangible assets	7	**(143,111)**	(30,600)
Increase/(Decrease) in capital payables		**61,149**	6,810
(Increase)/decrease in investing receivables		**-**	-
Net cash outflow from investing activities		**(82,007)**	(23,881)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease	13	**(37,955)**	(37,909)
Grants from DfC		**2,298,100**	1,958,195
Net Financing		**2,260,145**	1,920,286
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents in the period		**86,415**	(41,833)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		**11,828**	53,661
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	10	**98,243**	11,828

The notes on pages 85 to 103 form part of these accounts.

10. Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

for the year ended 31 March 2026

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The Revaluation Reserve reflects the change in asset values that have not been recognised as income or expenditure. The General Reserve represents the total assets less liabilities, to the extent that the total is not represented by other reserves and financing items.

	General Reserve	Revaluation Reserve	Taxpayers' Equity
	£	£	£
Balance at 31 March 2024	**237,699**	**88,629**	**326,328**
Grants from sponsor department - DfC	1,958,195	-	1,958,195
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	(2,006,702)	-	(2,006,702)
Revaluation gains and losses	-	1,991	1,991
Balance at 31 March 2025	**189,192**	**90,620**	**279,812**
Grants from sponsor department - DfC	2,298,100	-	2,298,100
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	(2,118,357)	-	(2,118,357)
Revaluation gains and losses	2,752	(1,765)	987
Balance at 31 March 2026	**371,687**	**88,855**	**460,542**

The notes on pages 85 to 103 form part of these accounts.

11. Notes to the accounts of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2025-26 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by Department of Finance. 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 Charity Commission for Northern Ireland for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

Without limiting the information given, the financial statements meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and of the accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board, so far as those requirements are appropriate. The accounts direction is reproduced as an appendix to these financial statements.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets. All amounts in the financial statements are expressed in pounds sterling (GBP) and rounded to the nearest pound.

1.2 Financing

In accordance with the amendments to FReM, Grant-in-Aid has been treated as Financing and had been credited directly to the general reserve. Capital Grant-in-Aid has been credited to the general reserve.

1.3 Property, plant, and equipment

Expenditure on property, plant, and equipment of £1,500 or more is capitalised. The Commission’s owned property, plant and equipment assets are held for their operational capacity, with the primary objective to deliver either front line services or back office functions. On initial recognition, assets are measured at cost including any costs attributable to bringing them into working condition. Individual assets may be grouped together were deemed significant. Subsequently, the value of assets are restated annually to reflect their current value in existing use, using the relevant price indices for March of each financial year. The revaluation surplus or loss, net of corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve. The Commission uses Producer Price Indices published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in order to apply indexation to the value of its own property, plant, and equipment. Further details are provided in note 6 to the accounts.

1.4 Intangible assets

Expenditure on intangible assets, which are primarily the Commission's database, CRM system and the online annual reporting application and the associated costs of implementation, are capitalised where the cost is £1,500 or more. On initial recognition, assets are measured at cost including any costs attributable to bringing them into working condition. Individual assets may be grouped together were deemed significant. From 1 April 2025 the option to measure intangible assets using the revaluation model has been withdrawn. The carrying values on intangibles at transition date (1 April 2025) are considered to be historical cost, any such revaluation reserve balance will continue to be transferred to the general reserve when the asset is disposed of following transition.

1.5 Depreciation

Non-current assets, with the exception of leased assets, are depreciated on a straight-line basis in order to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life at the following rates.

Furniture, fixtures and fittings..........	20% per annum
Equipment....................................	25% per annum
Information technology	25% per annum
Charity Commission Online Services .	10-17% per annum
CRM system	10% per annum
Leased equipment	Period of Lease
Buildings under lease......................	Period of Lease
Leasehold improvements.................	Period of Lease

1.6 Leasing

IFRS 16 Leases replaced IAS 17 Leases and was implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector, with effect from 1 April 2022.

