



The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland

Annual Report and Accounts

**For the year ended
31 March 2009**

**Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Commissioner
for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 by
the OFMdfM**

8 February 2010



CONTENTS

	Page
1. Directors Report	3
2. Management Commentary	7
3. Performance against Business Objectives for the year 2008/09	26
4. Remuneration Report	45
5. Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities	50
6. Statement on Internal Control	51
7. The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly	54
8. Financial Statements	
(a) Operating Cost Statement for the year ended 31 March 2009	57
(b) Statement of Recognised Gains and Losses for the year ended 31 March 2009	58
(c) Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2009	59
(d) Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2009	60
(e) Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009	61



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland (NICCY) is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdfM). NICCY was established on 1st October 2003 under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

These accounts are prepared in accordance with Schedule 2 11 (1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and in accordance with the 2008/09 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland (DFP).

Principal Activities

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's principal aim is to 'safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young persons'. While the detailed powers are set out in the legislation, they may be grouped under three main areas as follows:

- Promoting children's rights - the Commissioner will be guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an international agreement setting out how children should be treated and the rights that they have;
- Complaints and legal action - the Commissioner can deal with individual complaints from children and young persons, or their parents/ guardians about any services that impact on those under 18 years of age (or under the age of 21 for those with a disability or leaving care);
- Research and enquiries - the Commissioner will base all her work on thorough research and evidence. The Commissioner has the power to undertake general enquiries into issues where she believes children and young people are being adversely affected. The Commissioner is also required to review the ways that those providing services for children and young people listen to complaints and take account of their views.

Important Events Occurring After the Year End

There have been no significant events since the year-end, which would affect these accounts.

Results for the Year

The results for the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland for the period are set out in detail on page 57. The net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2009 was £1,790,275 following a credit of £21,266 in notional costs. This net expenditure resulted in a balance in reserves of £646,216 at 31 March 2009.



Fixed Assets

Details of the movements of fixed assets are set out in Note 5 to the Accounts.

Research & Development

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland does not engage in any research and development activities as defined by UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Charitable Donations

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland made no charitable donations during the period.

Pensions Liabilities

Staff Pension Liabilities are borne by the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) – see Remuneration Report and notes 1.5 and 2(b) to the Accounts.

Payments to Suppliers

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the Confederation of British Industry's Prompt Payers Code.

Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment was due within 30 days of receipt of the goods or services, or presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand, whichever is later. From 1 December 2008, this was reduced to 10 days.

During the period 80.85% of bills were paid within this standard (94% in 2007/08).

Disabled Persons

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland seeks to follow best practice guidance as set out in Disability Codes of Practice, on employment and the provision of services to disabled persons.

Equality of Opportunity

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity and fair participation to all persons regardless of sex, marital status, religious belief, political affiliation/opinion, age, family status, ethnic or racial background, sexual orientation, disability, nationality or trade union membership.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland will, in all its actions, conform to both the letter and the spirit of the relevant equality legislation. The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland will provide equality of opportunity to all persons irrespective of whether or not there are legislative provisions in place.

Employee Involvement

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland encourages widespread consultation and exchange of information at all levels within the Office through staff and team briefings. NICCY has made a commitment to be an Investor in People accredited organisation.

Sick Absence Data

During the course of the year, 1.84% of the available working days were lost due to staff sickness in NICCY.

Register of Interests

An up to date register of interests is maintained by the Accounting Officer and is available for inspection at the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland offices in Millennium House, 17-25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast BT2 7BA.

Auditors

The financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. He is head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and he and his staff are wholly independent of the Commissioner for Children and Young People. He reports his findings to the Assembly.

The audit of the financial statements for 2008/09 resulted in an audit fee of £14,000 which is included in the Operating Costs within the Operating Cost Statement.

Disclosure of Audit Information

So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the entity's auditors are unaware. The Accounting Officer has taken all steps that she ought to have taken to make herself aware of any audit information and to establish that the entity's auditors are aware of that information.

Offices of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland:

Millennium House
17-25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7BA

Auditor:

Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Signed by:



Patricia Lewsley
Commissioner and Accounting Officer



MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland has prepared this review in accordance with the Accounting Standards Board Reporting Statement: Operating and Financial Review. Following the spirit of the Reporting Standard, this Management Commentary shall focus on matters that are relevant to the interests of members. In the context of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland, 'members' shall be all users of the accounts.

The Commissioner

On 19 December 2006 Patricia Lewsley was announced as the second Commissioner for Children and Young People and took up appointment on 8 January 2007.

Description of the Business

The mission of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland (NICCY) is to:

Safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people by listening to them and working with them to challenge and change the world in which they live.

While the detailed powers are set out in the legislation, they may be grouped under the three main areas identified under 'Principal Activities' within the Director's Report. To ensure that NICCY meets the aspirations set out in our mission statement and succeeds in carrying out its functions and duties under the legislation, NICCY carried out a large scale consultation in 2008. This was used to identify the following five priority areas of work:

- Play and Leisure
- Having Your Say
- Wellbeing and Mental Health
- Protection
- Equal Treatment

Following the identification of these priority areas, the Corporate Plan for NICCY from 2008 to 2011 was developed. This was developed using the Balanced Scorecard tool, with NICCY arranging them into the following quadrants:

- Our stakeholders (children, young people, parents and others)
- How we do things;
- NICCY staff; and
- Money.

This Balanced Scorecard forms the basis against which NICCY measures its performance and reports to Government.



Full details of our priorities and objectives are set out in NICCY's Corporate Plan 2008 to 2011, and the annual Business Plans, all of which are available on the NICCY website (www.niccy.org).

Corporate Governance

NICCY has a Senior Management Team, comprised of Commissioner, Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Casework, Head of Policy and Research and Head of Communications and Participation which meets on a monthly basis.

The Audit and Risk Committee, is an independent advisory committee with no executive functions. The Committee provides an independent oversight on our work and supports the Commissioner in discharging her role in relation to managing risk, internal control and corporate governance. This is done by carrying out an independent appraisal of these areas and advising on the adequacy of procedures and processes in place and assurances received. The committee members Bob McCann (Chair), John Fenton and Hilary McCartan meet four times a year. The agenda and papers are circulated to members before meetings and minutes are taken of the Committee's discussions, decisions and actions.

The Ethics Committee has three independent advisors and two young people from NICCY's Youth Panel. The Committee ensures that all research and service reviews meet minimum ethical standards and are carried out following best ethical practice.

NICCY's Environment

You can read more about the way NICCY works in our Corporate Plan 2008 to 2011, which is available to download at www.niccy.org. It explains in more detail the context within which NICCY operates. However, the key aspects are as follows:

Legislative and Policy

NICCY was established by the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The Order outlines NICCY's functions, duties and powers. A review of NICCY's legislation was also carried out and the recommendations from this are currently being considered. Copies of both the Order and the review of the legislation are available from our website (www.niccy.org).

Four other key areas of legislation, proposed legislation and policy initiatives and United Nations reports will have a major influence on the lives of children and young people within Northern Ireland.

- The 10 year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 'Our Children and Young People - Our Pledge' and associated Action Plan has been published by OFMdFM. While NICCY welcomed the strategy, the action plan must be much more robust. We will work closely with Government to review how well this works in light of the recently published three-year action plan.



- NICCY is monitoring the equality legislation being brought forward under a single Equality Bill. We will work closely with the Equality Commission and other statutory and voluntary organisations to ensure that children and young people's rights are fully protected within the legislation.
- Government has also indicated its commitment to a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. NICCY will work with colleagues in the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector to promote the full incorporation of the UNCRC in Northern Ireland legislation through the Bill of Rights.
- How the UK Government and Northern Ireland Assembly respond to the recent report and the Concluding Observations by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Political and Administrative

NICCY continues to work with the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly in a variety of ways. Significant changes to public administration took place in the year, such as in Health and Social Care and the beginning of the establishment of the Education Skills Authority. We continue to use the opportunities these major changes bring to promote the rights and best interests of children and young people in the services they need and seek to make sure any changes do not lead to children and young people being disadvantaged.

NICCY's relationship with individual committees of the Northern Ireland Assembly is ongoing to ensure mutual understanding of key issues affecting children and young people.

We have continued to develop relationships with our fellow Commissioners in England, Scotland, and Wales to develop a clear agreement on our roles and responsibilities. Along with these Commissioners and the Children's Ombudsman in Ireland, we are part of the British and Irish Network of Ombudsmen and Children's Commissioners (BINOCC). This group meets independently but is also a sub-committee of the European Ombudsmen for Children (ENOC), of which we are a member. Further information about the role of this group can be obtained on its website, www.ombudsnet.org.

NICCY continues to develop memoranda of understanding with statutory, inspectorial and monitoring bodies in addition to those agreed previously.

Economic and Social

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child agreed with NICCY in the view that poverty is one of the main reasons children and young people don't always achieve their rights. We want our work to highlight and challenge the effects of poverty on our children and young people and we will continue to seek improvements. We briefed the Assembly Committee of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on this prior to them producing their report and recommendations to the Northern Ireland Assembly.



Demonising and negative stereotyping continue to be major issues for children and young people in Northern Ireland. This has been highlighted in the UK Commissioner's joint report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child which will examine the UK's progress on promoting and safeguarding children's rights across the four UK jurisdictions later this year.

Social exclusion arising from sectarianism, racism, homophobia and discrimination against those with a disability, is a significant factor in children and young people's lives in Northern Ireland. We want to ensure that a consistent and co-ordinated effort is made across the statutory, public, voluntary and private sectors to make children's lives better and have taken part in a series of events and initiatives to highlight this issue.

NICCY has a clear duty to advise and where appropriate challenge government and other statutory agencies when policy, legislation and services are ineffective or inadequate.

Value for Money

NICCY welcomes the developments in public sector governance arrangements. These guide our management activities. We use these to minimise risk and ensure effective controls throughout the organisation. NICCY will make further changes to the way we provide services, organise ourselves and are accountable.

Finance and Resources

NICCY receives £1.853 million as grant-in-aid from the Office of the First and deputy First Minister. The current structure comprises 28 full time staff. We will continue to work closely with OFMdFM to make sure the level of resources are fit for purpose and enable us to deliver our priorities as outlined in our Corporate Plan 2008-2011.

