

nipsa

Annual Report 2025

**For Working Class Unity
and a Socialist Economy**

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Foreword

The backdrop at the 2025 NIPSA conference in Enniskillen was emblazoned with the strap line, 'For Working Class Unity and a Socialist Economy'. This idea represents the basic principles that are central to the well-being of our members, their families and the community.

NIPSA's commitment to working class unity is not just an idealistic notion but is grounded in experience. We know that it is in the interest of working-class people to have unity so that they can focus the maximum pressure on employers and their representative governments. Any division in our ranks weakens our capacity to fight for better salaries, terms and conditions and public services.

Events in Belfast, Ballymena and Newry reminded us that racial tensions and the divisions sown by the capitalist system and the far right can come to the surface. Although racial tensions eased in the latter months of the year, the events of last summer reminded us that it is not enough just to condemn racism, and the far right who stir division, but we need to challenge the capitalist system which breeds poverty and division among workers. NIPSA continues to put forward our slogan 'Fight Racism - Fight for Decent Jobs, Homes and Services for ALL'.

The cancer of sectarianism continues to blight society and even effects our movement. We must constantly guard against our union becoming one sided or coming under the influence of sectarian politics. NIPSA has taken a clear position of putting working class unity first and foremost. In practice, this means we represent members who face intimidation and threats, we argue for compromise in situations where there are conflicting cultural rights and we seek to challenge the bigots, from either side, who stir up division.

Another aspect of unity is demonstrated in our work with our sister unions in the Irish Congress of Trade unions. Through the year, NIPSA worked within the ICTU to strengthen the Good Jobs Bill which we expect to be passed by the Assembly in 2026. The Bill will undo some of the undemocratic, anti-union legislation that we have endured for decades. Though welcome, it is just a start and there is more to do to create a fully level playing field to allow trade unions to act on behalf of their members and to break the stranglehold of anti-union employers.

Equally important is our commitment to a socialist economy. The wealth in society is produced by the hard work of ordinary people but ends up in the hands of a handful of billionaires. Instead of receiving our share of the wealth our members use food banks, young members are priced out of the property market, and our pensions remain inadequate and under attack. In the short term, NIPSA seeks to redress this imbalance by fighting for a greater share of wealth in society to go into members wages and pensions while also fighting for the longer term goal of a rational, democratically controlled, socialist economic model where everyone should have the basics of life such as access to free education and health care, a good job, a nice home and a timely retirement.

This year we won a significant 6% pay award for civil servants as part of a 20-month deal amounting to over 9%. Our social work members in Family and Child Care took to the picket lines to fight for safe staffing and increased resources for a vital service that protects children. As a result of their selfless action, they won additional resources for the service. Workers also took to the picket lines in GLL and through just one day of solid strike action won pay awards of up to 14.5% for the lowest paid members. In NI Water workers took strike action to fight for equal treatment with colleagues, and to fight a management that gave themselves a higher pay award. At year end the action was continuing with the members remaining solid in the determined to succeed.

Foreword

The successful action by NIPSA members and strikers has shown us that workers can continue to make gains through struggle. The capitalist system will give us nothing unless we fight. The year ahead is likely to prove difficult. We have a US President who is volatile and unpredictable. His economic strategy to move even greater wealth into the hands of the billionaires has destabilised an inherently weak global capitalist system to the detriment of workers and their families. It is important, therefore, that we do what we can to protect our members and our services and to continue to fight for a socialist economy.

Our principles have been backed by a strong organisational strategy. We have continued to increase our membership and to build on the significant successes we have had over several years. A strong financial position allows us to represent members through campaigns, through legal action and through industrial action. As a result of careful management of resources, the union is now fully staffed and in the best financial position in its history.

NIPSA ends this period as a strong and confident union. We record sincere thanks to the staff, the activists and the members for the work they have done to bring us to this position. With the level of work and commitment shown by all, we can be very confident that NIPSA will continue to build a successful fighting democratic union that takes a stand for working class unity and a socialist economy in the future.

Tanya Killen

Tanya Killen
President

Paul Dale

Paul Dale
Vice President

Jane Scott

Jane Scott
Honorary Treasurer

Carmel Gates

Carmel Gates
General Secretary

Officers and Secretariat
Secondees and TUS Officers
Meetings and Committees

Officers and Secretariat 2025

Officers 2025 **President:** Tanya Killen **Vice-President:** Paul Dale **Honorary Treasurer:** Jane Scott

Secretariat at 31 December 2025

General Secretary	C Gates
Deputy General Secretaries	A McMillen M Morgan P Mulholland
Policy and Research Officer	Vacant
Assistant Secretaries	C Arkinson K Kelly A Law L Mackel J Murdock ^(A) N Shiel B Trainor ^(A) R Wilson
Assistant Secretary (Finance)	M Law
Higher Executive Officers	D Adegoye I Boersma E Farrell R Graham S Harvey L Maguire S McConville C McDonnell R McGreevy J Walsh
Executive Officers	M Donnelly T McAteer A McDonnell B Nugent L A Hamilton D Whitford
Senior Personal Secretary (EO)	L Hudson
Building Supervisor (EO)	A Burns
Personal Secretaries	A Cartwright D Dawson S Johnston C McConnell C McLeish M Ó'Coisneacháin
Administrative Officers	S Clarkin ^(T) C Connor G Jarvis ^(P) J Jennings G Jones J Lavery P Murray
General Assistants	A Mekelburg ^(P) S Overend ^(P) D Rolley ^(P)

(A) Acting (T) Temporary (P) Part-time

Seconded Officers, Civil Service

Central Whitley, Assistant Trade Union Side Secretaries

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Department of Finance (DoF)/The Executive Office (TEO)

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Vacant, Assistant Departmental Secretary

Department of Health (DoH)

Vacant

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NI Water (NIW)

Vacant

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W Scott, Assistant Secretary T: 07866 067 625 E: warren.scott@psni.police.uk

Public Prosecution Service (PPS)

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Trade Union Side Officers

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Vacant, Trade Union Side Secretary

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Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT)

B Crawford **T:** 028 9536 1809

12 Hampton Manor Drive, Belfast, BT7 3EN.

General Council

Attendance of members at General Council Sessions:

January to May 2025		
Name	Possible	Actual
Anderson, F	5	4
Antal, S	5	5
Barlow, D	5	4
Bell, Si	5	5
Bell, St	5	3
Brooks, W	5	5
Collins, L	5	5
Conlon, SP	5	0
Creaney, T	5	3
Dale, P	5	5
Doherty, E	5	1
Fleming, E	5	5
Graham, R	5	5
Hamilton-Toner, D	5	1
Killen, T	5	1
McAtamney, E	5	5
McCann, F	5	1
McConville, S	5	5
McSherry, H	5	5
Morgan, C	5	5
Mulholland, B	5	3
O'Sandair, R	5	4
Scott, J	5	5
Turner, P	5	4
Watson, L	5	5

June to December 2025		
Name	Possible	Actual
Anderson, F	5	5
Antal, S	5	5
Bell, S	5	4
Brooks, W	5	5
Coates, J	3*	3
Collins, L	5	5
Creaney, T	5	5
Dale, P	5	5
Fleming, E	5	4
Garland, H	5	5
Godfrey, T	5	3
Graham, R	5	5
Killen, T	5	3
McAtamney, E	5	5
McCann, F	2* ¹	0
McConville, S	2* ²	1
McCorry, S	5	1
McKee, M	5	3
McSherry, H	5	5
McVeigh, G	3*	0
Morgan, C	5	5
Mulholland, B	5	3
O'Sandair, R	5	4
Scott, J	5	5
Soto-Kelly, P	5	5
Turner, P	5	1
Veighey, J	5	4

* Joined General Council October 2025.

*1 Retired September 2025.

*2 Took up a position in HQ in September 2025.

Committees

Membership of Committees at 31 December 2025

General Purposes Committee

L Collins
T Creaney
P Dale
T Killen
H McSherry
B Mulholland
J Scott

Finance Committee

P Dale
R Graham
T Killen
J Scott
R O'Sandair
J Scott

Conference Arrangements Committee

W Brooks
Si Bell
E McAtamney

Equality Committee

S Antal
L Collins
T Creaney
P Dale
J Davidson
H Garland
L Glass
E McAtamney
B McGeehan
A Millar
T McLeish
H Uprichard

Management Side JNCC

P Dale
T Killen
J Scott

Standing Orders Committee

A Boal
E Donaghy
G McVeigh

Global Solidarity Committee

F Anderson
S Antal
W Brooks
K Coghlan
L Collins
T Creaney
E McAtamney
R O'Sandair
J Scott
P Soto-Kelly

NIPSA News Editorial Committee

J Davidson
D Maguire
B McGeehan
H McSherry
R O'Sandair

Welfare Fund Committee

T Killen
J Scott
J Veighey

Civil Service Group

Attendance of Members and Officers at Executive Committee Meetings

December 2024 to October 2025

Name	Possible	Actual
W Brooks	8	8
P Cobain	8	5
L Collins	8	6
T Creaney	8	8
D Crilly	8	7
P Dale	8	7
E Doherty	8	3
H Garland	8	5
L Glass	8	8
S Gowdy	8	6
E McAtamney	8	8
D McErlean	8	7
B McGeehan	8	6
M McKee	8	6
A Millar	8	6
C Morgan	8	8
B Mulholland	8	6
M Neeson	8	5
B O'Reilly	8	7
R O'Sandair	8	7
T Rice	8	8
V Russell	8	5
P Soto-Kelly	8	8
P Turner	8	2
J Veighey	8	7

Officers: November 2024 to October 2025

Chairperson: T Creaney

Vice-Chairpersons: P Dale, D McErlean

Standing Orders Committee

A Boal, A Dickson*, E Donaghy

* Deceased July 2025

Health and Social Services

Representation on Health and Social Services Trade Union Forum 31 December 2025

K Kelly, (HQ Official) P Quinn

Education Authority

Representation on the Education and Library Boards Joint Council, 31 December 2025

Eamonn Lavery Helena McSherry

Jane Scott **N Shiel** (HQ Official)

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Joint Consultative and Negotiation Committee, 31 December 2025

Olugbenga Adegoye Sheelagh Agnew Claire Bintley

Christine Boyle Barry Fox (Assistant TUS Secretary) **J Murdock** (HQ Official)

Christina Girvan (Vice Chair) Sean McMahon Liam O'Hanlon (Chair)

B Trainor (HQ Official)

Resolutions and Motions

Resolutions at the 2025 General Conference

Resolutions at the 2024 Civil Service Group Conference

Resolutions at the 2025 General Conference

Resolution No 1

Conference notes the ongoing challenges faced by public sector workers in part, due to a budgetary position that is still predicated on the Barnett Formula which is intentionally underfunding our public services.

Conference calls on the General Council to:

- Challenge any attempts to cut back on essential public services.
- Maintain our opposition to stealth taxes such as water charges.
- Campaign for recurring multi-year, needs-based budgets that take account of the unique structural pressures we face here in order to provide stability for strategic investment in workers and public services.
- Continue to campaign in the broader trade union movement against the political decisions taken thus far by the Labour Government which has attacked older people, the sick and workers in general.
- Fight to ensure the Assembly does not become facilitators of the Westminster cuts agenda.
- Calls for continued support for campaigns across the union that highlight the importance of adequately funding public services.