Right-of-use assets obtained under lease agreements are capitalised as non-current assets. Obligations under such agreements are included in current liabilities. The right-of-use asset, and the lease liability is initially measured at the present value of unavoidable future lease payments, adjusted by the amount of any prepaid or accrued lease payments relating to that lease, together with both (i) periods covered by an option to extend the lease if it is reasonably certain to exercise that option; and (ii) periods covered by an option to terminate the lease if it is reasonably certain to exercise that option.

The right-of-use asset is depreciated on a straight line basis over the remaining lease term. The lease liability is reduced for payments made and increased for interest. The interest element of the lease payment is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure over the period of the lease

Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets are not recognised as right-of-use assets and lease liabilities, payments in relation to these are expenses in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure as incurred.

1.7 Impairments

The value of non-current assets is reviewed at the end of each full financial year after acquisition for evidence of reduction in value. Where impairment is identified that is attributable to the clear consumption of economic benefit, the loss is charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure. Impairment reviews will also take place in other periods if events or changes in circumstances occur which indicate that the carrying values may not be recoverable.

1.8 Foreign currencies

There were no foreign currencies purchased during 2025-26. Any monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the rates of exchange prevailing at the accounting date. Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded at the date of the transactions. Translation differences are dealt with in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

1.9 Value added tax

All items in these financial statements are inclusive of VAT, which is not recoverable.

1.10 Staff costs

Under IAS 19 Employee Benefits legislation, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken leave as at the year end. The cost of untaken leave has been determined using data from electronic leave records.

1.11 Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) (PCSPS) (NI). Detailed information on pensions can be found in the Remuneration Report and in the notes to the accounts.

1.12 Accounting estimates

As a result of uncertainties in some business activities, some items in the financial statements cannot be measured with precision and can only be estimated, these include estimates for the useful lives of intangible assets, provisions and capital accruals. Where estimates have been required in order to prepare these financial statements in conformity with FReM, management have used judgements based on the latest available, reliable information. Management continually review estimates to take into account any changes in the circumstances on which the estimate was based or as a result of new information.

1.13 Financial instruments

The Commission does not hold any complex financial instruments. The only financial instruments in the accounts are receivables and payables. Receivables are recognised initially at fair value less a provision for impairment. A provision for impairment is made when there is evidence that the Commission will be unable to collect an amount due in accordance with agreed terms. Financial assets and liabilities are generated by operational activities and are not held to manage the risk profile facing the Commission in undertaking its operations.

1.14 Analysis of net expenditure by segment

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has one purpose, and as such is considered to have only one operating segment. All income, expenditure, assets, and liabilities relate to the Commission's sole activity.

1.15 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards adopted to the year ended 31 March 2026

Additional or revised accounting standards and new (or amendments to) interpretations contained within FreM 2025-26 have been considered. The adoption of these standards has not had a significant impact on the Commission's financial position or results.

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

The Commission has reviewed the standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards that became effective during 2025-26 and which are relevant to its operations.

IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements

IFRS 18 will replace IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements and is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2027 in the private sector. The impact of IFRS 18 on the Public Sector is still being assessed, and a decision has not yet been taken on an implementation date.

IFRS 19 Subsidiaries without Public Accountability: Disclosures

IFRS 19 allows eligible subsidiaries to apply IFRS Accounting Standards with reduced disclosure requirements and is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2027 in the private sector. The impact of IFRS 19 on the Public Sector is still being assessed, and a decision has not yet been taken on an implementation date.

It is likely there will be no impact on the Commission.

1.17 General reserve

The general reserves of the Commission represent the net of its total assets and total liabilities at the Statement of Financial Position date. The non-current assets of the Commission have been funded through Grant-in-Aid and capitalised in accordance with the policies set out under notes 1.3 and 1.4. The current assets and liabilities are a result of receivables, cash and payables arising due to the timing of invoices received and payments made as at 31 March 2026. The reserves of the Commission are non-distributable.

1.18 Revaluation reserve

All property, plant and equipment are carried at fair value and any revaluation of assets are taken to the Revaluation reserve. The Commission’s owned assets are re-valued annually on the basis of appropriate indices from the Office for National Statistics. From 1 April 2025 the carrying value of intangible assets are deemed to be historical cost, any such revaluation reserve balance will continue to be transferred to the general reserve when the asset is disposed of. The Commission’s Right-of-use assets are carried at fair value and are valued in accordance with the terms of the lease, which requires a review of lease payments.