Participation with Children and Young People

NICCY's legislation requires that we engage and work with government to ensure structures are in place to enable children and young people to participate. This means helping them to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives, not only in day-to-day activities such as school but also in society in general. In its concluding observations the United Nations Committee reflected that government should bring forward formal structures and policies and practices to make this a reality. To support this requirement NICCY produced a draft policy statement which could serve as a commitment from government to achieve this.

During the year, NICCY also established a Participation Forum, made up of representatives of NGOs and statutory bodies with a vested interest in the participation of Children and Young People in today's society. The Forum aims to provide support and information to the Commissioner from a range of experts in the field of participation, assisting her in promoting the participation of children and young people in Northern Ireland.



Over the last three years the levels of participation of children and young people within NICCY have increased. It is important to benchmark this level of participation as we move through the new 2008/11 Corporate Plan. To do this NICCY initiated an internal participation audit using the 'Hear By Right' model. This model has been developed to help organisations establish children and young people's participation as a right -built in, not bolted on - to improve services and outcomes. The outcomes of the audit will be explored during 2009/10.

Throughout 2008/09 participation staff worked directly with children and young people to help realise this goal. The team met with almost 4,000 children and young people throughout the year, explaining the work of NICCY, discussing the UNCRC and explaining how it is relevant for every child and young person in Northern Ireland.

The participation service also acts as a channel for NICCY's priority actions, providing feedback to the organisation about issues facing children and young people. Databases have been developed to track the current issues facing young people.

During the year Participation Officers worked with over 200 different schools, youth groups and youth organisations. They were also involved in supporting statutory organisations develop good participation practice, increasing their levels of youth participation and develop terms of reference.

Staff continued to work on NICCY's Democra-School programme, promoting the development of school councils by posting additional resources on www.niccy.org. We also continue to explore the introduction of school council policy so that school councils will be mandatory in every school in Northern Ireland.

In addition, the team supported the personal and skills based development of the NICCY Youth Panel (NYP). The NYP is currently made up of 25 young people from throughout Northern Ireland who advise the Commissioner on issues affecting young people and contribute to the overall work of the Commissioner's office.

Members of the panel were involved in a wide variety of NICCY activities ranging from peer research and project planning through to sitting on committees and other decision making bodies. They also continued to play a pivotal role in recruiting new NICCY staff, receiving training, sitting on interview panels and having an equal voice in the selection process. The NYP also planned their own recruitment process for new NYP members when 12 young people joined the panel.

The Participation team supported the panel in developing their skills and personal capacity, through working with them on projects, including writing, filming, directing and taking part in multimedia projects. These new skills resulted in a DVD for the International Youth Day on 12 August and a young person's version of NICCY's



Children's Rights Review. You can view these videos on the NICCY Youth Panel YouTube channel, which the panel will be expanding over the coming year.

During the year we facilitated and supported members of the panel and other children and young people with the opportunity to speak to Government ministers directly, including the First Minister and other Ministers from the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Department for Education (DE), Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), Department of Environment (DoE) and Junior Ministers from OFMdfM.

An internal review of the Participation Service was undertaken to identify how we can add value to the service and further promote the voice of young people throughout Northern Ireland. This also reinforced our legislative duties of listening to children and young people in the areas in which they live.

In real terms this means exploring opportunities to expand our 'Training the Trainer' programmes, helping develop complaints clinics and linking with our communication team to further promote NICCY's priorities in local regions. It is also about encouraging two-way dialogue between young people and NICCY and about meeting young people where they are, whether that be in a school, youth club or newer online environments.

NICCY's 'Training the Trainers' programme - where our participation officers pass on skills of facilitation in children's rights education to teachers, in order that they through a cascading effect, train the children they teach - continues to develop with new contacts made with Stranmillis College and NICIE.

Our work with St. Mary's University College continues to expand with a peer training model being introduced where student teachers are trained to deliver training to their fellow students.

Strategically, the Participation team have been supporting the development of participation guidance through the development of the Big Deal's 'Making Your Youth Council Work For You: Guidance For Effective Youth Councils' and the Participation Network's development of participation advice for statutory organisations.

Following NICCY's 3 year external review it was recommended that to reinforce and encourage greater continuity of the participation service the four Participation Officer posts should become permanent posts as opposed to secondments. These four posts have subsequently been filled.



Legal and Casework

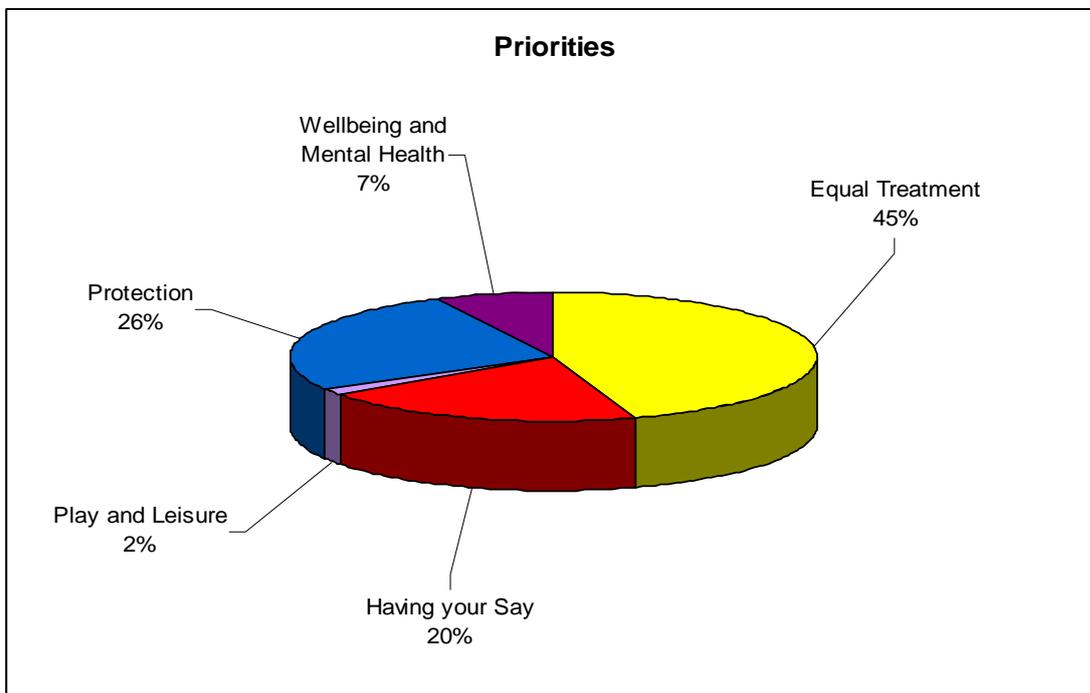
NICCY's Legal and Casework team assist the Commissioner in her principal aim of promoting and safeguarding the rights and best interests of children and young people. The team do this by handling and investigating complaints from children and young people, their parents or carers, or sometimes from professionals working alongside children and young people. The team have two main ways in which they provide assistance:

1. Through their casework function
2. Through their legal work

Casework at NICCY

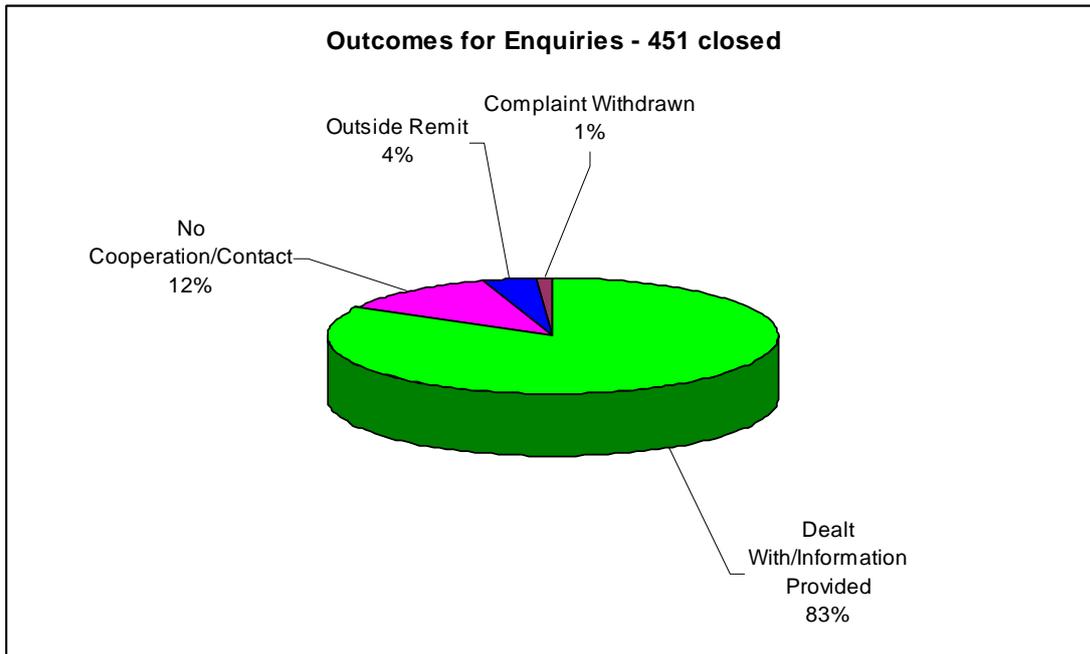
The Legal and Casework team received 575 new referrals during the year. This reflected the ongoing upward trend of increasing referrals every year. During each quarter of last year we received a higher number of referrals than the previous year's quarter. The wide range of issues being referred to the team also continued from previous years.

The charts below provide an overview of the work carried out by the department over the year. They show how enquiries and cases were broken down against our five priorities and the outcomes of these.



As you can see from the pie chart above, the majority of cases received by NICCY in the last year related to equal treatment of children and young people.





As you can see from the pie chart above 83% of the 451 enquiries closed by the Legal and Casework team in the last year were dealt with.

Work was undertaken with the Participation team to develop and pilot a series of Outreach Clinics. The aim of these clinics is for the team to get out and meet groups of young people where they are, hearing directly about the issues affecting them. A number of focus group sessions took place so that young people had a say in advising and guiding the team on how best to deliver the service. As a result a programme of pilots have been organised for 2009/10 to further develop and establish the clinics.