Continue to implement as part of the Public Service Defence campaign and lobby the NI Executive and Westminster on the need to implement a needs-based budget. Referred to CS Executive Committee and PO Panels.

Resolution No 4

Congratulates members on the outcomes on pay and grading that have been won through recent struggles. Recognises that public sector workers have not been reimbursed for all the losses they experienced. Also recognises that public sector pay has not been prioritised by successive Assembly politicians.

Calls on the General Council to:

- Demand needs-based budgets that recognise the unique structure of the public service here.
- Continue to highlight the critical role of civil and public service workers who deliver quality and essential services to our community.

- Highlight that fair pay is essential to attract and retain workers into the civil and public services.
- Call on the NI Executive to engage in consultation with NIPSA to address pay issues and working conditions, including the many thousands of vacancies that currently exist across public services.
- Campaign on the need for fair pay for civil and public sector workers.

Continue to campaign on pay and lobby political parties, the NI Executive and Westminster on the need for adequate investment in public sector workers. Referred to CS Executive Committee and PO Panels.

Resolution No 7

Notes with concern the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the middle east and in particular the devastating impact the destruction and ethnic cleansing of Gaza has had on the innocent civilian population of Palestine, the ongoing conflict of the Syrian Civil war which is now in its 14th year and the invasion of Lebanon. Condemns the continuing indifference of the western governments to the plight of the civilian populations of the middle east, who are the innocent victims in proxy wars.

Calls on the General Council to support efforts for peace in the Middle East by continuing to support humanitarian aid efforts; by reaffirming its support for the innocent people of Palestine; by lobbying and campaigning of politicians, political influencers and decision makers to seek a meaningful and lasting peace; by continuing to support ICTU and other Trade Union affiliated campaigns on the issue; and, through continuing to educate and inform members and the wider public of the true scale of the crisis afflicting the civilian population.

Continue action in line with NIPSA policy in relation to Palestine. Continue to work with ICTU and other unions as part of the Trade Union Friends of Palestine and the BDS campaign. Continue donations to Medical Aid for Palestinians and Standing Together. Continue to put pressure on Westminster to help bring about an end to the bombardment of Gaza and introduce sanctions. Continue with a policy of educating NIPSA members on these complex issues.

Resolution No 8

Notes the outreach work that NIPSA has carried out with trade unions in Turkey and Kurdistan including attendance by remote link to the 'Peace' conference of the Turkish public service trade union federation, KESK. Salutes the efforts of comrades in those regions who are engaging in seeking peace and social and economic justice for working class people.

Calls on the General Council to strengthen links with trade unions in the region who share our ethos.

Continue to strengthen links with trade unions in the region.

Resolution No 9

Notes the huge protests that broke out in Nigeria in July and August 2024 against rampant inflation and a food and energy price crisis. Condemns the reaction of security forces which resulted in the deaths of scores of protesters and the arrests of others who were subsequently charged with Treason and Terror financing.

Calls on the General Council to support international campaigns to lift all charges against those arrested, consider what further support can be offered and to support campaigns defending the right to protest safely in Nigeria.

Continue to show support for the #EndBadGovernance campaigners in Nigeria and wrote to the Nigerian government.

Resolution No 10

Recognises that with his policies and actions the current US President Donald Trump has demonstrated a complete disregard for workers' rights, human rights, global cooperation, and fair trade. The threatened imposition of tariffs and other economic sanctions by the US administration threatens to undermine the financial stability and economic welfare of working-class citizens globally.

Calls on the General Council:

- To call on our local MLAs to actively challenge and seek the removal of these tariffs through diplomatic and trade negotiations.
- To encourage solidarity between unions, particularly those in the UK and the US, in advocating for fair trade policies that prioritise workers' rights and economic justice.

- To stand in firm opposition to any proposal that seeks to forcibly remove the Palestinian people from the Gaza Strip, including those put forward by President Donald Trump.

Lobby MLAs, continue to work with ICTU for workers' rights etc and continue action in line with our policy on Palestine.

Resolution No 11

Notes that seven years ago NIPSA passed a motion calling for support for Rojava and for the release of Abdullah Ocalan from prison in Turkey so meaningful peace negotiations could commence. Since then the autonomous administration of Rojava continues building a society based on principles of co-operation, equality and ecology.

In recent months Trade Unionists have been intimidated and arrested, particularly in Kurdish areas and Abdullah Ocalan continues to be imprisoned on Imrali Prison Island in near total isolation with limited contact to the outside world.

Calls on the General council to work towards the establishment of a Trade Union Friends of Kurdistan group within ICTU to specifically highlight information about the situation in the area and to also establish links with groups and organisations in Turkey, Rojava and the diaspora.

Referred to the Global Solidarity Committee of the ICTU.

Resolution No 14

Conference Paper Number 1 proposes constitutional amendments to The Rulebook to remove references to the Public Officers Executive Committee and Public Officers Annual Conference. The role of the Public Officers Executive Committee and Public Officers Annual Conference as previously defined in The Rulebook, are no longer functional. This change in functionality follows the revision of terms and conditions in Health, to Agenda for Change, rendering the existing references to the Public Officers Executive Committee obsolete as commonality of Terms and Conditions across the Public Officers Group no longer exists.

Conference agrees to support the constitutional amendments outlined in Conference Paper Number One which remove all references to the Public

Officers Executive Committee, its functions and the Public Officers Annual Group Conference from The Rulebook, thereby ensuring future governance structures uphold democratic principles and transparency.

Constitution amended.

Resolution No 17

Notes the significant pressures on parents and carers at a time when the cost of living is soaring including the scarcity of affordable childcare options.

Calls on the General Council to campaign for equal promotion rights and pathways for part time workers which would encourage a more diverse workforce and progression prospects for all.

Continue to lobby Stormont for the introduction of assistance for parents and carers and referred to the CS Executive Committee and PO Panels for action by employers.

Resolution No 20

Recognises that transformational projects and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are having an increasing impact on workplaces across the Public Sector and that transformation initiatives promise to substantially change work tasks and workplaces. Recognises that proponents for AI claim it has the potential to enhance productivity, create new opportunities and improve working conditions.

Calls for the following to address the effect of new technology, transformation processes and AI in the workplace:

- The development and implementation of policies to prevent job losses due to introduction of new working processes and technology. This should include the introduction of a shorter working week without loss of pay and the reskilling and retraining of workers for roles developed and created by new technology. Digital literacy and traditional skills training should be complementary and supportive of both.
- Meaningful negotiation between employers and trade unions when implementing transformation projects, AI systems or automation in the workplace ensuring that workers' concerns are heard and addressed.

- The involvement of trade union representatives in the design and deployment of transformation systems and AI to ensure that these technologies are used ethically and with consideration for human dignity.

- New technologies in the workplace must respect workers' privacy, data security, and personal rights. There should be clear guidelines in place to regulate the collection and use of personal data. Similarly new systems should not be used to conduct surveillance on workers. Clear ethical guidelines must be established regarding AI's role in performance monitoring and decision-making processes.

- Employers should invest in education and training programs to enable workers to gain the necessary skills to work alongside new technologies.

- Democratically controlled regulatory bodies should be established to oversee and regulate the introduction and use of AI in workplaces.

Referred to the CS Executive Committee and PO Panels for agreed action with employers on the impact of AI on members and continue to review.

Resolution No 22

Commends the work done by NIPSA over the past year in remaining vigilant to the rise of the Far Right and opposing Racist protests. Congratulates all trade union members and those others who joined the anti-hate protests to declare our streets are welcoming to all who wish to live here.

Calls on the General Council to consider how these can be supported, enhanced and built across our Trade Union movement.

Continue to lobby and to work within the ICTU to develop the anti-racist work including the development of a trained stewards' group.

Resolution No 23

Seeks to address the crucial issue of additional facility time for union representatives in NI working in public services.

Calls on the General council to robustly campaign, negotiate and demand that employers in our public services properly look at union representation and give more facility time to NIPSA to allow our members to be properly represented in all areas of our union.

Referred to CS Executive Committee and PO Panels to raise with employers.

Resolution No 27

Notes that the promotion and development of NIPSA Youth is essential for the future of the Union and the future strength and success of NIPSA depends on engaging, developing, and empowering its younger members.

Calls on the General Council to launch a new initiative aimed at promoting and developing NIPSA Youth through targeted training, mentoring, and opportunities for involvement at all levels of the union.

Referred to the Youth Committee in the first instance and consider what additional assistance can be provided by the General Council and other NIPSA bodies to increase youth participation.

Resolution No 28

Notes that there can be a disconnect between NIPSA and members in the various campaigns NIPSA takes forward on behalf of the membership. Notes that various campaigns of industrial action over the last 12 months may not have got the publicity they should have in terms of ensuring that the wider membership is sighted on NIPSA's campaigning activity.

Calls on the General Council to review communications to the broader NIPSA membership across media platforms to assess whether these communications can be improved. Calls on the General Council to consider if NIPSA News should be reinstated, so that all of NIPSA's industrial campaigns and other important issues such as our campaigns against racism, the genocide in Palestine and on the range of Equality issues, can be best highlighted to the wider NIPSA membership.

Continue with publications as are but consider an occasional broader publication (possibly by direct email) and revisit.

Resolution No 29

Acknowledges the need for a targeted recruitment strategy for engaging with young adults on entry to employment which should incorporate going into schools, regional colleges right up to universities to increase the knowledge of Trade Unions; the benefits

of being in a Trade Union, and the support one would get from the trade union.

Calls on the General Council to develop a strategy for engaging with young adults before and on entry to employment, to educate them on their rights and protections. This is essential to ensuring the long-term strength and sustainability of NIPSA.

Referred to the Northern Committee of the ICTU for consideration.

Composite Resolution No 30

Expresses concern at the continuing poor turnout in General Council elections and believes that steps must be taken to try to increase turnout in the future.

Calls on the General Council to investigate options for, and barriers to, other voting methods for forthcoming General Council elections with a view to ensuring greater engagement with members and ultimately a greater turnout.

Do article for NIPSA News in advance of General Council Election to encourage members to vote.

Resolution No 33

Expresses concern regarding the culture around drugs and addictions in our society affecting the mental health, of not only the users, but their family, friends and the wider community.

Calls on the General Council to do everything in its power to lobby Government to ensure charitable organisations especially around mental health receive sufficient funding to keep up the good work they are already carrying out. Through a public campaign continue to raise the awareness on mental health and organisations that are out there to support those in need.

Adopt as part of the Public Service Defence Campaign and as part of the lobbying for a needs-based budget.

Comprehensive Resolution No 34

Notes that domestic abuse and violence affects both men and women in our society, along with children.

Calls upon the General Council to:

- Work with organisations such as Women's Aid to help with funding for education in schools across NI to help educate young people in positive

relationships and to address the root cause of domestic abuse and violence.