1.19 Provisions

The Commission makes provision for liabilities and charges where, at the Statement of Financial Position date, a legal or constructive liability exists (that is a present obligation from past events), where the transfer of economic benefits is probable, and a reasonable estimate can be made. IAS 37 requires that where the effect of the time value of money is material the amount of a provision should be the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation. Where cash flows have been adjusted for risk, the standard requires the use of a risk-free discount rate.

2. Staff costs

	2025-26	2024-25
	£	£
Wages and salaries	**1,076,935**	1,024,750
Social security costs	**134,255**	97,364
Other pension costs	**351,358**	327,383
	1,562,548	1,449,497

A breakdown of the above costs into permanent staff and others can be found in the staff report within the *Accountability Report*.

Commissioners’ costs comprise:

	2025-26	2024-25
	£	£
Commissioners’ remuneration	**76,521**	89,526
Social security costs	**6,680**	6,758
	83,201	96,284

In addition to their salary, subsequent to the High Court ruling, Commissioners are paid a fee for attendance at Schedule 1 Committee meetings to make statutory decisions. In 2025-26 Commissioners were required to work additional days over and above their contracted days, excluding Schedule 1 Committee work, therefore additional remuneration was paid to them for this work. The costs above include the total remuneration received throughout the year.

3. Other operating expenditure

	2025-26	2024-25
	£	£
Service charges	**1,381**	2,464
Rates	**18,951**	17,783
Security	**12,074**	11,750
Maintenance and repairs	**3,303**	14,043
Cleaning	**8,186**	8,142
Telephone and postage	**20,018**	25,778
Heat, light and power	**10,454**	16,194
IT network support	**6,491**	13,971
Stationery and consumables	**2,003**	2,167
Publicity, printing and advertising	**405**	3,909
Staff/Commissioners’ training	**10,905**	10,917
Travel and Subsistence	**5,923**	5,093
Recruitment costs	**31,870**	23,543
Events and hospitality	**1,958**	3,067
Legal and professional fees	**84,614**	71,360
Miscellaneous expenses	**3**	9
Membership and licence fees	**7,169**	8,181
Charity digital services maintenance	**64,387**	46,453
Minor equipment	**2,376**	566
Communication and research costs	**33,987**	5,074
Total	**326,458**	290,464
Non-cash items		
Depreciation and amortisation	**134,885**	166,766
Provision expense	**11,220**	3,600
Total	**146,105**	170,366

4. Notional Costs

	2025-26	2024-25
Notional costs incurred during the year relate to:	**£**	£
NIAO audit fee	**27,500**	26,400
Internal audit fee	**16,960**	15,610
	44,460	42,010

During the year, the Commission did not purchase any non-audit services from its auditor, the Northern Ireland Audit Office, and the notional cost above relates to the audit of the financial statements.

5. Other operating income

The Commission had no other income during the year. (2024-25: £0).

6. Property, plant, and equipment

2025-26	Buildings £	Furniture & fittings £	Information technology £	Total £
Cost or valuation				
At 01 April 2025	142,095	5,147	26,420	173,662
Additions	19,000	-	-	19,000
Disposals	-	-	(10,591)	(10,591)
Revaluations	-	417	1,127	1,544
At 31 March 2026	**161,095**	**5,564**	**16,956**	**183,615**
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2025	115,558	4,782	23,569	143,909
Charged in year	36,037	313	2,835	39,185
Disposals	-	-	(10,591)	(10,591)
Revaluations	-	408	149	557
At 31 March 2026	**151,595**	**5,503**	**15,962**	**173,060**
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	**9,500**	**61**	**994**	**10,555**
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	26,537	365	2,851	29,753
Asset Financing:				
Owned	-	61	994	1,055
Right-of-use	9,500	-	-	9,500
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	**9,500**	**61**	**994**	**10,555**