Below are examples of work we have undertaken on behalf of children and young people on a wide range of issues:

Getting the right support from Social Services

NICCY was contacted by a representative of an organisation regarding a couple who were caring for two children of members of their extended family. The couple felt they were not receiving adequate support, including financial support, from Social Services. Social Services said that this was because they considered the placement to be a private family placement.

However the couple disagreed, and felt that as the children had been placed with them by Social Services, it was a Social Services placement with certain statutory obligations to enable their care of the children to be maintained.



Following a number of investigatory communications, a meeting was convened with the couple, the representative, the Social Worker representing the Trust and NICCY. The meeting concluded with an agreement that the Trust would carry out a full assessment of the children's needs and also provide appropriate financial support to the family. There was then a decision to place the children formally with the couple, as well as an agreement to identify and provide support services for each of the children to help them understand their early family life experiences. All parties involved were satisfied with the outcome, as being in the best interests of the children concerned.

Helping parents make school safer for their daughter

A young child with a severe nut allergy started school, and during the preceding summer her parents met with the school's headmistress, cook, supervisor and the school nurse to discuss all of the issues involved and to agree a suitable diet for the future. Difficulties arose, and a meeting was convened with NICCY, the parents, school staff and other professionals. This resulted in a constructive discussion and a proactive approach and way forward was agreed. This included the school catering staff undertaking specialist awareness training in the area, the headmistress introducing innovative ways of informing all parents and children at the school about the issue of having a severe nut allergy, and what to do in the event of an attack. The parents were pleased with the efforts made by the school and Education and Library Board, and were grateful to NICCY for bringing the different parties together.

In addition to individual cases, members of the Legal and Casework team represent NICCY on a number of important initiatives, including the Taskforce for Traveller Education and the Speech and Language Taskforce. Members of the team have also given talks on the Commissioner's role and NICCY's legal function and powers to the QUB Schools of Nursing and Social Work, as well as to other organisations, groups and young people.

In order to help further promote and co-ordinate the rights and best interests of children and young people, the team has also supported greater engagement between the Commissioner, the judiciary, lay magistrates and the court service.

Legal work at NICCY

The Commissioner has been given important powers and responsibilities in matters involving law or practice concerning the rights or welfare of children or young persons. These powers have been used in a number of legal cases throughout the year. This year we:



1. Challenged the lawfulness of a defence in relation to the physical punishment of children;¹
2. Were involved in a case about the right of children and young people to be protected from inhumane and degrading treatment under Article 3 ECHR; the Commissioner's intervention in this case was welcomed as being helpful, in the Judgment of Baroness Hale ²; and
3. Have been involved in a case regarding the use of Taser in Northern Ireland in relation to children and young people (Judgment awaited).³

A review of our powers under the 'Review of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003 (NIA 93/08-09)' was laid before the Assembly in early 2009 and we await the outcome of this.

Policy and Research at NICCY

Reviewing and analysing policies and undertaking research is an important part of NICCY's work. It enables us to inform, influence and challenge Government where and when legislation, policies and practice with children and young people does not meet the standards set down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also enables us to highlight good practice and to recommend improvements in the interests of children and young people.

This year was a particularly significant one for NICCY in that we were involved in the UNCRC periodic reporting process for the first time. We worked with the offices of the three Children's Commissioners in England, Scotland and Wales to produce a joint independent report. This included more than 100 recommendations to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the UNCRC across the UK. We found many issues of common concern, but with quite important differences based in different historical, legislative and cultural contexts. With this large number of recommendations, the report highlighted that, in the judgments of the four Commissioners, the UK governments had not made sufficient progress since the previous reporting period.

Along with NGO partners we hosted a visit of the Special Rapporteur, Lucy Smith, to Northern Ireland in advance of the Committee hearings in Geneva in June 2008. Following the review of papers submitted on the state of children's rights across the UK, oral evidence was delivered by the UK Government, the Governments of the three devolved administrations, the four Children's Commissioners and non-governmental organisations.

¹ **An Application for Judicial Review by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People [2007] NIQB 115; [2009] NICA 10**

² **Re E (a child) [2008] UKHL 66**

³ **In the matter of an application JR1 (a minor) by her mother and next friend for Judicial Review [2009] NIQB**



Four months later the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child produced its Concluding Observations report which included 124 Recommendations, several of which focussed specifically on Northern Ireland.

NICCY has since met with Government several times to press for action to address the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. We also gave evidence on this, along with the other three UK Children's Commissioners, to the Joint Committee on Human Rights at Westminster. Holding government to account to deliver on the Concluding Observations will continue to be an important focus of our work over forthcoming years.

February 2009 saw the publication of NICCY's review of children's rights in Northern Ireland. This was the culmination of a large amount of work undertaken by staff across the organisation, as well as numerous help from individuals and organisations throughout Northern Ireland. Importantly, the report was informed by talking to more than 2000 children and young people and receiving questionnaires from a further 300 children and young people. This fieldwork formed part of a wider review of legislation, policy and literature on children's rights. Part of this review was commissioned through external research and identified where laws and practices have changed since our baseline review of children's rights in 2004.

The report: 'Children's rights: Rhetoric or Reality', was launched at the Long Gallery to a full-capacity audience including Executive Ministers, MLAs and representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors. The Commissioner used this opportunity to urge Ministers and government departments to consider, and act where needed, on the findings of the review and to implement action to prioritise the rights and best interests of children and young people across all aspects of legislation, policy and practice. In advance of the launch NICCY's Youth Panel produced a short video outlining some of the key findings. This was shown at the launch and posted on the NICCY Youth Panel YouTube channel.

Following the launch more than 700 hard copies of the report have been distributed, and its chapters have been downloaded more than 8,200 times from the website. NICCY is currently planning further dissemination of the review and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations, through policy briefings, workshops, children and young people's campaign briefings. These will form the basis of NICCY's year long celebration of the UNCRC starting on the 20 anniversary of its completion, in November 2009.

In addition to these larger scale projects, NICCY also undertook policy analysis around more specific issues. We responded to 32 government consultations, including the Northern Ireland Office's (NIO) consultation on community safety, DHSSPS consultation on Mental Capacity and Mental Health legislation, and DE's draft Transfer 2010 Guidance. In each of these cases – and many others – we also met a range of officials and policy makers to express our concerns at the proposals and to seek to ensure that the new policies would have a positive impact on children.



In February 2009 NICCY hosted a meeting of individuals and organisations with an interest in involving children and young people in peer research. It was agreed that this was a useful opportunity to share good practice and so NICCY have gone on to develop this into a Network of interested groups to further encourage the sharing of information and knowledge.

NICCY's research is supported by clear ethical guidance and is monitored by both our Ethics Committee and our Shadow Ethics Committee made up of members of NICCY's Youth Panel. Both of these ensure that our work meets ethical standards and protects children and young people from risk.

All NICCY's policy and research work over this year and previous years can be accessed via our website (www.niccy.org).

Communicating at NICCY

Influencing change and promoting mutual understanding of the work we are set up to do in NICCY, means communicating with others is at the heart of what we do. We engage both formally and informally with a vast range of stakeholders from children and young people themselves to government, the media and many individuals and groups all with the same aim in mind – to make this world a better place for children and young people.

One of the key things that NICCY does to communicate is to make sure that children and young people are not only at the heart of what we do as an organisation, but that their views and voices are heard.

On August 12 2008, members of the NICCY Youth Panel, with support from communications staff, launched a short film on the YouTube video sharing website to mark International Day of Youth. The video, which explained some of the issues young people experience, attracted considerable media interest and also marked the launch of the Youth Panel's own channel on YouTube (visit www.youtube.com and search for NICCY Youth Panel to see all the panel's videos).

The need for children and young people's views and voices to be heard and listened to was also a key message from the Commissioner as the debate on transfer to post-primary education continued throughout the year.

As the legislation which established NICCY made the promotion and safeguarding of children's rights and best interests key to our work, the launch of the Children's Rights Review at Stormont attracted both media attendance and interest from senior political figures from across the Northern Ireland political spectrum.

The gaps in children's rights were not only highlighted at Stormont, but on the international stage during the presentation to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child at Geneva.



Considerable effort was put into making sure that the key issues were drawn to committee members, with NICCY represented on the UK's communications team, ensuring that the Northern Ireland messages were heard on local, regional and national media.

Using a variety of tools, from printed materials through to video, the issues were developed and several of the topics NICCY brought to the Committee's attention were included in their Concluding Observations.

Before the current economic downturn, NICCY was highlighting the issue of child poverty and gave evidence to the OFMdfM's committee in relation to the need for the NI Executive to act on the report's recommendations.

A key focus of NICCY's work was to bring the issues affecting children directly to government's attention. This involved meeting with Ministers, developing briefings, attending party conferences and supporting young people to report their issues directly to individual Ministers or, committees. This has been a very successful initiative and one which is being further developed this year.

The work with the Media and the many journalists we meet and talk to about the issues faced by children and young people is a major part of the work of the Communications team. Over the period we issued media releases and statements on topics ranging from school transfer and the 11 Plus, to child poverty, physical punishment, and finding more safe and accessible things for children and young people to do.

The Commissioner was featured in all of the Northern Irish daily newspapers this year, and considerable work has begun on the Commissioner being featured in regional papers, and building up a good network of regional contacts. As a result there have been more than 250 articles this year that have featured the Commissioner or the office, a good increase on the previous year. There has also been an increase in coverage of the Youth Panel, consolidating on the work carried out on International Day of Youth, to raise the profile of the Youth Panel, work that will continue over the next year.

We recognise and are grateful for the work and the commitment of the NI media in supporting the many initiatives over the year by providing the opportunity to bring these issues into the homes and workplaces of so many people.

NICCY's corporate web site (www.niccy.org) continued to attract considerable visitors and several thousand documents were downloaded throughout the year. A major redesign of the site was started in year and launched in June 2009. The new site will provide a flexible and dynamic online platform to communicate the work of the Commissioner over the coming years.



Another important piece of work was a review of NICCY's overall online presence, with a particular focus on assessing new opportunities for NICCY to engage with children and young people on social networking sites. Following on from this a number of recommendations were made which are being implemented in 2009/10.

All aspects of NICCY's work were highlighted with the publication in November of the award winning NICCY News Annual Review. More than 200,000 readers received a copy of the review.

Corporate Services supporting NICCY

During 2008/09 the Corporate Services team continued its important role of supporting the organisation by developing and maintaining structures, procedures and policies essential for the smooth running and operation of the organisation.