- Lobby our government to address root causes of domestic abuse.
- Improve conviction rates as a deterrent.
- Demand tougher sentencing for perpetrators.
- Ensure that victims are given greater support and protection.
- Referred to Equality Committee.
- Composite Resolution No 35
- Recognises that the state pension remains under threat from further cuts by Westminster whether through the abolition of the triple lock or further increases in the age at which citizens receive their pension.
- Calls upon the General Council to begin to campaign for a reduction in the state pension age.

Write to Westminster government and lobby for a reduction.

Resolution No 36

Notes with concern the rapid turn to militarisation and jingoism by the government in Westminster and big business governments internationally. Notes the UK Government's intention to increase defence spending from 2.5% of GDP in April 2027, rising to 3% within the next five years. Condemns the dangers inherent in these developments and the re-emergence of phrases such as the "coalition of the willing" that show a failure to learn the lessons of history, specifically the illegal invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the death and destruction in the "forever wars" that followed.

Calls on the General Council to:

- To play its part in ensuring that internationalism, peace and disarmament are the key features of the labour movement's response to these events and that this contribution is shaped by the post Second World War vision of turning "swords into ploughshares".
- Oppose militarisation and jingoism.
- Campaign for the nationalisation of the arms industry under democratic control and management that will allow the industry to be transformed to provide new civil manufacturing capacity for renewable energy. This can

accelerate progress towards a zero-carbon economy, provide skilled employment, including for displaced arms-industry workers with transferable skills, and help regenerate regions that have experienced de-industrialisation.

Wrote to UK Government. Referred to ICTU for joined up action after conference motion in July. Raise in the media.

Resolution No 37

Notes that people who have been diagnosed with Breast Cancer can now receive amazing help and support throughout their illness however those diagnosed with Secondary Breast Cancer have not had access to same level of care and support.

Calls on the General Council to engage with the NI Executive and Assembly and Cancer Charities to bring about improved awareness of Secondary Breast Cancer and improved services and support for those diagnosed with it.

Write to the Health Minister and cancer charities and publicise information on support services to NIPSA members.

Resolution No 38

Notes that sex work takes place indoors, outdoors, and online. Selling sex itself is not illegal, but many laws criminalise associated activities that leave sex workers vulnerable and deprived of basic rights.

Calls on the General Council to:

- To support and campaign for the full decriminalisation of sex work.
- To support the unionisation of sex workers and to respect their demands for labour rights and to improve their working conditions, including occupational safety and health.
- To campaign for legislative reform to end the criminalisation of clients, often referred to as the Nordic Model, which was introduced to Northern Ireland in 2015.
- To oppose any proposed law criminalising the advertisement of sexual services (similar to the US laws, FOSTA/SESTA).

Make contact with branch for consideration of further action.

Resolution No 41

Notes with concern that women are still facing stigma, shame and taboo surrounding getting help during their periods.

Calls on the General Council to engage with employers to review existing Menopause Policies with a view to incorporating a section on Menstruation or to consider writing a stand-alone Menstruation policy.

Referred to CS Executive Committee and PO Panels.

Resolution No 42

Notes that blood donations are a vital element of our Health Care System. Notes that all employers, but particularly public sector employers, should have a moral imperative to promote and encourage those who are willing to donate to do so. But it is often the case that employers put up barriers, prioritising short term targets and goals ahead of this life giving venture.

Calls on the General Council to engage with all relevant employers and other parties to develop policies for paid time off for all staff who wish to donate blood with the NIBTS.

Referred to CS Executive Committee and PO Panels.

Resolution No 43

Notes that public sector organisations have failed to provide the necessary training and access to higher learning that would allow members to perform at their best.

Notes that NI is home to a wealth of educational institutions all of which have the potential to become partners in our professional development.

Calls on the General council to campaign for:

- Investment in further education for our public sector workers.
- Including discounted/ free or an annual allowance towards further training through our educational institutions.

Referred to CS Executive Committee and PO Panels.

Resolution No 46

Notes that under successive governments our NHS is being deliberately underfunded, dismantled, and sold off piece by piece. People are struggling to get GP appointments, waiting months in pain for dental care, and skipping eye tests because they can't afford them.

Calls on the General Council to recommit to fighting for the NHS as free for everyone who needs it, to continue to fight for the NHS to be properly funded and fully in public ownership to work with the wider Trade Union movement to ensure the NHS is still here in another 75+ years.

Take forward as part of Public Service Defence Campaign and lobby Department of Health.

Composite Resolution No 47

Notes the role of NIPSA in campaigning against racism and the far right. Recognises that the far right seeks to use misinformation to create division and conflict that undermines the ability of trade unions to successfully fight for high quality, jobs, homes, living standards and public services for all. Recognises that the far right seeks to divert energy away from the real issues impacting communities, acts in the interests of billionaires and big business and remains a threat to the trade union movement and must be opposed by all necessary means.

Calls on the General Council to:

- Campaign for a positive socialist economic alternative to the blight of poverty and hopelessness that creates fertile ground for the far right.
- Organise and take part in protests against the far right.
- Ensure sufficient stewarding at all protests and demonstrations.

Continue to take the lead in anti-racist work and to fight the causes that give rise to racism as part of Public Service Defence Campaign. Continue to push for action by politicians.

Composite Resolution No 48

Condemns the current Labour Government's approach to Welfare State "reform" both in terms of the rationale given for these decisions and the harm that flows from such policies. Notes that Social Security provision is a devolved matter and just as the last significant "welfare reforms" of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition were challenged by the trade union movement and our allies to the point that the NI Executive introduced mitigations to protect us from some of its worst aspects - such opposition is also required now.

Calls on the General Council to:

- Play its fullest part in opposing this latest assault on the essential safety nets our society needs.
- Argue for proper "social security" in-work or out of it.
- Challenge any militaristic re-framing of UK Government priorities.

Continue the excellent work being undertaken by NIPSA members in DfC in challenging the social security cuts and continue to assist and support the work of Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC).

Resolution No 49

Notes with concern the increasingly prevalent use of drugs within our street and the number of drug-related deaths in our towns and villages. Welcomes the decision of Belfast City Council to pass a motion to set up a safe injecting facility to help prevent overdoses among drug users however, notes the lack of progress on this.

Calls on the General Council to reach to, and liaise with, interested parties, statutory agencies, the Welcome centre and other Unions to bring about the necessary legislative change to establish safe injecting facilities and help save the lives of the most vulnerable.

Raise within the ICTU and liaise with support groups to offer assistance to their campaigns.

Resolution No 50

Notes that the Education Authority has decided to make all schools diverse schools and that this has shown itself to be a disservice to children and staff with children being left behind because of it.

Calls on the General Council to ask the Education Authority to reconsider their decision to make all schools diverse schools.

Referred to the Education Panel in the first instance for their recommendations on action.

Resolution No 51

Notes that it was trade unions who won the 5-day week and paid annual leave for ordinary workers. Notes that there is already a national campaign for a shorter working week led by the 4 Day Week Foundation.

Calls on the General Council to set up a Working Group or sub-Committee to examine the feasibility of aligning with this existing campaign, joining with other unions on this issue or establishing our own campaign to pursue a shorter working week with no loss of pay for all workers. Calls on this Group or sub-Committee to provide recommendations to Conference next year.

Set up a sub-group of 3 people.

Resolution No 52

Notes that 57 lives have been tragically lost on one of NI's most dangerous roads since 2006. Notes that the A5 upgrade was set to begin earlier this year but progress has been delayed.

Calls on the General Council to support the A5 Enough is Enough campaign and lobby the NI Assembly to get this long overdue upgrade completed.

Write to the Enough is Enough campaign to offer assistance.

Resolution No 55

Notes that every year delegates to Conference are reminded of the behaviour expected of them at Conference and advised that no non-NIPSA authorised materials are to be displayed in the hall. Notes that during conference over the past few years delegates have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour consisting of shouting and intemperate language. Acknowledges that this behaviour is not in keeping with the spirit of democratic debate and free speech.

Calls on the General Council to vigorously ensure that acceptable behavioural standards are adhered to during conference, to ensure that no non

NIPSA authorised materials are displayed in the Conference hall and to actively prevent any attempt to circumvent this instruction.

Continue to implement as policy.

Resolution No 56

Notes that Meta (owners of Facebook, Instagram, Threads and WhatsApp) is ending its 3rd party fact checking program and moving to a community notes model similar to X (formerly known as Twitter).

Calls on the General Council to warn members about the danger of a lack of fact checking, the danger of trusting disinformation on social media and to only use reputable sources.

Referred to training officer for consideration of an online course for NIPSA members.

Resolution No 58

Recognises the essential role that effective member engagement plays in maintaining a strong and active union. However, in light of evolving work patterns, increased remote working and shifting communication preferences, it is clear that traditional engagement methods are no longer fully sufficient to meet the needs of our members.

Calls on the General Council to look at investing in improved digital platforms to ensure that members feel more informed and empowered.

Discuss in conjunction with Resolution 28.

Resolution No 62

Notes with concern that members with urinary dysfunctions are facing stigma, shame and physical barriers around the understanding and support that is needed to manage their condition or disease.

Calls on the General Council to engage with all public sector employers to review their existing disability policies with a view to incorporating a section on urinary dysfunctions or consider writing a stand-alone policy to deal with this emotive and deeply personal condition.

Referred to CS Executive Committee and PO Panels.

Resolution No 63

Recognises that NIPSA produced guidance on breastfeeding in the workplace in March 2018. However, despite the statement to ensure that women who want to continue breastfeeding on returning to work are provided with appropriate working arrangements and facilities, there has been no evidence that would suggest this has occurred in all relevant workplaces.

Calls on the General Council to raise awareness of the breastfeeding policy, and work to incorporate into New and Expectant Mother risk assessments, to ensure that members are supported in their decisions upon returning to work.

Referred to CS Executive Committee and PO Panels.

Resolution No 66

Notes that free travel passes are a crucial financial lifeline for older people, particularly in NI where many rely on public transport due to limited alternatives in rural and urban areas.

Calls on the General Council to lobby Government and to campaign to vigorously to protect this essential benefit, highlighting its critical role in addressing the cost of living crisis, promoting social inclusion, and supporting a greener future.

Lobby political parties and the NI Assembly to protect and extend public transport.

Comprehensive Resolution No 67

Recognises that more and more NIPSA members and a greater number of individuals, within NI as a whole are living with ADHD, Autism and other Neurodiverse conditions, impacting not only on how they view and interact with society but how society views and interacts with them.

Calls on the General Council to:

- Engage with other ICTU affiliated unions and disability organisations to consider what additional protections we need to advocate for, in protection of our disabled colleagues.
- Advocate for an ICTU supported campaign to update the Disability Discrimination Act to make it fit for the 21st Century.

- Develop a campaign to promote awareness and understanding of Neurodiversity in the workplace and in society in general.
- Engage with MLAs and the NI Executive to come up with a strategy to improve adult neurodiverse Health & Social Care Services.

Referred to the Equality Committee and NIPSA's Disability Champions to consider appropriate action and refer to the ICTU.