2024-25	Buildings £	Furniture & fittings £	Information technology £	Total £
Cost or valuation				
At 01 April 2024	123,140	4,836	26,344	154,320
Additions	18,955	-	-	18,955
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	311	76	387
At 31 March 2025	**142,095**	**5,147**	**26,420**	**173,662**
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2024	75,760	4,262	20,391	100,413
Charged in year	39,798	255	3,119	43,172
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	265	59	324
At 31 March 2025	**115,558**	**4,782**	**23,569**	**143,909**
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	**26,537**	**365**	**2,851**	**29,753**
Carrying amount at 31 March 2024	47,380	574	5,953	53,907
Asset Financing:				
Owned	-	365	2,851	3,216
Right-of-use	26,537	-	-	26,537
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	**26,537**	**365**	**2,851**	**29,753**

The Commission owns all assets, except for buildings which is capitalised as a right-of-use asset.

The Commission's owned assets are re-valued annually on the basis of appropriate indices from the Office for National Statistics. The Commission uses Producer Price Indices published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in order to apply indexation to the value of non-property assets at year-end. Ordinarily the Commission uses March indices at year end, however, in March 2025, ONS issued a statement indicating that they had identified a problem with the chain-linking methods used to calculate these indices, affecting the years from 2008 onwards, and that they would consequently be pausing publication of Producer Price Index data while the issue is rectified. ONS recommenced publication of the Producer Price Indices during the 2025-26 financial year and the indexation of non-property assets has been brought up to date in the 2025-26 accounts. The Commission's right-of-use assets are carried at fair value and are valued in accordance with the terms of the lease.

7. Intangible assets

Intangible assets represent the integrated IT system in the Commission to facilitate the registration and regulation of charities. The integrated IT system comprises:

- the Commission's charity registration database
- a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software package
- a website
- an online application for submitting annual returns and the associated costs of implementation.

Online Systems (OLS)

OLS encompasses the previous intangible categories of database and annual return. The Commission's online charity register system was brought into use in June 2011. A number of important enhancements were subsequently made to the suite of online services available to the charity sector. Updates improve the level of functionality available to registered charities in Northern Ireland, to those organisations applying to register as a charity and others viewing their information published on the Commission's website.

The charity register has been variously updated to reflect annual reporting regulations, requirements in particular for submission of annual monitoring returns during reporting periods, and the associated financial statuses a charity can acquire. Additions were made in relation to required changes to the charity register display in response to the Court of Appeal judgment in February 2020. Changes were made to the charity register display previously because of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. At 31 March 2026, development work is underway to update the online charity register system, brought into use in 2011, to enable introduction of a registration threshold and other legislative changes . These development costs have not been amortised as they are not yet available for use.

Work was ongoing during 2025-26 to redesign the Commission’s website in line with recommendation 19 of the Independent Review of Charity Registration. This project has been finalised and the website was formally launched on 24 February 2026.

CRM

CRM was initially configured to manage registration workflows and this element of the software package has been operational since 2014-15. Further development of CRM was undertaken to allow other workflows to be incorporated into the software package and has been operational since 2015-16. A fourth phase of CRM development was undertaken, providing further functionality covering administration of use of powers and upgrading the software version used. This allows internal departments to fully record and report on these functions.

2025-26	OLS operational £	OLS in development £	CRM operational £	CRM in development £	Total £
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2025	838,073	78,831	469,948	4,680	1,391,532
Additions	1,560	134,531	7,020	-	143,111
Reclassification	78,830	(78,830)	4,680	(4,680)	-
Disposals	(53,084)	-	-	-	(53,084)
Revaluation		-		-	
At 31 March 2026	**865,379**	**134,532**	**481,648**	**-**	**1,481,559**
Amortisation					
At 1 April 2025	591,286	-	396,531	-	987,817
Charged in year	84,019	-	11,682	-	95,701
Disposals	(53,084)	-	-	-	(53,084)
Revaluation		-		-	
At 31 March 2026	**622,221**	-	**408,213**	**-**	**1,030,434**
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	**243,158**	**134,532**	**73,435**	**-**	**451,125**
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	246,787	78,831	73,417	4,680	403,715
Asset Financing:					
Owned	243,158	134,532	73,435	-	451,125
Right-of-use	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	**243,158**	**134,532**	**73,435**	**-**	**451,125**