Much of this work was centred around the consolidation of effective governance arrangements as set out by both internal audit and an independent external auditor. This involved maintaining and further developing an effective Audit and Risk Committee. The committee continued to provide independent oversight on our work as well as supporting the Commissioner in discharging her role in relation to managing risk, internal control and corporate governance. In addition, NICCY's annual accounts are audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office and there is an oversight of the office by our sponsoring department OFMdfM.

As always, NICCY remains committed to being accountable for, and demonstrating value for money, in our work on behalf of children and young people.

In keeping with NICCY's culture of making sure that children and young people have a voice, all recruitment activity included young people from the NICCY Youth Panel. This involved young people having a say throughout the entire process, from short listing through to sitting on the interview and selection panels. All of the young people involved received recruitment and selection training that was specific and tailored to their needs. Depending on the posts being recruited the young people were also supported by independent advisors.

NICCY continues to encourage work placements for children and young people who are of school age. We believe it is important to offer opportunities to young people who wish to gain an insight into the work of the Commissioner and develop their own skills across the various departments. We aim to take on 12 student placements on an annual basis with the length of placement varying from days to weeks depending on the needs of the young person. When NICCY has specific ongoing projects we can also provide opportunities for older young people to become involved as this benefits both the young person and the work of NICCY.

The Corporate Services team has continued to develop new and review existing policies. During 2008/09 the decision was taken to move away from the paper



based staff handbook and use an electronic version instead. This enables staff to get immediate access to policies whilst ensuring that they are the most up to date version. As part of the ongoing performance management process within NICCY, a new staff appraisal programme has been implemented. This enables staff to regularly monitor their progress against the goals and objectives set with their Line Manager. It also enables them to identify any training needs and plan for these accordingly.

In line with the family-friendly ethos of the organisation, Corporate Services provided support for staff seeking more flexible working arrangements. NICCY recognises that there are daily stresses and strains on staff and in order to support employees, we have continued to offer our Employee Assistance Programme through Carecall.

During 2008/09, NICCY continued to work in partnership with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). However, the previous Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (POCVA) checks ceased in March 2008 and AccessNI took over as being the new disclosure service in Northern Ireland. This enables NICCY to make a more informed recruitment decision as AccessNI provides detailed criminal history information about anyone seeking paid or unpaid work in certain defined areas, such as working with children or vulnerable adults.

From October 2009 the launch of the new Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) will provide additional safeguards to protect children and vulnerable adults. This is a registration scheme which will prevent those who are deemed to be unsuitable from gaining access to children or vulnerable adults through their work. This will be achieved by helping to ensure that employers benefit from an improved vetting service and that those who are known to be unsuitable are barred from working with children and/or vulnerable adults at the earliest possible opportunity.

Employers, Social Services and professional regulators will have to notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority of relevant information so individuals who pose a threat to vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Over the course of the year, NICCY through its day to day work with children and young people received a number of disclosures of a child protection nature. These were dealt with and appropriately referred on to the relevant authorities by designated child protection officers, in line with Regional Child Protection procedures.

NICCY's child protection policy was scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Committee and reviewed in light of their and staff recommendations. All new staff commencing employment with NICCY are required to attend a two day child protection training programme. An annual training event relating to child protection and keeping safe is also given to all existing staff through an external service provider and this is tailored to the needs of the organisation. This reviewed signs



and symptoms of abuse, referral procedures and new AccessNI arrangements. The child protection policy is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains up to date and addresses any emerging issues.

Other areas of work undertaken by the team include the operation of NICCY's financial systems and reporting. In addition we lead on meeting IT needs and making sure standards, in dealing with suppliers, are maintained in line with Government purchasing requirements.

NICCY received a total of 3 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests during 2008/09 and responses to these requests were sent within the required timeframes.

During 2008/09, NICCY ensured the accurate and timely completion of all returns for the Equality Commission in line with the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998 and the annual progress reports on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006 were also submitted.

During the year NICCY did not receive any formal complaints against the office.

Risks Facing NICCY

The Statement on Internal Control sets out our risk management process within NICCY and the actions taken in the year 2008/09 to embed this within the organisation. As stated above, NICCY's Audit and Risk Committee whose membership is drawn from external representatives, has a major governance role in relation to audit and risk factors involved in the work of the Commissioner.

NICCY's Corporate Risk Register 2008/09 identified 11 risks across the four quadrants of the Balanced Scorecard, which is used for our business planning. Four of the risks identified are strategic risks; examples include the impact of impairment of reputation on NICCY's objectives, the risk of impairment of NICCY's independence, and the risk of failing to fulfil the statutory duties within the legislation, with a further risk of legal sanction. The Corporate Risk Register identifies seven operational risks; examples include child protection issues, judicial review of a decision not to provide financial assistance, and insufficient resources to carry out activities within the Business Plan. The register also details the controls that are in place to manage these risks; these controls along with the risks are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

NICCY has developed a revised Corporate Risk Register for 2009/10. This risk register is part of the process whereby NICCY has mainstreamed risk management throughout the organisation, including departments establishing departmental risk registers.

NICCY operates within a dynamic environment and therefore regularly reviews this risk register with the help of the Audit and Risk Committee, to make sure all risks are identified and effectively managed.



The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is a corporation sole. She has a Senior Management Team (SMT) consisting of the Commissioner, the Chief Executive, Head of Policy and Research, Head of Communications and Participation, Head of Legal and Casework. SMT's primary purpose is to provide leadership, vision, continuity of purpose, and accountability in taking forward and delivering the mission of the Office of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

NICCY has four reference groups to provide advice and support in key areas, as follows:

- A Youth Panel with 25 young people from across Northern Ireland; this panel acts as a representative consultation committee to provide the Commissioner with views and opinions of children and young people within Northern Ireland. Members are aged between 12 and 18 and represent different backgrounds and abilities.
- An Audit and Risk Committee, formed in April 2006 with three non-executive members, who were appointed by open recruitment. The primary role of the Committee is to independently contribute to the overall process for ensuring that an effective control system is maintained.
- An Ethics Committee, with three independent advisors, and two young people from NICCY's Youth Panel. The role of the Committee is to ensure all research and service reviews meet minimum ethical standards and are carried out following best ethical practice. Over the course of the last year NICCY's ethical guidance was reviewed in light of experience and practice.
- The Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) forum which allows the Commissioner to hear the views and issues raised by these organisations as they work with children and young people. It is also an opportunity for the Commissioner to update the NGO sector on the work she is doing.

Relationships

Reputation

We continue to enhance our reputation within Northern Ireland, the UK and further afield. The Commissioner and the Senior Management Team believes that this is important to NICCY's ability to carry out its work. NICCY monitors its reputation by listening to children and young people when they tell us their views. We listen to employees' opinions, and we monitor how we are reported and what people say about us in the media, as well a variety of other public forums.

Children and young people

Children and young people are central to the work of NICCY. NICCY's Youth Panel is a sounding board and focal point for a range of activities including employee recruitment, our participation work, and steering groups for our research projects. We regularly review our relationship with the Youth Panel so that we can continually improve how we work and engage with them.



Employees

NICCY continued to develop and expand its range of employee policies and procedures to ensure effective management and development. NICCY aimed to recruit and retain the best people, with a diverse range of skills, experience and backgrounds, people who are committed to making NICCY successful. NICCY is working towards achieving Investors in People accreditation to ensure that staff skills are developed to their full potential. NICCY is also committed to supporting staff in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. To this end NICCY is also working to maintain its Employers of Choice accreditation.

Statutory and Non Governmental Organisation bodies

NICCY maintains a good working relationship with its sponsoring body, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. This is through quarterly liaison meetings and other meetings and discussions as required. In addition we meet with committees of the Northern Ireland Assembly on a regular basis on specific issues. NICCY recognises the importance of learning and sharing good practice from other Children's Commissioners and Ombudsmen. We are therefore a member of the British and Irish Network of Ombudsmen and Children's Commissioners (BINOCC), and the European Ombudsmen for Children (ENOC). NICCY has also developed relationships with other statutory and NGO bodies, and Memoranda of Understanding with relevant statutory agencies. NICCY staff attended the third annual BINOCC Staff Conference in Edinburgh in November 2008. This brought together staff from five Commissioner's offices to discuss best practice and ways to work together.

Social, Environmental and Ethical Policies

NICCY is committed to improving the lives of children and young people within Northern Ireland. Children and young people make up almost a third of the population within Northern Ireland. Taking into account this number, and the number of parents whose lives may be affected by improvements in their child's life, NICCY has a far-reaching role in improving social well-being. NICCY also works on an operational level to improve the skills of young people within the workplace, by offering work placements and work shadowing within NICCY itself.

NICCY is committed to preventing pollution, minimising waste and maximising opportunities to re-cycle and re-use resources. We now re-cycle paper, toners and cardboard where possible, and also operate a 'no smoking' policy. Where possible we use carbon neutral paper and printing processes when printing publications.



Future Trends and Factors

There is a range of factors, both short and longer term that will have an impact on the future development of NICCY. These include:

- The development of work under our Corporate Plan 2008 -2011 and our 2009 – 2010 Business Plan;
- Concluding Observations delivered by the Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- The impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on services that affect children and young people;
- The further implementation of the Review of Public Administration, which may lead to changes in the quality of services provided to children and young people;
- The challenge of how best we utilise new and emerging technology to communicate and involve children and young people in our work;
- The impact of the Ten Year Strategy and Action Plan;
- The challenge for Government to meet its target to reduce child poverty by 2010.

Financial Result

NICCY drewdown £1.853 million of its allocation from its sponsoring body for the year 2008/2009. NICCY had expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2009 of £1,790,275.

PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUSINESS OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR 2008-09

To help readers understand how we have worked to achieve our set objectives we have reproduced our corporate objectives and associated actions. For clarity we have used a 'traffic light' system to indicate our progress against our objectives:

- **Green indicates that the corporate objective has been completed**
- **Amber indicates that the objective was partially completed**
- **Red shows that the objective has not been met**

1. Play and Leisure		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
1.1 Safe Places	<p>1.1 A Establish project team and action plan - input from teams (based on required skill set) and NICCY Youth Panel</p> <p>1.1 B Play Strategy Produce a first stage review of existing policy and legislation on play and leisure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Action Plan for fieldwork in Yr 2 on basis of findings of review • Explore possible young people led campaign (video on play) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team in place • Develop project action plan • Implement action plan • Mapping exercise - overarching policies and legislation • Review of Play policies in district councils • Action plan developed for fieldwork in Yr 2



1. Play and Leisure		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>1.1 Safe Places</p>	<p>1.1 C Communications Activity Proactively seek PR opportunities on Play and Leisure including: Media, Partner events, Public Affairs, stakeholder communications and online activity</p> <p>1.1 D Policy work Produce consultation responses, inquiry reports, submissions, briefings for Commissioner/SMT as required and policy information for speeches</p> <p>1.1 E Legal & Casework Monitor casework and queries to identify strategic cases/issues for further action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the forward planning diary • Develop calendar of events/activity • Produce 4 media releases and briefings • Organise 3 key media interviews • Co-ordinate political contact/public affairs activity and liaison • Support development of 1 keynote speech • Develop and maintain play section of NICCY web site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce consultation responses in line with priorities • Produce briefing papers • Inquiry Reports • Draft speeches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly reports reviewed by HoD • Review of policy and legislative developments in relation to Play



1. Play and Leisure		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
1.1 Safe Places	1.1 F UN Reporting Communicate concluding observations from UNCRC to key audiences Follow up on concluding observations from UNCRC with relevant government departments in relation to Article 31 – Child’s Right to Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan developed • Key audiences informed • Concluding Observations discussed with relevant statutory partners • Action Plan for follow up of concluding observations agreed and implemented



2. Having Your Say		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>2.1 Being Heard and Making A Difference</p>	<p>2.1 A Establish project team and action plan - input from teams (based on required skill set) and NICCY Youth Panel</p> <p>2.1 B Working with marginalised children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop Action Research Project to facilitate the voice of marginalised children and young people <p>2.1 C Participation of children and young people in decision making bodies</p> <p>Develop Participation Standards (with Partners such as The Big Deal, and The Participation Network)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team in place • Develop project action plan • Implement action plan • Identify partners/criteria • Develop Terms of Reference and Action Plan for Year 1 • Engage children and young people • Work in partnership, in preparation for RPA, to develop standards of participation when working with children and young people • Publication of Standards for Shadow Youth Councils and ELB youth forums • Develop internal NICCY children and young people Governance policy plan and implement Hear by Right model of participation



2. Having Your Say		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>2.1 Being Heard and Making A Difference</p>	<p>Review and further develop the Children's Rights Impact assessment tool (CRIA)</p> <p>Further develop Democra School programme</p> <p>Develop Article 12 Policy Paper</p> <p>2.1 D Develop NICCY Participation Advisory Forum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow –up on evaluation of Consultation report • Produce revised CRIA for use by NICCY and Statutory Authorities in developing Policy and legislation • Develop Standards of Good practice for Statutory Agencies/public bodies • L&C advice given on legislative processes • Develop Public Affairs strategy to enable School Councils to become part of School Development Plans and are inspected by ETI • Article 12 Policy Paper Produced and Launched • Terms of reference developed • Two meetings facilitated by NICCY • Work in partnership with key stakeholders to promote the voice of children and young people through participation



2. Having Your Say		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>2.1 Being Heard and Making A Difference</p>	<p>2.1 E BINOCC Joint Activity Develop and initiate Participation toolkit as part of BINOCC programme of work</p> <p>2.1 F Communications Activity - Proactively seek PR opportunities on Having Your Say including: Media, Partner events, Public Affairs, stakeholder communications and online activity</p> <p>2.1 G Policy work Produce consultation responses, inquiry reports, submissions, briefings for Commissioner/SMT as required and policy information for speeches</p> <p>Involve NICCY Youth Panel in consultation responses where appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner’s joint BINOCC working programme agreed • Participation Toolkit concept explored • Monitor the forward planning diary • Develop calendar of events/activity • Produce 4 media releases and briefings • Organise 3 key media interviews • Co-ordinate political contact/public affairs activity and liaison • Support development of 1 keynote speech • Develop and maintain Having Your Say section of NICCY web site • Produce consultation responses • Produce briefing papers • NICCY Youth Panel involved in consultation responses in relation to children and young people in decision-making bodies as appropriate



2. Having Your Say		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>2.1 Being Heard and Making A Difference</p>	<p>2.1 H Legal & Casework Maintain and develop existing complaints and advocacy service</p> <p>Develop outreach clinics</p> <p>Monitor developments regarding voice of young person in Private Law proceedings</p> <p>2.1 I Develop protocol on use of peer researchers</p> <p>2.1 J UN Reporting Communicate concluding observations from UNCRC to key audiences</p> <p>Follow up on concluding observations from UNCRC with relevant government departments in relation to Article 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify localities for Outreach service • Develop casework service at local level where children and young people are • Involvement with COAC and other agencies • Develop protocol on use of peer researchers • Develop plan for use of peer researchers in subsequent years • Communications plan developed • Key audiences informed • Concluding Observations discussed with relevant statutory partners • Action Plan for follow up of Concluding Observations agreed and implemented



Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>2.1 Being Heard and Making A Difference</p>	<p>2.1 K NICCY UNCRC Awareness Continue to raise awareness of Children's Rights</p> <p>2.1 L NICCY Youth Panel Implement recommendations from review of the Youth Panel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to run the 'Train the Trainers' Programme' • Explore other opportunities for promoting the UNCRC using the Train the Trainers model • Further develop UNCRC workshop resources on www.niccy.org • Develop action plan to outwork recommendations as agreed between NYP /SMT • NYP 85% satisfied in their level of participation



3. Wellbeing and Mental Health		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>3.1 Getting the Right Mental Health Services</p>	<p>3.1 A Establish project team and action plan - input from teams (based on required skill set) and NICCY Youth Panel</p> <p>3.1 B Promoting Emotional Wellbeing Research project on the promotion of emotional wellbeing in children (Tier one services)</p> <p>3.1 C Communications Activity - Proactively seek PR opportunities on Wellbeing and Mental Health including: Media, Partner events, Public Affairs, stakeholder communications and online activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team in place • Develop project action plan • Implement action plan • Secondary data analysis • Fieldwork with children and young people • Data gathered and analysed for production of report in Yr 2 • Monitor the forward planning diary • Develop calendar of events/activity • Produce 4 media releases and briefings • Organise 3 key media interviews • Co-ordinate political contact/public affairs activity and liaison • Support development of 1 keynote speech • Develop and maintain wellbeing and mental health section of NICCY web site



3. Wellbeing and Mental Health		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>3.1 Getting the Right Mental Health Services</p>	<p>3.1 D Policy work Produce consultation responses, inquiry reports, submissions, briefings for Commissioner/SMT as required and policy information for speeches</p> <p>3.1 E Legal & Casework Monitor Casework to identify strategic cases/ legal issues for further action</p> <p>Write and submit report to UN Discussion Day on the Children’s Right to Education in Emergency Situations</p> <p>3.1 F UN Reporting Communicate concluding observations from UNCRC to key audiences</p> <p>Follow up on concluding observations from UNCRC with relevant government departments in relation to Articles 23,24 and 25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of consultation responses • Production of briefing papers • Monthly reports reviewed by HoD • Review of Policy and legislative developments in Mental Health • Report written • Attendance at Discussion day • Recommendations made • Communications plan developed • Key audiences informed • Concluding Observations discussed with relevant statutory partners • Action Plan for follow up on Concluding Observations agreed and implemented



4. Protection		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
4.1 Child Abuse	<p>4.1 A Establish project team and action plan - input from teams (based on required skill set) and NICCY Youth Panel</p> <p>4.1 B Physical Punishment Judicial Review Pursue appeal from Judicial Review on Physical Punishment</p> <p>4.1 C Physical Punishment Report Complete and launch report</p> <p>4.1 D Positive Parenting Explore possibility of campaign with partners</p> <p>4.1 E RE: 'E' Case (Holy Cross School Case) Pursue case through the House of Lords to relation to protection of Child 'E'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team in place • Develop project action plan • Implement action plan • Submissions lodged • Arguments heard • Judgement received • Produce and implement Communications/ Media plan • Publish report • Launch Report • Explore opportunities for a campaign with partners and produce a proposal • Develop partnerships i.e. Children Are Unbeatable • Petition and Submissions lodged with House of Lords • Arguments heard • Judgement received



4. Protection		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>4.1 Child Abuse</p>	<p>4.1 F Communications Activity - Proactively seek PR opportunities on Protection including: Media, Partner events, Public Affairs, stakeholder communications and online activity</p> <p>4.1 G Policy work Produce consultation responses, inquiry reports, submissions, briefings for Commissioner/SMT as required and policy information for speeches</p> <p>4.1 H Develop policy paper on physical punishment and positive parenting & deliver recommendations to the relevant agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the forward planning diary • Develop calendar of events/activity • Produce 4 media releases and briefings • Organise 3 key media interviews • Co-ordinate political contact/public affairs activity and liaison • Support development of 1 keynote speech • Develop and maintain protection section of NICCY web site • Produce consultation responses • Produce briefing papers • Produce Inquiry Reports • Draft speeches • Develop Plan • Review secondary data • Consult stakeholders • Produce Paper



4. Protection		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
4.1 Child Abuse	<p>4.1 I Launch and deliver recommendations to relevant agencies of various policy papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road safety • Sexual health <p>4.1 J UN Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate concluding observations from UNCRC to key audiences • Follow up on concluding observations from UNCRC with relevant government departments in relation to Articles 6 and 19 <p>4.1 K BINOCC Work Scope possible BINOCC work- unaccompanied asylum seeking children</p> <p>4.1 L Consider review of Child death reports with ROI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with relevant Officials • Papers produced and launched • Communications plan developed • Key audiences informed • Concluding Observation discussed with relevant statutory partner • Action Plan for follow up of Concluding Observations agreed and implemented • Plan of work agreed • Meetings with Ministers held • Paper written • Meet with colleagues in Irish office to scope possibility of cross border review