Resolution No 68

Notes that education is not a privilege—it is a right and is the foundation of a fair society, a tool for social mobility, and a great leveller for the working classes.

Notes that year after year, we see it under attack with cuts, creeping privatization, and policies designed to entrench inequality rather than eliminate it. Notes there is no place for academic selection in secondary education - the SEAG, Transfer tests only segregate children based not on their potential but on their background.

Calls on the General Council to campaign for:

- free education for all, fully funded and accessible.
- for universal free school meals—because no child should learn on an empty stomach.
- And for an end to academic selection, because education should lift people up, not divide them.

Write to the Education Minister. Refer to the ICTU and lobby political parties.

Resolution No 69

Condemns the NI Executive for its chronic failure in dealing with the crisis in Health and Social Care and, in particular, the chaos surrounding front door access to services in Emergency Departments. Notes that up to 1600 deaths are being reported as being linked with delays in the provision of medical care.

Calls on the General Council to call out the failure to address the basic needs of the population, that calls into question the effectiveness of the DOH and the NI Executive. Calls for NIPSA to explicitly campaign for an urgent overhaul of the Department of Health, as it is not fit for purpose. Further calls on the General Council to begin preparations to ensure that this failure is a high profile campaigning matter in the next election.

Referred to the Health Panel for specific recommendations for consideration by the General Council.

Resolution No 70

Notes that the week of 9th to 15th June has been designated as Loneliness Awareness Week and is concerned at the figures which indicate the increasing prevalence of the feeling of loneliness particularly among young males. These young individuals are at exponential risk of being exploited by such nefarious persons as the likes of Andrew Tate, who will manipulate their sense of loneliness and isolation and potentially weaponise it to be used against women and young girls.

Calls on the General Council to engage with MLAs, men's advocacy groups and independent bodies such as PIPS to begin to develop a coherent strategy to tackle this scourge of loneliness.

Referred to the Equality Committee to deal with as part of their work on men's mental health.

Resolutions at the 2024 Civil Service Group Conference

Composite Motion No 1

This motion acknowledges and congratulates the Civil Service Executive Committee for a successful pay campaign and reaffirms its commitment to ensuring civil servants are never again treated as second class citizens and calls on the Civil Service Executive Committee to explore strategies including multi-year pay deals to address long term issues such as grading, allowances, leave and mileage.

Continue to take forward as part of the discussion on pay and allowances at the Pay & Workforce Sub Committee.

Motion No 2

This motion acknowledges the upcoming 5.7% increase in the National Living Wage (NLW) in April 2025 and highlights that this increase exceeds the current rate of inflation. The motion calls on the incoming Civil Service Executive Committee to use the NLW percentage increase or the rate of inflation - whichever is higher - as the starting point for civil service pay discussions.

REMITTED - For TUS discussion when considering the next pay claim.

Composite Motion No 3

This motion highlights the ongoing issue of delayed pay agreements resulting in the accumulation of back pay and raises concern about the negative financial impact on affected members. The motion calls for NIPSA to ensure that any delayed pay award includes protection for affected members and seeks a commitment from the NICS to work with HMRC to prevent financial detriment ensuring members are not unfairly penalised due to late pay settlements.

Continue to raise with Management Side at the Pay & Workforce Sub Committee.

Motion No 4

This motion highlights significant disparities with the NICS pay scales both within the band increases per grade (steps), and also the gaps between one grade and the next and calls on the incoming Civil Service Executive Committee to ensure that future pay negotiations include measures to reduce these inequalities.

REMITTED - For consideration and negotiation at the Pay & Workforce Sub Committee.

Motion No 5

The motion instructed the incoming Civil Service Group Executive when analysing pay offers and issuing bulletins to members that they do not include any recommendations from the Group Executive on whether to accept or reject any offer.

LOST - No action required.

Composite Motion No 8

This motion addresses concerns over the implementation of hybrid working within the NICS. The motion argues that this 'one size fits all' approach is unnecessary and not welcomed by members and that attendance should be determined through local agreements that consider both individual and business needs. The motion calls on the incoming Civil Service Executive Committee to engage urgently with NICS HR to ensure that the Hybrid Working Policy is consistently applied across all NICS Departments.

Raise with Management Side in negotiations at the Employee Relations Sub Committee and refer to Departmental Committees.

Composite Motion No 9

The motion highlights the inadequacy of the current paternity leave entitlement which grants fathers only two weeks of leave unless the mother sacrifices part of her maternity leave. It argues that this arrangement is unfair and calls on the incoming Civil Service Executive Committee to advocate for an expansion of paternity leave.

Take forward as policy at the Employee Relations Sub Committee.

Motion No 10

This motion instructs the Civil Service Executive Committee to advocate for the payment of work-related tuition by the NICS to allow members affordable access to training and qualifications necessary for career development without financial barriers.

Take forward with Management Side under Learning and Development and at the Resourcing Sub Committee. Raise with the NIPSA Training Officer.

Motion No 11

This motion advocates for the implementation of a 4-day working week within the NICS Arms Length Bodies and other associated organisations. The motion calls for the Civil Service Executive Committee to develop a proposal for the transition to a 4-day working week.

Continue to take forward as policy at the Pay & Workforce Sub Committee under the auspice of the Pay Strategy.

Motion No 12

This motion expresses concern about the Dignity at Work process within the NICS, highlighting its inefficiency in delivering satisfactory outcomes for members and calls on the incoming Civil Service Executive Committee to work with NICS HR to review and improve the Dignity at Work process and develop an awareness pack to help reduce toxic work environments and prevent discrimination in the workplace.

Ongoing at the Employee Relations Sub Committee and the current review of the DAW policy.

Motion No 13

This motion acknowledges the need for policy reviews within the NICS whilst expressing concern about the potential risks those reviews could pose to members' terms and conditions. The motion calls on the Civil Service Executive Committee to ensure thorough scrutiny of any policy changes to prevent any reduction or undermining of hard-won terms and conditions.

Take forward as policy.

Motion No 14

This motion addresses the issue of Agency workers transitioning to permanent positions within the NICS and called on the Civil Service Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to ensure that the service time agency workers have already accrued is properly recognised when calculating their pay and leave entitlements.

Continue to raise at the Pay and Workforce Sub Committee.

Motion No 15

This motion addresses concerns with the Hybrid Working Policy and use of Hubs within the NICS and called on the Civil Service Executive Committee to ensure that Hubs are more accessible and effectively utilised.

Take forward in negotiations on the Hybrid Working Policy and continue to raise at the Accommodation Sub Committee.

Motion No 16

This motion addresses concerns about the NICS Menopause Policy and instructs the Civil Service Executive Committee to work with NICS HR to ensure that the Menopause Policy remains a priority and called for future iteration of the policy to be regularly updated in line with the latest medical advice and research.

Write to Management Side at the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Sub Committee.

Motion No 19

This motion expresses concern regarding vacancy levels, temporary promotions and delays in filling essential posts within the NICS and instructed the Civil Service Executive Committee to engage in discussions with NICS Management on workforce planning and the future structure of the service.

Continue to raise as policy with P&OD & NICS HR at the Resourcing & Talent Sub Committee.

Motion No 20

This motion addresses concerns regarding the policy of equivalency within the NICS particularly its negative effect on scientific/technical members and called for an end to the equivalency policy and advocating for a pay structure that properly recognises the scientific and technical skills of those posts and to work towards the replacement of JEGS for those grades.

REMITTED - For consideration and discussion among TUS to decide how best to raise with MS at the Pay & Workforce Sub Committee.

Motion No 21

This motion welcomes the work done by the Civil Service Executive Committee in persuading the DWP

to recruit permanent workers at the AO grade for roles that were previously filled by agency staff and called on the incoming Civil Service Executive Committee to continue advocating for full harmonisation of terms and conditions for agency workers ensuring full parity with their substantive colleagues.

Continue to raise with Management Side at the Resourcing Sub Committee.

Composite Motion No 24

This motion addresses concerns regarding travel and subsistence allowances within the NICS particularly in relation to rising costs and their failure to keep pace with inflation and called on the Civil Service Executive Committee to engage in negotiations with NICS Management Side to increase travel and subsistence allowances for GB and ROI to match actual travel and accommodation costs and for restoration of all allowances in line with inflation. It also called for an increase of the 45p per mile mileage rate.

Continue to take forward as policy on pay and allowances at the Pay & Workforce Sub Committee.

Motion No 25

This motion addresses the need to bring Professional and Technical grades in line with ICT grades in the NICS specifically by expanding the ICT allowance to all Professional and Technical staff in order to prevent staff shortages. The motion called on the Civil Service Executive Committee to urgently negotiate for an equivalent allowance for Professional and Technical staff to ensure job retention.

REMITTED - For consideration and discussion with the Branch and TUS to decide best approach to take with P&OD in line with the recruitment and retention policy.

Composite Motion No 28

This motion expresses alarm regarding the NICS Recruitment Policy of 'external by default' which they believe is unjustified and detrimental to the NICS and called on the Civil Service Executive Committee to continue to challenge the NICS Board's decision to pursue external recruitment competitions given the lack of a clear rationale and the potential negative impact on both the workforce and the NICS budget.

Continue to take forward as policy at the Resourcing Sub Committee.

Motion No 29

This motion addresses the role of agency staff in the NICS and called on the Civil Service Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to review the current structure for external recruitment competitions to ensure the process better reflects the conditions and experience of agency workers within the NICS. The motion also seeks to ensure that agency staff who have demonstrated competency through years of service and fairly recognised and given a more structured path to permanent positions without the need for repetitive testing.

Continue to raise with Management Side at the Resourcing Sub Committee.

Motion No 32

This motion addresses the growing presence of agency workers within the NICS and specifically calls for improvements in their ability to participate in union activities and called on the Civil Service Executive Committee to engage with NICS Management to enable agency workers to receive facility time.

Write to Management Side to assess the current position on Agency Workers facility time arrangements.

Motion No 33

This motion emphasises the importance of information in the planning and execution of pay campaigns particularly in the context of industrial action. The motion seeks to ensure that future pay campaigns are more effective by learning from past experiences.

To be discussed at Executive Committee when considering Industrial Action.

Motion No 34

This motion addresses the issue of transparency within NIPSA particularly in relation to voting at the Civil Service Group Conference and called for all votes taken at the Conference that are recorded to be shared with all Civil Service Branches.

Continue to implement as current policy.

Section A

NIPSA Headquarters

General Issues

Organisation and Administration

General Issues

A1 Irish Congress of Trade Unions

The key focus of the work of Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) of the ICTU was employment law and the NIC's contribution to the work on the Good Jobs Bill being developed by the Department for the Economy. Trade union leaders, including NIPSA's General Secretary remained involved in the Engagement Forum and met regularly with business leaders. The ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference took place in Belfast in July and Carmel Gates and Tanya Killen were elected to the Executive Council.