2024-25	OLS operational £	OLS in development £	CRM operational £	CRM in development £	Total £
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2024	835,380	52,306	469,364	-	1,357,050
Additions	-	25,920	-	4,680	30,600
Reclassification	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	2,692	605	583	-	3,880
At 31 March 2025	**838,072**	**78,831**	**469,947**	**4,680**	**1,391,530**
Amortisation					
At 1 April 2024	513,894	-	348,376	-	862,270
Charged in year	75,641	-	47,953	-	123,594
Revaluation	1,751	-	201	-	1,952
At 31 March 2025	**591,286**	-	**396,530**	**-**	**987,816**
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	**246,786**	**78,831**	**73,417**	**4,680**	**403,714**
Carrying amount at 31 March 2024	321,486	52,306	120,988	-	494,780
Asset Financing:					
Owned	246,786	78,831	73,417	4,680	403,714
Right-of-use	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	**246,786**	**78,831**	**73,417**	**4,680**	**403,714**

The Commission's intangible assets are no longer re-valued annually on the basis of appropriate indices from the Office for National Statistics. From 1 April 2025 the carrying values are considered historical cost.

8. Financial instruments

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

9. Trade and other receivables

	2026	2025
Amounts falling due within one year:	**£**	£
Prepayments and accrued income	**56,739**	9,003
Other receivables	**-**	-
	56,739	9,003

10. Cash and cash equivalents

	2026	2025
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	**11,828**	53,661
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	**86,415**	(41,833)
Balance at 31 March	**98,243**	11,828
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	**98,243**	11,828
Balance at 31 March	**98,243**	11,828

10.1 Reconciliation of liabilities arising from financing activities

	2025	Additions	Cashflow	Non-Cash Lease Liability	Non-Cash Interest Charges	2026
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Lease Liability	18,955	19,000	(38,000)	(45)	45	-
Total	**18,955**	**19,000**	**(38,000)**	**(45)**	**45**	**-**

	2024	Additions	Cashflow	Non-Cash Lease Liability	Non-Cash Interest Charges	2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Lease Liability	37,910	18,955	(38,000)	18,865	90	18,955
Total	**37,910**	**18,955**	**(38,000)**	**18,865**	**90**	**18,955**

11. Trade and other payables

	2026	2025
Amounts falling due within one year:	**£**	£
Trade payables	**8,865**	-
Capital payables	**62,079**	9,930
Accruals and deferred income	**73,956**	142,981
	144,900	152,911

11.1 Public sector payment policy – measure of compliance

The Department requires that the Commission pays its trade creditors in accordance with the Account NI Prompt Payment Code and Government Accounting Rules. The Commission payment policy is consistent with the Accounts NI Prompt Payment Codes and Government Accounting rules and its measure of compliance for invoices paid 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 is;

	2025-26		2024-25	
Total invoices in accounting period	**400**		451	
Invoices paid within 10 days	**400**	**100%**	451	100%
Invoices paid 11-30 days	**-**	**0%**	-	0%
Invoices paid over 30 days	**-**	**0%**	-	0%

12. Provision for liabilities and charges

Legal Costs	**2026**	2025
	£	£
Balances at 1 April	**2,620**	3,232
Provided in the year	**11,220**	3,600
Provisions not required/written back	**-**	-
Provisions utilised in the year	**(2,620)**	(4,212)
Balance at 31 March	**11,220**	2,620

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows

	2026	2025
	£	£
Less than one year	**11,220**	2,620
Greater than one year	**-**	-
Balance at 31 March	**11,220**	2,620

At the year-end, an amount has been provided for in the accounts in relation to an appeal before the Charity tribunal, and a High Court appeal from the Charity Tribunal. The Commission anticipates these will come to a conclusion in the next financial year.