5. Equal Treatment		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
5.1 Discrimination	<p>5.1 A Establish project input from teams (based on required skill set) and NICCY Youth Panel</p> <p>5.1 B Deliver and follow up the recommendations of research on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traveller Education • Advocacy for disabled children • Poverty <p>5.1 C Commission and support the writing of Information Pack on Poverty in Northern Ireland with Equality Commission, Human Rights Commission and Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network</p> <p>5.1 D Communications Activity - Proactively seek PR opportunities on Equal Treatment including: Media, Partner events, Public Affairs, stakeholder communications and online activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team in place • Develop project action plan • Implement action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with relevant officials completed – recommendations delivered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External steering group established • Contract agreed • Plan of work agreed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the forward planning diary • Develop calendar of events/activity • Produce 4 media releases and briefings • Organise 3 key media interviews • Co-ordinate political contact/public affairs activity and liaison • Support development of 1 keynote speech • Develop and maintain equal treatment section of NICCY web site



5. Equal Treatment		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
<p>5.1 Discrimination</p>	<p>5.1 E Policy work Produce consultation responses, inquiry reports, submissions, briefings for Commissioner/SMT as required and policy information for speeches</p> <p>5.1 F Legal & Casework Monitor casework and queries to identify strategic cases/issues for further action</p> <p>5.1 G Review recommendations of speech and language taskforce and advise government</p> <p>5.1H UN Reporting Communicate concluding observations from UNCRC to key audiences</p> <p>Follow up on concluding observations from UNCRC with relevant government departments in relation to Article 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce consultation responses • Briefing papers • Inquiry Reports • Speeches • Monthly reports reviewed by HoD • Review of policy and legislative developments in relation to Equal Treatment • Meetings with Govt Officials • Action plan agreed • Communications plan developed • Key audiences informed • Concluding Observations discussed with relevant statutory partners • Action Plan for follow up of Concluding Observations agreed and implemented



5. Equal Treatment		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
5.1 Discrimination	5.1 I BINOCC Joint Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibility of a campaign to raise awareness of how children and young people are treated in the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with BINOCC partners on agenda for joint meeting

6. Corporate		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
6.1	6.1 A Establish project input from teams (based on required skill set) and NICCY Youth Panel 6.1 B Children's Rights Review Complete Children's rights report Design, print and launch final report 6.1 C UNCRC Country Report Report to UNCRC pre-sessional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Team in place Develop project action plan Implement action plan Identification of relevant research Identification of Policy and legislation Production of report merging all data sources (July – Sept) Report produced in Q3 and launched in Q4 Report completed BINOCC communications plan implemented Evidence given Recommendations pursued as part of Action Plan on Follow Up of Concluding Observations



6. Corporate		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
6.1	<p>6.1 D Formal investigation Carry out investigation or service reviews as appropriate</p> <p>6.1 E Corporate Communications Undertake a major awareness survey with key stakeholders</p> <p>6.1 F Corporate Reputation and Raising Awareness Promote the role and function of the Commissioner</p> <p>Communicate NICCY's work and priorities</p> <p>Outreach Programme/ Regional Development</p> <p>Undertake Schools Awareness Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce Terms of Reference • Establish Review • Develop plan • Carry out fieldwork • Write report with recommendations • Develop communications plan • Develop terms of reference • Produce specification, tender and appoint consultancy to undertake work • Review findings of survey to develop an Action Plan • Identify and support public relations opportunities/ activities/events • Develop a Corporate Communications Plan • NICCY Awareness toolkit developed and all staff trained in its use • Deliver information sessions to 100 stakeholders by key staff • Develop regional programme to include all teams within NICCY • NICCY promotional materials delivered to every Year 8 pupil in NI



6. Corporate		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
6.1	<p>6.1 G Corporate Publications Produce a range of NICCY Publications</p> <p>6.1 H Develop NICCY Online Presence</p> <p>6.1 I Review of Office Review and implement recommendations from Deloitte Report</p> <p>6.1 J Ethics Committee Review, maintain and support the work of NICCY Ethics and Shadow Ethics Committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a range of materials including: • Annual Review Q2-Q3 • Xmas Card Q3 • Corporate Plan Q2 • Ezine x 2 • CRR report and children and young people version Q2 – Q3 • Policy Papers x 3 Q4 (Having Your Say, Positive Parenting, Mental Health) • Report on emotional health & wellbeing Q4 • Develop new Corporate website to ensure it is fit for purpose for the new Corporate Plan • Explore social networking as communications tool • Develop and implement Action Plan for carrying out recommendations • Meetings x3 per annum for both Committees • Training of Committees



6. Corporate		
Corporate Objective	Actions	Measure of success & target
6.1	<p>6.1 K Corporate Functions Provide Corporate Services support for the organisation</p> <p>Corporate Reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing NICCY policies and develop new policies as required • HR services including recruitment of new staff as required • Review Employers of Choice Scheme • Finance services including preparation and maintenance of annual and monthly accounts • Facilities management including maintaining building and IT infrastructure • Staff development and training • Coordinate corporate/business planning activity • Monitor corporate risk for the organisation and liaise with Audit and Risk Committee • Produce 07- 08 Annual Report Q2 – Q3 • Produce 09 – 10 Business Plan Q4



REMUNERATION REPORT

Remuneration Policy

The remuneration of the Commissioner and the Chief Executive is made in accordance with the Pay Strategy for Senior Civil Servants as set by the Prime Minister following independent advice from the Review Body on Senior Salaries. The remuneration of all senior civil servants is entirely performance-based.

The Head of the Civil Service assesses the performance of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, whilst the performance of the Chief Executive is assessed by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, using the formal appraisal system adopted by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

The remuneration of the other members of the Senior Management Team is made in accordance with the pay awards set out by Northern Ireland Civil Service. Remuneration is entirely performance-based, with performance being assessed by the Chief Executive, using the formal appraisal system adopted by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Service Contracts

The appointment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is made by the First Minister and deputy First Minister under Article 5 of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003, and in accordance with the recruitment code of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The terms and conditions are as set out in Schedule 2 to the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003.

Patricia Lewsley was appointed as Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland on 8 January 2007 for a four-year period, with the possibility of renewal for a further term.

The other members of the Senior Management Team are direct employees of the Commissioner; the appointments, which are permanent, are analogous to grades in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) with terms and conditions that are very similar but not necessarily identical to those that apply to the NICS.



Salary and Pension Entitlement *(audited)*

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioner and Senior Management.

	2008-09		2007-08	
	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)
Commissioner				
P Lewsley	75 – 80	4,500	75 – 80	4,500
General Management				
B McNeany (Chief Executive) Resigned 19/02/2008	-	-	65 – 70	0
G Campbell (Chief Executive) Appointed 01/07/2008	40 – 45 <i>(55-60 full year equivalent)</i>	0	-	-
E Ryan (Head of Legal Services and Complaints) Appointed 29/10/08 Previously Acting Head of Legal Services & Complaints	45 – 50	0	30 - 35	0
T Devlin (Head of Research, Policy and Service Review) Resigned 18/08/08	15 – 20 <i>(45-50 full year equivalent)</i>	0	50 - 55	0
M Kinghan (Head of Communications and Participation)	45 – 50	0	45 - 50	0
S Weiniger (Corporate Services Manager) Resigned 04/04/2008	0 – 5 <i>(35-40 full year equivalent)</i>	0	35 – 40	0
A Tennant (Head of Research, Policy and Service Review) Appointed 19/01/09	5 – 10 <i>(35-40 full year equivalent)</i>	0	-	-

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary, performance pay or bonuses, any allowance such as London Weighting Allowances, to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation. This report is based on payments made by the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland 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 the HM Revenue & Customs as a taxable emolument. The Commissioner received a company car in April 2007 as part of her remuneration package and will be taxed accordingly on this benefit. The other members of the Senior Management Team did not receive any benefits in kind during the year ended 31 March 2009.

Pension Entitlement (audited)

	Accrued pension at age 60 as at 31/3/09 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at age 60 £'000	CETV at 31/3/08 £'000	CETV at 31/3/09 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account Nearest £100
Commissioner						
P Lewsley	0 – 5 no lump sum	0 -2.5 no lump sum	24	46	17	0
General Management						
G Campbell (Chief Executive) Appointed 01/07/2008	0 – 5 no lump sum	0 -2.5 no lump sum	0	7	6	0
E Ryan (Head of Legal Services and Complaints) Appointed 29/10/08 Previously Acting Head of Legal Services & Complaints	0 – 5 no lump sum	0 - 2.5 no lump sum	16	37	18	0
T Devlin (Head of Research, Policy and Service Review) Resigned 18/08/08	0 - 5 no lump sum	0 – 2.5 no lump sum	49	53	3	0
M Kinghan (Head of Communications and Participation)	15 - 20 no lump sum	0 - 2.5 no lump sum	282	315	6	0
S Weiniger (Corporate Services Manager) Resigned 04/04/08	0 - 5 no lump sum	0 – 2.5 no lump sum	37	37	0	0
A Tennant (Head of Research, Policy & Service Review) Appointed 19/01/09	0 – 5 no lump sum	0 -2.5 no lump sum	0	1	1	0



Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP). Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' defined benefit arrangements (classic, premium, and classic plus). These arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under classic, premium, and classic plus are increased annually in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index. New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining a good quality 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account). New entrants joining on or after 30 July 2007 are eligible for membership of the nuvos arrangement or they can opt for a partnership pension account. Nuvos is an 'earned pension' arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The current rate is 2.3%. Earned pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases in the RPI and attract annual pension increase.

Employee contributions are set at the rate of 1.5% of pensionable earnings for classic and 3.5% for premium, classic plus and nuvos. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years' pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic plus is essentially a variation of premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic.

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

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**.

Further details about the CSP arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk



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 figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the CSP arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

Real increase in CETV

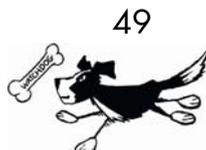
This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation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

Signed by:



Patricia Lewsley
Commissioner and Accounting Officer

Date: 26 October 2009



STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under Schedule 2 11 (1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is required to prepare a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis determined by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's state of affairs at the year-end and of its income and expenditure, recognised gains and losses 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 Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, 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; and
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland will continue in operation.