A2 Legal Cases

Holiday Pay

NIPSA Holiday Pay claims continued to progress through the Tribunal process. They were under the carriage of the President of the Employment Tribunals who was actively case managing each multiple towards substantive hearing. The progress of each claimant group was dependent on a number of facts including:

1. The resources available to the Respondent (who was required to collate and provide all relevant pay data for the claimants for the relevant period (from 1996 onwards if available) which required significant time.
2. The number of claimants. The more claimants there were in a multiple, the longer it would take to collate and provide pay data.
3. Any legal challenges raised, such as time limits or disputing that overtime or allowances were worked. Respondent appetite towards resolution/settlement.

Case Management: The case management directions for each claim multiple were largely identical and included:

- The provision of pay data. The preparation of a financial loss report(s).
- The determination of agreed legal and factual issues.
- The identification of any preliminary legal issues (such as time points or challenges relating to overtime/allowances worked).

- The identification of lead claimants.
- Preparation of witness statements.
- Attendance at substantive hearing to determine the outstanding agreed legal and factual issues.

The key issues relating to how compensation was to be calculated involved:

1. **How far back claims extended:** NIPSA, through its solicitors MTB, argued entitlement runs to **1996** (the date of EU Directive transposition). The Respondents argued **1998**.
2. **Divisor (how much holiday pay should have been paid, denoted as a percentage):** NIPSA, through its solicitors MTB, contended the appropriate divisor was one reflecting all days on which normal pay including overtime and allowances was earned. The Respondents contended for a lower divisor.
3. **Inflation/uplift NIPSA:** through its solicitors MTB, argued for addressing the eroding impact of inflation over the lengthy period many payments have been outstanding.
4. **Method of calculation where records are incomplete:** NIPSA, through its solicitors MTB, position was that a fair averaging methodology must be used where full records do not exist.

Claimant Groups: The largest claimant group related to claims against the Northern Ireland Civil Service (across the various Governmental departments) ["NICS"] followed by those working in the various NHS Trusts and contingent departments.

NICS Claimants: The NICS claims were extremely important not just because there were large numbers of members involved, but also because any resolution of the claims would have a significant impact on claims advanced by members against other employers who were tangentially linked to NICS, such as sporting organisations, museums, Housing organisations etc.

The NICS claims were listed for hearing on 26 May 2026 with the above preparatory work undertaken by our Solicitors MTB.

Many Employers linked to the NICS sponsoring departments would not consider any potential settlement or resolution of the claims against them until they were directed to do so by the sponsoring Government Department or until the determination of the main NICS claims.

This was extremely frustrating in circumstances where the main NICS claims, due to claimant size, limited resources and legal challenges, moved slowly.

NHS Trust claims: The NHS trust claims were not as advanced as the NICS claims as our Solicitors awaited the pay data required by our forensic accountant to prepare a loss calculation for each claimant.

This report was important in order to have prepared and served papers to expedite towards a final hearing or resolution. The report was still awaited by the end of the year.

A further complicating factor was another claim, known as Agnew & Others, which was the key claim that determined liability in favour of claimants following a lengthy battle, up to Supreme Court level.

Following the determination of liability in October 2023, that claim, the non-Union claim, had been working its way through the Tribunal system towards a substantive remedies hearing. That hearing was listed to take place in June 2026.

Many of the claim multiples were awaiting the outcome of this claim before determining how they would proceed, subject to the determination on how the loss calculation was to be clarified.

Settlement: Despite the reluctance to engage in settlement by many Respondents, there were a few notable exceptions where Employers were actively engaged in settlement discussions with our Solicitors, McCartan Turkington Breen Solicitors, including:

1. **The Education Authority:** offers had been made, the majority of which had been accepted, subject to settlement terms being finalised.
2. **Radius Housing:** offers had been made and our Solicitors were taking instructions from individual claimants.

3. **NI Water:** extensive negotiations had taken place between the legal teams and it was hoped that a formal offer would be forthcoming in the New Year for members consideration and acceptance.

4. **Northern Ireland Assembly:** extensive negotiations had taken place with the legal teams and it was hoped a formal offer would shortly be forthcoming in the New Year for members consideration and acceptance.

5. **Waterways Ireland:** an offer was made and accepted, with payment expected in the New Year.

6. **Council Respondents (Ards & North Down, Lisburn, Mid & East Antrim):** offers had been made and accepted, with payment expected in the New Year.

NIPSA remained committed to advancing the rights of members and seeking to ensure that they received all payments in connection with these claims as quickly as possible. The issue was ongoing.

NIPSA Public Sector Age Discrimination Claims (Injury to Feelings Changes to Public Sector Pension Arrangements)

1. NIPSA commenced proceedings for approximately 45,000 members in June 2022 in respect of the majority of its membership, in relation to changes to public sector pension arrangements implemented on 1 April 2015, where employees changed from a final salary pension scheme to a career average scheme.
2. This change would have had an unfavourable impact on the pensions of most employees. However, as part of this transition, it was decided that older employees (principally those closest to retirement) would be shielded from these unfavourable changes to their pension provisions [known as the statutory underpin], in contrast to younger employees, who were generally 10 years or more from retirement, who were not protected from these less favourable changes.
3. These changes to Public Sector Pension schemes were subject to successful challenge on the ground of age discrimination, in the Court of Appeal in 2018, by way of two conjoined appeals

General Issues

know as McCloud Sargeant which ruled that the reforms unlawfully treated existing public sectors differently based upon age on the 1 April 2012.

4. The Government sought leave to appeal the decision, which was subsequently rejected in July 2019.
5. As a result, remedial legislation was subsequently introduced to remedy this discrimination, by way of The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 (“the 2022 Act”) in March 2022 and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023, (“the 2023 Regulations”) came into operation on 1 October 2023 which addressed any financial loss arising BUT did not address compensation for injury to feelings arising from this aggravated act of discrimination. MTB argue this is aggravated because the Government was advised the originally that its changes to public sector pensions were discriminatory but nevertheless implemented these changes as per the Hutton report:

“Para.7.34 - “...Therefore, special protections for members over a certain age should not be necessary. Age discrimination legislation also means that it is not possible in practice to provide protection from change for members who are already above a certain age”

6. NIPSA instructed MTB Solicitors to submit claims on a protective basis. Discrimination claims must be lodged within 3 months of an act of Discrimination occurring or the last in a continuing act as otherwise a time limitation argument would arise. The claims were submitted to ensure that NIPSA protected its members ability to pursue a claim in respect of this accepted act of discrimination.
7. The value of these claims of openly accepted Discrimination on the grounds of age could be between £50,000,000-£100,000,000 depending on claimant numbers.

Consent

8. Since the submission of the claims, there was an effort on the part of the majority of Respondents

to the claim to argue that the claims were advanced by NIPSA were without the individual consent of its members and thus invalid.

9. This argument was considered during an Employment Tribunal on 16 October 2025, which considered a number of issues including
 - a. Whether a Trade Union could commence proceedings, on behalf of its members, on a protective basis?
 - b. Whether each member of the Trade Union had to provide express consent at the outset for the claim to be lodged on their behalf?
 - c. Whether a member could provide retrospective consent to the claim after it has been lodged?
 - d. Whether the claims of those members who did not provide consent initially or subsequently (known as retrospective consent) “the silent group” should be struck out?

Judgement

10. In summary, the Judgement confirmed that:

- a. It was arguable for a Trade Union to instruct its solicitors to issue protective proceedings on behalf of its membership.
- b. Those claimants who had not confirmed their authority for NIPSA and its Solicitors (the silent group) to continue with their claim would be struck out for failing to actively pursue their claims (specifically by not providing the retrospective consent previously which was being sought by NIPSA).
- c. However, the Judgement went on to say that NIPSA was required to take all available steps to seek all outstanding consents and provide a final list of those received as of 30 January 2026). The Tribunal would then seek to strike out thousands of claims who had not provided consent.
- d. The Tribunal judgement vindicated NIPSA's actions in pursuing the claim in the first instance.

11. NIPSA sent a number of circulars to those affected members since 2023 seeking their consent to

continue with the claim. Thousands replied, however time was running out for the “silent group”.

12. Affected members were contacted by means of email and post from NIPSA with details of how they could confirm their consent to the claim and ensure that their claim was protected.
13. All affected members were strongly encouraged to complete the questionnaire as a matter of extreme urgency before 30th January 2026 to protect their claim.
14. The issue was ongoing by year end.

A3 GDPR and Cyber Security

Training: To strengthen NIPSA's compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and enhance our overall approach to data protection and cybersecurity, we engaged the services of a specialist consultancy firm with in-depth expertise in GDPR and related regulatory standards. This collaboration ensured that our internal practices, systems, and staff behaviours aligned with current legal requirements and recognised best practices for managing and safeguarding personal data.

NIPSA implemented a comprehensive training programme that was delivered to all staff members and designated representatives. This training package was retained yearly for 5 years. The training focused on the core principles of GDPR and Cybersecurity, covering critical topics such as lawful data processing, consent management, data breach response, secure handling and storage of personal information, and the identification and mitigation of cyber threats.

The programme was delivered by accredited professionals and included formal certification. Participants receive a certificate upon successful completion of the training and assessment. To date, over 1,000 individuals comprising HQ Officials and NIPSA representatives across the organisation had been sent the training ensuring awareness and understanding of data protection responsibilities for reps and staff alike.

This ongoing training initiative played a vital role in embedding a culture of data security and regulatory

compliance throughout NIPSA. It aimed to ensure that all records and personal data were managed responsibly, securely, and in strict accordance with legislative requirements—thereby significantly reducing the risk of data breaches and reinforcing the trust of our members.

Administration Processes: In an effort to enhance the confidentiality and security of printed materials within the organisation, a secure print release system has been implemented across all staff-accessible photocopying and printing devices. Under this new protocol, staff members were required to enter individual passcodes before any print job was released from the machine.

This measure aimed to ensure that sensitive or confidential documents were not left unattended on printers or photocopiers, thereby significantly reducing the risk of unauthorised access, accidental disclosure, or loss of information. It also aligned with our broader commitment to data protection, information governance, and compliance with legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The introduction of this secure printing process reflected NIPSA's ongoing efforts to promote accountability, safeguard personal and organisational data, and foster a workplace culture where information security was a shared responsibility across all levels of staff.

A4 Pensions

The Central Consultative Working Group (CCWG): The CCWG covers all public sector pension schemes including NICS, Health, Teachers, Local Government, Fire, Police, Prisons and Judiciary. Trade Union representation falls under the auspices of the ICTU. NIPSA is represented on the group and the main issues dealt with in-year included the McCloud remedy implementation process, providing Trade Union Side comments on the Pensions Schemes Bill, Pensions Dashboard Programme and the development of a secure online initiative to view all pension information. There had also been updates and discussion on legislation and litigation.

General Issues

A5 Equality Committee

Meetings of the Committee were held on a regular basis throughout the year. The key action areas were as follows:

Cliff Edge Coalition: NIPSA continued to support the Coalition.

Coalition of Carers Organisations: NIPSA continued to be an active member of the Coalition of Carers Organisations. The Coalition is a collective of community and voluntary sector organisations to campaign for policy change to better support unpaid carers in Northern Ireland. Catherine Arkinson (Headquarters Official) attended the All Party Carers meeting which was held regularly throughout the year.

Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022: NIPSA continued to campaign for the regulations to be issued in relation to the implementation of Safe Leave. As part of the 16 Days of Action to end violence against women and girls NIPSA supported the NIC ICTU rally at Stormont held on the 25 November and called on the Assembly to produce the regulations.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse: NIPSA continued to promote and campaign on behalf of all victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse through the following actions:

- Issued regular circulars to branches providing information on new support services; and
- Continued to be an active member of the Belfast, Northern, Southern, South-Eastern and Western Area Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnerships.

International Women's Day (IWD): The theme for the 2025 International Women's Day was 'For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.' with the central vision on empowering the next generation - youth, particularly young women and adolescent girls - as catalysts for lasting change. To mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2025 NIPSA attended at the IWD march and rally on Saturday 8 March 2025.

International Men's Day: The theme for the 2025 International Men's Day was 'Celebrating Men and

Boys'. To mark International Men's Day on the 19 November NIPSA held a lunchtime session 'Hope Matters'.

Disability: NIPSA relaunched its Disability Champions Network. A major focus of the Committee and the Network was raising awareness and training in relation to issues faced by members with a disability. A Disability Champions Network Forum is scheduled to meet regularly in 2026.

ICTU Women's Seminar, Dundalk 2025: NIPSA was represented at the ICTU Women's Seminar on 20 - 21 March 2025 in Dundalk.

NIC/ICTU Women's Committee: Tina Creaney (Chairperson of the Equality Committee) and Catherine Arkinson (Headquarters Official) continued to represent NIPSA on the NIC/ICTU Women's Committee.

Tina Creaney (Chairperson of the Equality Committee) and Lucia Collins (Vice Chairperson of the Equality Committee) attended the Trade Unions Women's Council of the Isles Conference in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland on 23 - 24 January 2025. The theme of the Conference was 'Tackling the Far Right, Extremism and Misogyny'. The conference unfortunately ended early due to Storm Éowyn.

Promotion of Ethnic Minority/Migrant Workers Issues and Anti-Racist Agenda: The Committee continued to engage with Branch Activists on progressing the issues of ethnic minority/migrant workers. To mark International Migrant Workers Day on 18 December 2025 NIPSA issued a questionnaire to all branches and began establishing a NIPSA Members Ethnic Minority and Migrant Workers Network. The Network will be launched in 2026.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy: NIPSA continued to lobby for the effective and meaningful implementation of the strategy.

Female Participation: In furtherance of the aims of Resolution No 10, adopted at the 2022 NIPSA Annual Delegate Conference (ADC), the Committee continued to work on progressing the Action Plan.

Violence Against Women and Girls: As part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women and Girls 2025, NIPSA had scheduled a

lunchtime session on 9 December led by the PSNI on how women and girls can keep themselves safe on-line. This session had to be postponed and will be rescheduled for early 2026.

A6 Global Solidarity Committee

The Global Solidarity Committee met regularly during the year and dealt with a range of issues as follows:

NIPSA Global Solidarity and Developing World Fund has met all its financial commitments with regards to projects during the year:

Centre for Global Education - Project Nour: Educating Palestinian and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. To provide educational and psychosocial support services to 100 Palestinian and Syrian children in Burj Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut. NIPSA Global Solidarity and Developing World Fund met its commitment for Year 2 of the project and donated £11,500 for Year 2 2024/2025. The 2-year project ended in October 2025.

Tools for Solidarity for Artisan Sewing and Training Centres in Tanzania: NIPSA Global Solidarity and Developing World Fund met its commitment for Year 2 of the project and the final payment of £9,855 in support of the 2-year project was issued.

The Global Solidarity Committee is currently undertaking a piece of work to identify potential future funding projects. The Committee will undertake and review and selection process in early 2026.

The number of donors contributing to the Fund is as follows:

- a. 111 donors contribute through GAYE generating a monthly income of approximately £740.
- b. Two donors contribute monthly through Cheques for Charity (Gift Aid) creating an additional £15.
- c. One donor donates £4.75 per month through Charities Trust.
- d. One donor donates £60 annually (£5 monthly).
- e. One donor donates via bank transfer at £5 per month.

The overall total number of donors as detailed above is 116 generating a monthly income of approximately £769.75.

JustGiving Funding Mechanism: The NIPSA Global Solidarity and Developing World Fund created a JustGiving Charity Account in 2025 as a mechanism for members and non-members to donate to the Charity. JustGiving allows for both one-off donations as well as regular donation payments.

Give as You Earn (GAYE): The Committee continues to promote regular members consider making regular donations via Give As You Earn (GAYE) mechanisms via payroll.

Give As You Live: The Committee is going to explore Give as you Live as a potential fundraising mechanism for members/non-members to donate to the Charity.

Abseiling the Europa Fundraising Event, 14 September 2025: A number of the Global Solidarity Committee members and NIPSA members i.e. William Brooks, Jane Scott, Tina Creaney, Ruaidhri O'Sandair and Brian Crawford abseiled down the front of the Europa Hotel to fundraise for the Charity. The group raised donations in excess of £1,500.

Developing World Fund Christmas Baubles 2025: A NIPSA member, Grainne Knox designed a unique Developing World Fund Christmas Bauble, Grainne hand-painted and donated all 77 Christmas Baubles to the Committee. The Committee sold the Christmas Baubles raising in excess of £770.

Presentation of Annual Report and Audited Accounts: The Annual Report and Audited Accounts, presented by GMcG Chartered Accountants, for the year ending 31 December 2024 were approved by the Committee. The Annual Report and Audited Accounts for the Charity Commission by the deadline of 31 October 2024.

GMcG Chartered Accountants were appointed as auditors for 2025.

Organisation and Administration

A7 Donations

Organisation	Amount £	Purpose of Donation
Aid for the Caribbean	500	Donation towards shipping costs - Medical Aid for Cuba
Belfast City of Sanctuary	300	Refugee Picnic 2025
Belfast Pride	100	Towards full page advert in Pride Guide, parade registration and stand
Belfast Pride	250	Village Stall
Belfast Trades Council	1,000	May Day March and Rally
Causeway Pride	100	Pride Festival
Cork Mother Jones	200	Mother Jones Festival 2025
Derry Trades Council	500	May Day March and Rally
Fermanagh Pride	100	Pride Festival
GMcG Charity Firewalk	100	Donation to NI Chest Heart & Stroke
International Brigade Memorial Trust	200	Towards 20th Anniversary events for International Brigade Commemoration
International Communities Cup	118	International Communities Cup Catering
International Trade Union Confederation	500	Earthquake appeal - Myanmar
Lurgan Pride	100	Pride Festival
Medical Aid for Palestine	5,000	Medical Aid for Palestine
Medical Aid for Palestine	5,000	Medical Aid for Palestine
Mothers Against Genocide	1,000	Towards organising and producing events in support of Palestine at Belfast Feile
Newry Pride	100	Pride Festival
Nigerian Workers Support Campaign	2,000	Expenses for Treason Trial
NIPSA Global Solidarity & Developing World Fund	7,500	Annual General Council Donation
Reclaim the Night	300	Support for programme of events for International Women's Day
Save Our Acute Services	5,051	Towards Road Map Consultation
Tamil Solidarity	500	Affiliation and Donation towards May 18th Solidarity Day
Trade Union Friends of Palestine	1,500	Donation towards delegation expenses to Rafah Crossing
WAUGH	1,000	Towards costs of staging a play on Cramlington Train Wreckers

A8 Health and Safety Committee

Meetings of the Committee were held on a regular basis throughout the year. The key areas were as follows:

Health and Safety Work Programme: The Committee developed a work programme with some of the key action areas as follows:

- a. Covid-19 and the effects of Long Covid including creating Covid-19 Guidance to including in the Toolkit for Health and Safety Reps.
- b. Exploring developing template risk assessments.
- c. Highlighting the issues of Stress and Mental Health in the workplace.
- d. Developing a calendar of key Health and Safety related dates and events.
- e. Considerable focus has been placed on issues affecting women in the workplace, in particular such issues as domestic violence, and the menopause.

Annual Health and Safety Conference: The 1st in-person Health and Safety Conference since before Covid was held on 28 October 2025 in the Clayton Hotel, Belfast. The theme of the conference was Health and Safety Issues affecting Women in the Workplace. The event was very well attended and the panel discussions proved very successful with a high level of participation from delegates.

A9 LGBTQI+ Committee

The LGBTQI+ Committee met regularly during the year and dealt with a range of issues as follows:

Pride Festivals and Parades: As part of NIPSA's commitment to Pride NIPSA was in attendance and participated in all 8 Pride Parades across the region as well as the following actions:

1. Belfast Pride Festival and Parade:

- a. A £100 donation towards the organising costs.
- b. A full page advertisement in the Pride Guide.
- c. A stand was located at The Pride Village.
- d. Information was issued to branches.

2. Omagh Pride - Saturday 14 June 2025:

- a. A £100 donation towards the organising costs.
- b. Information was issued to branches.
- c. A NIPSA representative spoke at the event.

3. Mid and East Antrim Pride - (Ballymena) Saturday 28 June 2025:

- a. A £100 donation towards the organising costs.
- b. Information was issued to branches.
- c. A NIPSA representative spoke at the event.

4. Causeway Pride (Portrush) – Saturday 2 August 2025:

- a. A £100 donation towards the organising costs.
- b. Information was issued to branches.
- c. A NIPSA representative spoke at the event.

5. Lurgan Pride – Saturday 16 August 2025:

- a. A £100 donation towards the organising costs.
- b. Information was issued to branches.

6. Foyle Pride – Saturday 23 August 2025:

- a. A £100 donation towards the organising costs.
- b. Information was issued to branches.

7. Newry Pride – Saturday 30 August 2025:

- a. A £100 donation towards the organising costs.
- b. Information was issued to branches.

8. Enniskillen Pride – Saturday 6 September 2025:

- a. A £100 donation towards the organising costs.
- b. Information was issued to branches.

Social Media Strategy: There is emphasis on developing new content for the Committee's social media outlets.

LGBTQI+ Strategy and Action Plan: The Committee is working on a new strategy and action plan which will be agreed in 2026. The strategy and action plan will continue to guide the work of the committee in supporting our LGBTQI+ members and raising key issues on which campaigns have been formulated. The Committee will also continue to review and updating all training material and the LGBTQI+ Reps toolkit to ensure it is up to date and reflective of current information.

Organisation and Administration

LGBTQI+ Strategy (DfC): Despite the resumption of the NI Executive in February 2024 the Co-Design Group established by the Department of Communities to work on the development of a government LGBTQI+ strategy Co-Design Group has not met and there have been no developments in relation to this strategy. NIPSA will continue to lobby for the development and implementation of the strategy.

Northern Ireland Assembly All-Party Group (APG) for LGBTQI+ and Equality: This group met twice in 2025 i.e. 17 October 2025 and 26 November 2025. NIPSA will continue to engage with political parties on LGBTQI+ matters at the APG. In early 2026 the committee will undertake a nomination process to identify a NIPSA delegate to attend this group.