13. Leases

The Commission held a lease at 31 March 2026 for the premises it occupies, this is reflected on the Statement of Financial Position as a right-of-use asset. This lease was extended in 2025-26 to 30 June 2026. At 31 March 2026 payments in relation to the lease up to 30 June 2026 were paid in advance in line with the lease agreement, resulting in a nil lease liability at year end.

13.1 Quantitative disclosures around right-of-use-assets

2025-26

	Buildings	**Total**
Cost or valuation	£	**£**
As at 1 April 2025	142,095	**142,095**
Additions	19,000	**19,000**
At 31 March 2026	161,095	**161,095**
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2025	115,558	**115,558**
Depreciation charged in year	36,037	**36,037**
At 31 March 2026	151,595	**151,595**
NBV at 31 March 2025	26,537	**26,537**
NBV at 31 March 2026	9,500	**9,500**

13.2 Quantitative disclosures around lease liabilities

	2025-26	2024-25
Buildings	**£**	£
Not later than one year	**-**	19,000
Later than one year and not later than five years	**-**	-
Later than 5 years	**-**	-
Less interest element	**-**	(45)
Present value of obligations	**-**	18,955

13.3 Quantitative disclosures around cash outflow for leases

	2025-26	2024-25
	£	£
Total cash outflow for lease	**38,000**	38,000

14. Capital commitments

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland had a capital commitment at 31 March 2026 of £9,000 in respect of a contract for development work to update the online charity register system. These commitments are expected to be settled in the following financial year and have not been provided for in these financial statements(2024-25: £0) .

15. Contingent liabilities

The Commission has two ongoing High Court claims. As proceedings are only at an early stage these have been recorded as contingent liabilities, as no amount can be reliably estimated at this time. (2024-25: Nil).

Public Sector Pensions - Injury to Feelings Claims

The Department of Finance (DoF) is a named Respondent in a class action affecting employers across the public sector and is managing claims on behalf of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Departments. This is an extremely complex case with potential implications for the NICS and wider public sector. However, given the complexities, the cases are still at an early stage of proceedings and until there is further clarity on potential scope and impact, a reliable estimate of liability cannot be provided.

16. Related party transactions

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department for Communities.

The Department for Communities is regarded as a related party. During the year the Commission had a number of material transactions with the department, including receipt of grant in aid of £2,298,100 (2024-25: £1,958,195).

In addition, the Commission had a number of transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies. Most of these transactions have been with the Department of Finance.

None of the Commissioners undertook any material transactions with the Commission in the financial year.

17. Events after the reporting period

There were no events after the reporting period, as defined by IAS 10, between the statement of financial position date and the date the accounts were signed.

Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised the issue of these financial statements on 22 June 2026.

ACCOUNTS DIRECTION GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHEDULE 1 SECTION 8(2) OF THE CHARITIES ACT (NI) 2008

1. This direction applies to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

2. Charity Commission for Northern Ireland shall prepare resource accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2026 and subsequent financial years in compliance with the accounting principles and disclosure requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual issued by HM Treasury ("the FReM") which is in force for the financial year for which the accounts are being prepared, together with any additional disclosure or other requirements as agreed with the department. The accounting policies contained in the Government Financial Reporting Manual apply International Financial Reporting Standards as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context.

3. The accounts shall be prepared so as to:

(a) give a true and fair view of the state of affairs at 31 March 2026 and subsequent financial year-ends, and of the income and expenditure, total recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the financial year then ended; and

(b) provide disclosure of any material expenditure or income that has not been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly or material transactions that have not conformed to the authorities which govern them.

Compliance with the requirements of the FReM will, in all but exceptional circumstances, be necessary for the accounts to give a true and fair view. If, in these exceptional circumstances, compliance with the requirements of the FReM is inconsistent with the requirement to give a true and fair view, the requirements of the FReM should be departed from only to the extent necessary to give a true and fair view. In such cases, informed and unbiased judgment should be used to devise an appropriate alternative treatment which should be consistent with both the economic characteristics of the circumstances concerned and the spirit of the FReM. Any material departure from the FReM should be discussed with the Department for Communities and the Department of Finance.

ISBN: 978-1-909525-13-9