The Accounting Officer of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has designated the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland as the Accounting Officer. The Commissioner's duties as Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances, for the keeping of proper records and for safeguarding NICCY's assets are set out in the Non-Departmental Public Bodies Accounting Officer's Memorandum issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Signed by:



Patricia Lewsley
Commissioner and Accounting Officer



STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

Scope of Responsibility

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in 'Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI)'

The Accounting Officer of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, has designated me as the Accounting Officer for NICCY. In this role I am personally responsible for propriety and regularity in the management of the public funds for which I have charge and for the day to day operations and management of NICCY. The relationship between NICCY and OFMdFM is set out in NICCY's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum as agreed with OFMdFM and DFP. The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum defines the financial and administrative framework within which NICCY operates, and sets out the conditions on which grant-in-aid is paid and relevant delegations. I act in accordance with the instructions and guidance contained within MPMNI and other instructions and guidance issued from time to time by OFMdFM and DFP – in particular, the NDPB Accounting Officer's Memorandum issued by DFP and the Treasury document 'Regularity and Propriety'.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2009 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts, and accords with Department of Finance and Personnel guidance.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland has developed a robust structure for overseeing the risk management process and for ensuring that it has identified its objectives and risks alongside a range of controls to manage these risks. Key members of the senior management team have been trained in risk management best practice to identify and assess risks which might impact on corporate or business plan objectives.



A corporate risk register is in place to define the system for managing risk. The register includes for each identified risk, the risk rating, business implications, controls and responsible owners and details any further action required to fully manage each risk. NICCY's Audit and Risk Management Committee has oversight for the initiatives taken by staff officers to promote risk management throughout the organisation. Risk management is a standing item at senior management team meetings and I meet with my senior management team on a quarterly basis to review and update NICCY's risk management processes and the corporate risk register.

I report on risk management to OFMdfM on a quarterly basis and keep OFMdfM apprised of any changes and/or developments to the corporate risk register. OFMdfM also designates a Liaison Officer who attends each quarterly meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

The Risk and Control Framework

I have ensured that NICCY has policies and procedures in place for verifying that risk management and internal control are regularly reviewed and reported on. NICCY has an internal audit function which operates to Government Internal Audit Standards and whose work is informed by an analysis of risk to which NICCY is exposed and annual audit plans are based on this analysis. In 2008/09, Internal Audit reviewed the following functions and provided assurance ratings as indicated:

- Communications – Substantial Assurance
- Corporate Buildings – Satisfactory Assurance
- Risk Management – Satisfactory Assurance
- Payroll – Limited Assurance
- IT Security, Strategy and Information Management – Limited Assurance.

In its annual assurance report, Internal Audit reported that there is, overall, limited assurance that the systems within NICCY can be relied upon to support the overall achievement of objectives. However, Internal Audit also reported that since the internal audit reviews were initially undertaken, NICCY has shown a positive attitude with regard to the implementation of agreed recommendations and has already made progress towards enhancing the existing control frameworks. All recommendations relating to payroll have been implemented. In addition, Internal Audit reported that NICCY continues to make progress towards the implementation of the remaining recommendations in relation to ICT.

With regard to the wider control environment, NICCY has in place a range of organisational controls, commensurate with the current assessment of risk, designed to ensure the efficient and effective discharge of its business in accordance with the law and departmental direction. Every effort is made to ensure that the objectives of NICCY are pursued in accordance with the recognised and accepted standards of public administration.



For example: NICCY's recruitment and selection policies and procedures are based on the principle of equality of opportunity and controls are in place to ensure that all such decisions are taken in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Risk to information is considered as an integral part of the process, particularly in relation to risk of damage to NICCY's reputation and the risk of failure of management information systems. While monitoring of risks is performed on a continual basis, a formal review of risks (including risks to information) is undertaken on a quarterly and annual basis.

Review of Effectiveness

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 and the executive managers within the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letters and other reports. I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Audit and Risk Committee and internal auditors and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

A review of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland must be carried out every three years, as per Article 24 of the NICCY Establishing Order. A report in 2007/08 concluded that NICCY had achieved most of its key objectives, and set out recommendations for further improvement. Senior management made significant progress on these recommendations throughout 2008/09 and this was a regular agenda item at quarterly meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Internal Audit annual assurance report in respect of the year ended 31 March 2009 provided a limited level of assurance in relation to the adequacy of the systems of control in place within the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland and their operation throughout the period under review. I have given priority to improving the internal control environment and will ensure that the remaining recommendations are implemented within the agreed timeframe.

Signed by



Patricia Lewsley
Commissioner and Accounting Officer
The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People

Date: 26 October 2009

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland

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

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2009 under The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003. These comprise the Operating Cost Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cashflow Statement, the Statement of Recognised Gains and Losses, and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the information in the Remuneration Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

Respective responsibilities of the Commissioner and auditor

The Commissioner as Accounting Officer is responsible for preparing the Annual Report, which includes the Remuneration Report, and the financial statements in accordance with The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003 and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's directions made thereunder and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions. These responsibilities are set out in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities.

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements and the part of the remuneration report to be audited in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, and with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

I report to you my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and whether the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003 and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's directions made thereunder. I report to you whether, in my opinion, the information, which comprises the Directors' report, included in the Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements. I also report whether in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

In addition, I report to you if The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland has not kept proper accounting records, if I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit, or if information specified by the Department of Finance and Personnel regarding remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed.



I review whether the Statement on Internal control reflects The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's compliance with the Department of Finance and Personnel's guidance, and I report if it does not. I am not required to consider whether this statement covers all risks and controls, or form an opinion on the effectiveness of The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's corporate governance procedures or its risk and control procedures.

I read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. This other information comprises the Management Commentary, the Performance against Business Objectives for the year 2008/09 and the unaudited part of the Remuneration Report. I consider the implications for my certificate if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. My responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

Basis of audit opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. My audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts, disclosures and regularity of financial transactions included in the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made by the Commissioner in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are most appropriate to The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error, and that in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited.

Opinions

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003 and directions made thereunder by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, of the state of The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's affairs as at 31 March 2009 and of its net expenditure after notional costs, recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the year then ended;



- the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003 and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's directions made thereunder; and
- information, which comprises the Directors' report, included within the Annual Report, is consistent with the financial statements.

Opinion on Regularity

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

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Kieran J Donnelly

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

Date 3 November 2009

**OPERATING COST STATEMENT FOR YEAR
 ENDED 31 MARCH 2009**

	Notes	Year to 31/03/09 £	Year to 31/03/08 £
Expenditure			
Staff Salaries and Commissioner's Fees	2	(905,871)	(909,947)
Operating Costs	3	(539,085)	(558,471)
Programme Costs	4	(229,812)	(260,564)
Depreciation	5	(113,433)	(138,623)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Expenditure before Notional Costs		(1,788,201)	(1,867,605)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets		(476)	0
Diminution in value of fixed assets		(1,598)	0
Notional Cost of Capital	9	<hr/> (21,266)	<hr/> (22,931)
Net Expenditure After Notional Costs		(1,811,541)	(1,890,536)
Reversal of Notional Cost of Capital	9	21,266	22,931
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Transfer From Reserves		<hr/> (1,790,275)	<hr/> (1,867,605)

All amounts above relate to continuing activities.

The notes on pages 61-75 form part of these accounts.

**STATEMENT OF RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED
 31 MARCH 2009**

	Notes	Year to 31/03/09 £	Year to 31/03/08 £
Net (loss)/gain on revaluation of tangible fixed assets	11	14,531	0
Total recognised (losses)/gains relating to the year		<u>14,531</u>	<u>0</u>

The notes on pages 61-75 form part of these accounts.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2009

	Notes	Year to 31/03/09 £	Year to 31/03/08 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	5	415,054	506,346
Intangible Fixed Assets	5	1,124	0
		416,178	506,346
Current Assets			
Debtors	6	52,581	36,463
Cash & Bank	7	267,115	111,935
		319,696	148,398
Current Liabilities			
Amounts falling within 1 year	8	(89,658)	(85,784)
Net Current Assets		230,038	62,614
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		646,216	568,960
Provisions for Liabilities and Charges		0	0
		646,216	568,960
Financed by			
General Reserve	10	631,685	568,960
Revaluation Reserve	11	14,531	0
		646,216	568,960

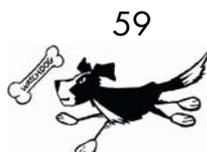
The notes on pages 61-75 form part of these accounts.

Signed By

Patricia Lewsley

Patricia Lewsley
Commissioner and Accounting Officer

Date: 26 October 2009



CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2009

	Notes	Year to 31/03/09 £	Year to 31/03/08 £
Net cash outflow from operating activities	12(a)	(1,687,011)	(1,674,420)
Capital Expenditure:			
Purchases of Assets	5	(10,810)	(13,159)
Financing:	12(b)	1,853,000	1,722,000
Increase/(Decrease) in Cash		<u>155,179</u>	<u>34,421</u>

The notes on pages 61-75 form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

1. **Statement of Accounting Policies**

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Schedule 2 11 (1) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and in accordance with the 2008/09 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland. The accounting policies contained in the FReM follow UK generally accepted accounting practice for companies (UK GAAP) to the extent that it is meaningful and appropriate to the public sector.

Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which has been judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The Commissioner for Children and Young People's accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts.

1.1 **Accounting Convention**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of fixed assets.

1.2 **Funding**

The activities of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland are fully funded by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. Income from other sources is immaterial. Permission must be sought from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister before non-grant income can be applied to the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's activities. Non-grant income for which departmental approval to use is not forthcoming is surrendered to the Consolidated Fund.

Grant-in-Aid and Grant received used to finance activities and expenditure which support the statutory and other objective of the Commissioner for Children and Young People are treated as financing, credited to the General Reserve, because they are regarded as contributions from a controlling party.

1.3 **Expenditure**

All expenditure on goods and services fall within the ambit of the Grant-in-Aid and complies with the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland's Financial Memorandum and government purchasing requirements.



1.4 Fixed Assets

- (a) The fixed asset additions are fully funded by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.
- (b) The cost of all fixed assets has been restated to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end. The revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve.
- (c) A capitalisation threshold of £500 is applied.
- (d) Depreciation is provided on fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset evenly over its expected life as follows:

Furniture and Fittings	10 years
Fixtures	10 years
Office Equipment	3 years
IT Equipment	3 years
Intangibles	3 years

1.5 Pension Costs

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). The defined benefit schemes are unfunded and are non-contributory except in respect of dependants' benefits. The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payments of future benefits is a charge on the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). In respect of the defined contribution schemes, the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland recognises the contributions payable for the year.

1.6 Value Added Tax

The Commissioner does not have any income which is subject to output VAT. Accordingly the Commissioner is not VAT registered and cannot recover any input tax.