A10 Appointment of Auditors

After a tender process GMcG Lisburn Chartered Accountants was appointed as NIPSA Auditors for the 2025 year.

A11 Headquarters Staff

NIPSA appointed 9 new Higher Executive Officers (HEOs) during the year to fill all the vacant posts at that grade. Those appointed were Deborah Adegoye, Ian Boersma, Eamon Farrell, Steven Harvey, Lorraine Maguire, Seana McConville, Ricardo McGreevy, Janette Murdock and Janice Walsh.

John McVey retired in August and Kim Smyth in November.

Composition of NIPSA's Workforce: The monitoring return for February 2025 to the Equality Commission showed the composition of NIPSA's workforce as summarised below:

	Below EO	EO and above	Totals
Male	4	14	18
Female	11	17	28
Protestant	7	10	17
Catholic	8	14	22
Unclassified	0	7	7
Disabled	2	5	7

A12 Membership

The year end figures for 2025 and comparison 2024 are listed below:

	Civil Service	Public Officers	NIPSA
2025	18,714	26,275	44,989
2024	19,181	27,845	47,026
Increase/Decrease	-2.43%	-5.64%	-4.33%
Male	8,543	5,779	14,322
Female	10,171	20,496	30,667

Membership records continued to be updated throughout the year with information provided by employers and members.

Membership Figures fluctuated during 2025 with the end of year total at 44,989. There was a decrease on the number of applications processed during the year. There were 3,908 applications processed in 2025, a significant decrease of 1,195 on 2024.

Career Breaks: The practice of inviting members to retain their NIPSA membership whilst on a Career Break continued with the annual fee remaining at £10.00. A total of 20 NIPSA members registered or retained their Career Breaks throughout 2025. This included 3 Civil Service members and 17 Public Officers members.

Organisation: Following consultation with the Branches the General Purposes Committee approved the following branch re-organisations:

- **Branch 5:** The DoF NIPSA Office proposed merging Branches 4 and 5. Members from PPSNI, DOJ, and TEO legal grades were reassigned as follows: PPSNI members moved to Branch 53; TEO members moved to Branch 14; and DOJ members moved to the appropriate DOJ branches based on their location. Once these transfers were completed, Branches 4 and 5 were merged and Branch 4 was closed.
- **Branch 122 (Cookstown):** Members in Cookstown merged with Branch 111 and Branch 122 was closed.

- **Branch 111 (Cookstown & Magherafelt):** These members have now merged with Branch 125.
- **Branch 116 (Ballynahinch/Bangor/Newcastle/Kilkeel):** The members within Bangor moved the Branch 130 (Holywood Road).
- **Branch 128 (Newtownabbey & Shankill):** These members have now merged with Branch 111 (Antrim). Branch 128 is now closed.
- **Branch 132 (Newtownards):** These members have now merged with Branch 130 (Bangor & Holywood Road).
- **Branch 132 (Knockbreda):** These members have now merged with Branch 136 (Lisburn).
- **Branch 144:** The members in Branch 144 merged with Branch 138 and Branch 144 closed.

A13 NIPSA Annual Conferences

The 2025 NIPSA Conference was held at the Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen, in hybrid format. The Conference took place over 3 days from Tuesday 27 to Thursday 29 May.

The Civil Service Group Conference was held in person at the Clayton Hotel, Belfast on 6 November.

A14 Services for Members

Legal Services: The NIPSA Legal Advice (Personal Matters) Scheme was used by 98 members in 2025.

Legal Services (Personal Injury): In 2025, 330 new cases were referred to the NIPSA Solicitor. In the same period, 44 cases were closed. Of these 41 were won or settled with awards totalling £1,740,238. 3 closed with costs of £3193.58.

Welfare Fund: 56 applications were received in 2025 and all have been dealt with resulting in payments of grants of £17,150.

Membership Plus Cards: Joint NIPSA membership/Membership Plus cards for 2025/27 were issued to members in December 2024. New members cards and replacement cards are available to be issued when required. Further offers were added throughout the year and were available at www.membershipplus.co.uk and on the Membership Plus App.

Specsavers: Premium Club discount vouchers continued to be available through NIPSA Headquarters.

Financial Services: Platinum Financial provided independent financial advice on all aspects of financial planning. This included participating in Pre-Retirement and Mid-Career Seminars.

Abbey Autoline Insurance: Abbey Autoline continued to offer NIPSA members exclusive discounts on Car, Home and Travel Insurance.

A15 Trades Councils

NIPSA continued to actively encourage Branches to affiliate to local Councils of Trade Unions.

The Trades Councils to which NIPSA Branches were affiliated were:

- Antrim and Ballymena
- Belfast
- Craigavon
- Derry
- Fermanagh
- Mid Ulster
- North Down & Ards
- Omagh

A16 Union Learning

Funding: The beginning of 2025 saw the NIPSA Union Learning Project still within their current bid for 3 years (2023/2026) with the Department for Economy (DfE) and administered by Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC ICTU). A new bid will be required before 31 March 2026.

The Union Learning Fund (ULF) Budget and Targets were not confirmed with NIC ICTU by the Department for Economy (DfE) for the project starting on 1 April. NIC ICTU continued to push the DfE for a Letter of Offer. On 23 July 2025, NIPSA and the other Unions in the ULF Project, were given the news that DfE wrote to NIC ICTU.

The letter outlined the following issues:

Organisation and Administration

- Core ULF funding is to be allocated from the Ministers Skills Fund rather than Further Education Budget.
- No uplift to funding for 2025/2026
- Refusal to fund Skills Fund projects

The Department had not issued a formal Letter of Offer for 2025/2026, therefore, NIC ICTU were unable to allocate budgets to projects, and they continued to challenge the Department. The Letter of Offer did not materialise until November, meaning the ULF were unable to look at funding courses until next year. At present, the Project continues to offer the Essential Skills Courses and assist members where possible, given the restrictions that we were placed under. The other issues remain outstanding at the end of the year.

Committee and Network Meetings/Conference: During the year, the Union Learning (UL) Committee and Network met on 25 February, 19 March, 18 June, 10 September and 10 December.

It was agreed that the ULR Conference would take place again virtually on Wednesday, 19 March and the theme would be 'Neurodiversity Awareness in the Workplace'. The Conference was opened by Maria Morgan (DGS) and there were speakers from Autism NI, Lena by Inspire and Libraries NI. Roisin Graham, UL Project Co-Ordinator, closed the Conference and met with the newly elected ULR Committee (see table below). The Chair, Stephen Gowdy, was elected, with the Vice Chair, Leah McDonnell, also being elected.

ULF Courses: The Union Learning Fund (ULF) Project Manager organised more remote Information Communication Technology Essential Skills (ICT ES) courses during the year. There were 3 courses that were to begin in January with Northern Regional College (NRC) but they did not commence until March,. This delay was due to unforeseen circumstances within NRC and the Awarding Body. These 3 remote ICT ES courses ran with 2 on a Tuesday night and 1 on a Wednesday night with 10 NIPSA members on each and they concluded at the end of June.

From June onwards, the Project Co-Ordinator gathered the names of members who would like to complete another remote ICT ES course in the new academic year beginning in September. The ICT ES courses did not take place as they were hampered by a review of the awarding body who accredits these courses. Other Projects and Further Education (FE) Colleges were able to register some of our NIPSA members onto the last City & Guilds (C&G) courses before the review was commissioned. ICTU then began talks with the Open College Network (OCN) about them accrediting these courses in FE Colleges going forward. There was no resolution to this issue at the end of the year and the Department for Economy (DfE) was kept informed of these ongoing issues. This means that Union Learning Fund (ULF) targets may not be met in full.

During the year, the Union Learning (UL) Project Co-ordinator was looking into issues that were reported to her about NIPSA members not being able to use their Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) work

ULR Committee 2024/25

Name	Br	Employer
Denise Crilly	124	DfC
Eugene Donaghy	119	DfC
Kris Doherty	135	DfC
Stephen Gowdy	119	DfC
Leah McDonnell	91	DAERA

Name	Br	Employer
John McKeegan	560	Libraries NI
Paul McKenna	527	ABC Council
Gerald McLernon	119	DfC
Gerardette McVeigh	733	SHSCT
Jane Scott	516	EABR

laptops to do these ICT ES Courses. The reason given was that it was due to security reasons. However, it was established that staff could raise a service request via IT Assist for an off-network, standalone laptop for education purposes, which would be approved at local departmental management level. Further issues arose when members tried to access this 'workaround' where it was reported that they had to make an advance request of up to 3 months, as well as having to pay for the laptop each month over the time of its use. Other issues also included that the laptop did not have the appropriate software that was required by the FE College. This issue was to be revisited next year with the NICS.

Other courses were advertised during the year in line with the ULF Budget. The lunch-time series of Seminars on 'Personal Development' (7 different sessions) and 'Communicate & Present with Confidence' (6 different sessions) ran in February/March. These sessions were recorded and could be viewed on the Hub, which members also registered for, and where they could access other useful materials. To date, these Seminars have been very well received and it is envisaged that they will run again next year.

The chance for another learning opportunity arose - 'Women in Leadership Programme' which was fully funded by Antrim & Newtownabbey Council. It was offered out for up to 5 NIPSA members. This began in late March 2025.

A pilot Level 1 Award Course in Environmental Sustainability funded by the Department for Economy (DfE) was scheduled for later in March with the opportunity to roll this out amongst employers. NIPSA had 10 members registered for this course. It proved a very popular choice, and we have a waiting list for it in the hope that the DfE will fund it going forward following the pilot.

Another Project Manager from Aegis was able to offer some interested NIPSA members the chance to participate in a fully funded OCN Level 3 Database and Spreadsheets course online via Teams that began in late March/early April.

Following a meeting with the FDA Project Manager, NIPSA were able to join in workshops on the NICS Competency Framework. As this course was very

well attended by NIPSA members and was beneficial in them achieving promotions and permanency, it was agreed that NIPSA would issue courses that were funded by the FDA Union Learning Project using NIPSA's Union Learning Logo.

Other courses that are being considered will be advertised in 2026 in line with the ULF Budget.

One ULR course ran from 29 April for 7 weeks with 7 NIPSA ULRs having been trained. The next ULR course is to run in the New Year from 26 January 2026 for 7 weeks.

The ULRs continued with any work that they could, given the continued hybrid working patterns.

The ULRs have had to look at different ways to communicate with members to get information out.

To date, there are 123 NIPSA ULRs, 82 in the Civil Service Group and 41 in the Public Officers Group.

A17 Training

From the beginning of 2025, Roisin Graham took up the post of NIPSA Training Officer. The NIPSA Reps training returned, to be delivered in NIPSA Headquarters, with 3 courses delivered during the year. The total number over the year was 50 NIPSA Representatives trained over 10 weeks in the necessary skills needed in being a Rep, NIPSA procedures and administration including Conference, Grievance & Disciplines, Equality, Discrimination, Bullying & Harassment, Negotiations, Campaigning, Recruitment & Organising, Mapping your Workplaces etc. These training groups also agreed to set up WhatsApp groups administered by the Training Officer so they could keep sharing their experiences, knowledge and support amongst their group. These WhatsApp groups have proved very beneficial in communicating with members, as well as developing their confidence in representing members.