1.7 Investments

The Commissioner does not undertake any investment activities.

1.8 Stocks

The value of stocks of consumables is immaterial and the Commissioner does not attribute a value for stocks in the accounts.



1.9 Operating Leases

Operating Lease costs are charged to the Operating Cost Statement over the period of the lease.

1.10 Capital Charge

A charge, reflecting the cost of capital utilised by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, is included in the Operating Cost Statement. The charge is calculated at the real rate set by HM Treasury (currently 3.5%) on the average carrying amount of assets less liabilities.



2. Staff numbers and related costs (including Commissioner)

	Notes	Year to 31/03/09 £	Year to 31/03/08 £
Commissioner Fees		101,239	98,935
Staff Salaries		804,632	811,012
		905,871	909,947

2 (a) Commissioner Fees

	Notes	Year to 31/03/09 £	Year to 31/03/08 £
Commissioner Fees		76,875	75,000
Social Security Costs		7,836	7,810
Pension Costs		16,528	16,125
		101,239	98,935

2(b) Staff Costs

	Total £	Permanent staff £	2008-09 Others (Agency & seconded) £	2007-08 Total £
Wages/Salaries	766,024	565,960	200,064	759,197
Social Security Costs	44,685	44,685	0	47,726
Other Pension Costs	95,162	95,162	0	103,024
Total Net Costs	905,871	705,807	200,064	909,947

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS(NI)) is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme but the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. A full actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2003. Details can be found in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation (www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk).

For 2008/09, employers' contributions of £95,162 were payable to the PCSPS(NI) (2007/08 £103,024) at one of four rates in the range 16.5 to 23.5 per cent (2007/08: 16.5 to 23.5 per cent) of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

The contribution rates reflect benefits as they are accrued, not when the costs are actually incurred, and reflect past experience of the scheme.



Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. No employees of the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland took up this option.

No employees retired early on ill-health grounds during 08-09.

The Commissioner's salary includes taxable benefits in kind but does not include a performance related bonus in accordance with the Commissioner's contract. The Commissioner is a member of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) on the same basis as all other members of staff. At 31 March 2008 the Commissioner has served 2 years and 3 months of a 4-year service contract which may be renewed once. At the year-end she would have been entitled to compensation for premature loss of office amounting to the equivalent of 1.75 years' gross salary.



2(c) Average Number of Persons Employed

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

			2008-09 Number Other (Agency & seconded)	2007-08 Number
	Total	Permanent staff		Total
Commissioner	1	1	0	1
General	23	16	7	20
Management	4	4	0	4
	28	21	7	25



3. Operating Costs

	Year to 31/03/09 £	Year to 31/03/08 £
General Costs		
Travel & Subsistence	20,572	28,793
Staff Recruitment	57,482	10,194
Staff Training	17,348	31,977
Postage	2,711	3,428
Telephones	27,809	36,161
Hospitality	3,520	5,107
Audit – external	14,000	13,000
Insurance	5,874	8,567
Miscellaneous	7,583	4,765
Office Consumables	12,756	23,915
Annual Contracts	38,611	33,678
Legal Costs	(10,754)	9,405
Corporate Services	35,943	40,210
	<u>233,455</u>	<u>249,200</u>
Premises Costs		
Rents	145,477	155,283
Rates	71,495	71,375
Service Charge	39,095	34,349
Electricity	22,255	20,844
Cleaning	27,308	27,420
	<u>305,630</u>	<u>309,271</u>
	<u>539,085</u>	<u>558,471</u>

Corporate Services costs include £4,492 in respect of vehicle operating leases. The rent charge above includes £145,066 in respect of a land and building operating lease.

Legal Costs includes £40,959 of income relating to the year ended 31 March 2008. This income is paid to us from OFMdfM for the Children's Law Centre and is normally paid out to this organisation immediately. In the prior year the payment was made to the Children's Law Centre, but the income was not received until the year ended 31 March 2009.

4. Programme Costs

	Year to 31/03/09 £	Year to 31/03/08 £
Communication & Participation	103,926	99,605
Legal and Complaints	103,473	127,266
Research, Policy and Service Review	22,413	33,693
	<hr/> 229,812 <hr/>	<hr/> 260,564 <hr/>



5. Fixed Assets

	Intangible Fixed Assets	Information Technology	Office Equipment	Furniture	Fixtures	Total 2009
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Valuation at 31/03/08	0	283,533	72,863	89,724	775,493	1,221,613
Transfers	127,840	(127,840)	0	0	0	0
Additions	1,383	4,747	1,563	3,117	0	10,810
Disposals	(8,253)	(12,624)	0	0	0	(20,877)
Revaluation	(8,103)	(9,068)	704	3,436	22,722	9,691
Valuation at 31/03/09	112,867	138,748	75,130	96,277	798,215	1,221,237
Accumulated Depreciation at 31/03/08	0	258,344	71,638	38,909	346,376	715,267
Transfers	116,366	(116,366)	0	0	0	0
Depreciation for the period	10,529	11,700	1,756	9,628	79,822	113,435
Depreciation on disposals	(7,777)	(12,624)	0	0	0	(20,401)
Revaluation	(7,375)	(8,198)	694	1,488	10,149	(3,242)
Accumulated Depreciation at 31/03/09	111,743	132,856	74,088	50,025	436,347	805,059
Net Book Value at 31/03/09	1,124	5,892	1,042	46,252	361,868	416,178
Net Book Value at 31/03/08	0	25,189	1,225	50,815	429,117	506,346

Asset financing:

Owned	1,124	5,892	1,042	46,252	361,868	416,178
Financed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leased	0	0	0	0	0	0
On-balance sheet PFI contracts	0	0	0	0	0	0
PFI residual interests	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net book value at 31/03/09	1,124	5,892	1,042	46,252	361,868	416,178



6. Debtors: amounts due within 12 months

a. Analysis by Type

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
Prepayments	41,949	36,305
Debtors	10,632	158
	<u>52,581</u>	<u>36,463</u>

b. Intra-Government Balances

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
Balances with other central government bodies	0	0
Balances with bodies external to government	52,581	36,463
Total debtors and prepayments at 31 March	<u>52,581</u>	<u>36,463</u>



7. Cash at Bank and in Hand

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
Cash in Bank	266,910	111,370
Cash in Hand	205	565
	267,115	111,935

8. Creditors and Accruals: amounts falling due within 12 months

a. Analysis by Type

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
Taxation and social security	0	255
Creditors	0	1,798
Sundry Creditors and Accruals	89,658	83,731
	89,658	85,784

b. Intra-Government Balances

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
Balances with other central government agencies	59,371	25,809
Balances bodies external to government	30,287	59,975
Total creditors and accruals at 31 March	89,658	85,784



9. Notional Costs

Notional Costs included in Expenditure

	Year to 31/03/09	Year to 31/03/08
	£	£
Notional Costs of Capital	21,266	22,931
	<u>21,266</u>	<u>22,931</u>

10. General Reserve

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
As at 1 April	568,960	714,565
Net expenditure	(1,790,275)	(1,867,605)
Grant-in-Aid received towards resource expenditure	1,842,190	1,708,841
Grant-in-Aid received towards purchase of fixed assets	10,810	13,159
At 31 March	<u>631,685</u>	<u>568,960</u>

11. Revaluation Reserve

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
As at 1 April	0	0
Revaluation of Fixed Assets	14,531	0
At 31 March	<u>14,531</u>	<u>0</u>



12. Notes to Cash Flow Statement

12(a) Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash outflow from operating activities

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
Net expenditure for the financial year.	(1,790,275)	(1,867,605)
Adjustment for non-cash transactions:		
Depreciation	113,433	138,623
Provisions	0	(10,000)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	476	0
Diminution on revaluation	1,598	
Adjustments for movements in working capital:		
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	(16,117)	26,115
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	3,874	38,447
Net cash outflow from operating activities	<u>(1,687,011)</u>	<u>(1,674,420)</u>

12(b) Analysis of financing

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
Grant-in-Aid received from OFMDFM	1,853,000	1,722,000
Applied towards the purchase of fixed assets	(10,810)	(13,159)
Total Grant-in-Aid towards revenue expenditure	<u>1,842,190</u>	<u>1,708,841</u>

12(c) Reconciliation of cash inflow to movement in net funds

	31/03/09	31/03/08
	£	£
Opening cash	111,935	77,514
Net cash inflow/ (outflow)	155,179	34,421
Closing cash	<u>267,114</u>	<u>111,935</u>

13. Commitments under Leases

Commitments existed at the 31 March 2009 under operating leases in respect of annual rentals which expire:

Land and Buildings

	2009	2008
	£	£
Within 1 year	0	1,287
Within 2-5 years	0	0
Over 5 years	239,085	145,582
Total	<u>239,085</u>	<u>146,869</u>

Equipment

	2009	2008
	£	£
Within 1 year	0	0
Within 1 – 5 years	5,680	5,680
Over 5 years	0	0
Total	<u>5,680</u>	<u>5,680</u>

Commitments under finance leases £nil.

14. Related Party Transactions

The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMdFM). OFMdFM is regarded as a related party. During the year the Commissioner had various material transactions with OFMdFM and various other bodies for which OFMdFM is regarded as the parent body.

During the year neither the Commissioner, members of the Audit and Risk Committee, Senior Management nor other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with The Commissioner for Children and Young People.



15. Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments as at 31 March 2009.

16. Commitments under PFI Contracts

There were no PFI contracts as at 31 March 2009.

17. Financial Instruments

FRS 29, Financial Instruments: Disclosures requires disclosure of the significance of financial instruments for the entities financial position and performance, and the nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments to which the entity is exposed and how the entity manages those risks. Because of the largely non-trading nature of its activities and the way in which government bodies are financed, The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) is not exposed to the degree of financial risk faced by business entities. Moreover, financial instruments play a much more limited role in creating or changing risk than would be typical of the listed companies to which FRS 29 mainly applies. NICCY shall not make any investments in traded financial instruments without the prior written approval of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Financial assets and liabilities are generated by day-to-day operational activities and are not held to change the risks facing NICCY.

FRS 26, Financial Instruments: Measurement, Recognition and Derecognition requires financial assets and liabilities to be measured at fair value. In the case of debtors and creditors which mature or become payable within 12 months from the balance sheet date this will be the transaction value.