Other courses continued to be delivered in the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC ICTU) building 45-47 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FG.

The tables below show when the courses ran, with the numbers who applied/attended and a breakdown of Male/Female and Civil Service/Public Officers.

Organisation and Administration

The total number over the year was 164 NIPSA Representatives trained. The Training Officer wrote to Branch Secretaries after the first training term so that the new representatives could be allocated a mentor in the Branch. This to help them to utilise the skills they had learned on the courses, put into practice what they had learned and to enable them to take on cases in the Branch with help and support from more experienced representatives on the Committee. The Training Officer encouraged the Branches to let these representatives shadow the more experienced representatives to further their involvement in NIPSA.

The Training Officer also contacted Branch Secretaries to ascertain what training they would like NIPSA to be able to deliver to enable them to upskill in their role as a representative including their committee members. Branches were also encouraged to let the Training Officer, who is also the Union Learning Project Co-Ordinator, know of any courses that their members may want to avail of under the Union Learning Fund.

During the year, other courses through the TUC were issued to Branches where NIPSA representatives could sign up if the subject was of interest to them and to further their skills in the roles they hold on their committees. The Training Officer contacted the TUC to have NIPSA added to the Trade Union list for these courses so that they could register under their union. If representatives registered for these courses, they could avail of a recorded session for viewing at a later date.

The Training Officer issued information on courses that are offered by the Labour Relations Agency (LRA) to Branch Secretaries. The link also included access to past recordings of sessions to view at a later date if representatives wanted.

Listening to the various Unions including NIPSA, NIC ICTU had other courses that were developed during the year for representatives on topical issues. These courses are on BDS Divestment and Training the Trainers and How to Design & Run Anti-Racism Training Initiatives. A popular course this year was developed on Neurodiversity with the option to be discussed about having Neurodiversity Champions.

There was also a course on Digital Communications and Organising and another one titled Preventing Violence at Work.

The Training Programme for the year was issued to Branches as follows: January - March/April - June/September - December 2025.

The Training Programme for January - March 2026 was issued to Branch Secretaries just before the end of the year.

January - March 2025

Course Name	Applied/Attended	Male	Female	CS	PO
NIPSA Reps 1	23	14	9	15	8
Handling Grievances & Disciplines (Online Evening Course)	10	1	9	8	2
Health & Safety Reps 1	9	8	1	4	5
Health & Safety Reps 2	5	2	3	3	2
Enforcing Health & Safety Law	7	7	0	5	2

April - June 2025

Course Name	Applied/Attended	Male	Female	CS	PO
NIPSA Reps 1	14	8	6	9	5
Handling Grievances & Disciplines (Day)	6	3	3	2	4
Diploma in Employment Law	4	2	2	2	2
BDS Course	3	3	0	3	0
Health & Safety Reps 1	5	1	4	4	1
Disability Champions	2	1	1	3	0
Bullying & Harassment	3	1	2	3	0
ULR	7	3	4	6	1
Neurodiversity	10	4	6	8	2

September - December 2025

Course Name	Applied/Attended	Male	Female	CS	PO
NIPSA Reps 1	13	7	6	9	4
Handling Grievances & Disciplines (online evening course)	7	1	6	2	5
Diploma in Health & Safety	9	7	2	5	4
Health & Safety Reps 1	9	4	5	6	3
Health & Safety Reps 2	9	5	4	6	3
Taking a Case to Tribunal	5	2	3	3	2
Prevention of violence in the Workplace	4	2	2	3	1

Section B

Civil Service

General Issues

Personal Management

Group Reports

B1 General Issues

B1.1 Accommodation

Trade Union Side continued to participate actively in the formal Accommodation Whitley meetings, engaging with Management Side on the implementation of the NICS Estate Strategy. The Strategy, published by the Department of Finance, outlined significant planned reductions in the government estate's overall footprint, along with investment in modernisation and low carbon refurbishment projects, such as the work planned for Omagh County Hall. Long term planning included consideration of transforming parts of the Stormont Estate into a centralised NICS campus.

Estate Operations Oversight: Management Side maintained oversight of estate operations, including monitoring the Aramark cleaning contract and considering the potential introduction of an anonymous staff survey to assess service performance. They also examined ways to standardise decisions on building closures during adverse weather events and reiterated that the estate remained suitable for existing hybrid working arrangements.

Estate Rationalisation and Sustainability: Engagement between CTUS and Management Side also focused on estate rationalisation, including building disposals and the scope of the office estate. Discussions covered future sustainability initiatives, such as the proposed solar panel installation at the Stormont Estate, which might have integrated with the existing high voltage network.

B1.2 Pay, Reward and Grading

2024/25 Pay: Following several weeks of informal discussion through November and December 2024, the Trade Union Side received a formal pay offer on 16 January.

The offer was set out below.

a. Terms of the Offer: The first part of the deal applied from 1 August 2024 in respect of the reporting year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. All elements of the offer detailed at (a) to (d) below applied for one-year with effect from 1 August 2024.

The elements proposed were:

- i. all eligible satisfactory performers to receive one step progression, subject to band maximum, with effect from 1 August 2024;
- ii. AA and analogous civil service pay scale to be revalorised to £24,336, in line with the Civil Service's continuing commitment to being a voluntary Living Wage Foundation employer;
- iii. all points on civil service pay scales A0 and analogous to SCS, inclusive, excluding non-NICS retained pay scales, from minimum to maximum, to be revalorised by 3%; and
- iv. any staff receiving less than a 3% consolidated increase, to receive a non-consolidated, non-pensionable payment to bring them up to the equivalent value of 3% of their salary at 31 July 2024 (for those in civil service grades who are in receipt of a salary in excess of the maximum, the 3% would be based on the scale maximum. For those on non-civil service pay scales the 3% would be limited to 3% of the equivalent civil service general service scale maximum).

In addition, there had been an increase in on-call rates already discussed with recognised civil service unions and applied with effect from 1 December 2024.

The second part of the deal applied from 1 August 2025 in respect of the reporting year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. All elements of the offer detailed at (a) to (d) below were in respect of an 8-month period from 1 August 2025 to 31 March 2026 and did not establish any future contractual entitlements.

The elements proposed were:

- i. all eligible satisfactory performers to receive one step progression, subject to band maximum, with effect from 1 August 2025;
- ii. all points on civil service pay scales, excluding non-NICS retained pay scales, from minimum to maximum to be revalorised by 6%;
- iii. any staff receiving less than a 6%

consolidated increase, to receive a non-consolidated, non-pensionable payment to bring them up to the equivalent value of 6% of their salary at 31 July 2025 (for those in civil service grades who are in receipt of a salary in excess of the maximum, the 6% would be based on the scale maximum. For those on non-civil service pay scales the 6% would be limited to 6% of the equivalent civil service general service scale maximum); and

iv. DP and analogous to SCS pay scales, excepting non-civil service pay scales, will be shortened by the removal of the minimum pay point.

b. Other pay-related issues: As part of this pay offer and as discussed in negotiations, Management Side made the following commitments:

- i. an increase to overtime caps;
- ii. a further review of on-call and standby allowances;
- iii. an increase in the period of contractual maternity and adoption pay, from 18 to 26 weeks;
- iv. an increase to some fixed rate allowances, to include: Flight, Sea Going, Diving, Plant Operators, Culvert Inspector, Footwear, Clothing and Uniform Allowances;
- v. removal of the 90-day eligibility criterion for pay awards with effect from the new pay settlement date of 1 April 2026, when new performance management arrangements are agreed in consultation with trade unions; and
- vi. move the pay award effective date to 1 April, from 1 April 2026.

The Civil Service Executive Committee met on 17 January to consider the offer and agreed to recommend acceptance to members. A consultation period ran for 3 weeks until 6 February. 89 branches responded to the consultation and, of those who took part, 96% of members voted in favour of acceptance of the pay offer with 4% voting against acceptance.

The first element was implemented in May and the award from 1 August 2025 was paid in September.

Discussions continued in relation to the implementation date of the changes to Maternity/Adoption leave and an effective date of 6 April 2025 had been agreed and the Handbook chapter was amended to reflect the new policy.

c. Meeting with the Finance Minister: NIPSA, along with the other 3 NICS trade unions had a brief meeting with the Finance Minister on 2 July.

The Minister outlined the budget issues the NI Executive was facing and it was expected it would cover a 3 year period from 1 April 2026, which would take us past the mandate of this Assembly. The Minister requested that the trade unions submitted a pay claim by the end of September to allow him to make budget recommendations to the Executive in October before it issued for a 12-week consultation period.

d. NICS Pay Claim 2026 - 2029: The Civil Service Executive Committee met in September to discuss the pay claim for 2026. The discussion centred on the proposal from the Finance Minister to NICS Trade Unions that a 3-year pay claim be submitted to match the 3-year budget that would be in place from April 2026. In considering the claim the Executive took account of conference policy and the above inflation 20-month deal for 2024-2026 which had helped to address the real terms pay cuts members had endured for more than a decade.

The Claim: The Civil Service Executive Committee agreed to put the following claim to members for consultation:

- Inflation plus a 3% increase on all scale points and allowances each year for 3 years (1/4/2026 - 31/3/2029).
- The amalgamation of the AA and AO grades and for the new combined grade to have a single point scale.
- The removal of the bottom point on all other pay scales (EOII to Grade 6).

B1 General Issues

When considering the 3-year deal, the Executive Committee was cognisant of the fact that economic changes, such as a rise in inflation, could affect the value of the award over time and so review points were a key element of the multi-year claim.

This was put to branches for consultation, and the claim was overwhelmingly endorsed.

After discussions with the FDA a joint multi-year pay claim was submitted on 29 September for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029.

NIPSA and the Civil Service Trade Unions received an invitation to a meeting with the Minister of Finance to discuss the claim. That meeting took place on the 12 November where we took the opportunity to raise that our members expectations were that they would no longer accept being left behind, that inflation must be a key consideration in any offer, a fair and decent pay award would continue to help with morale and recruitment & retention issues. It had also been raised that a 3-year budget would give stability and allowed for improved workforce planning.

Initial pay meetings were held with Management Side on 24 November and 6 December to begin early discussions on the pay claim, however, there had not been any remit given to open negotiations as the budget had not been agreed by the NI Executive. Further meetings were planned for the new year.

Starting Pay on Appointment and Recruitment and Retention Allowance: Management Side consulted Central Trade Union Side on a new Starting Pay on Appointment and Recruitment and Retention Allowance policy they wished to introduce. The policy was to be supported by business cases for affected roles. Central Trade Union Side initially expressed opposition to the proposal stating that the difficulties that had arisen in recruiting/retaining staff were because of the year-on-year fall in the real value of NICS salaries, Central Trade Union Side believed there should be higher salaries for all posts including those that are hard to fill because of the skills needed. Central Trade Union Side also pointed out that such an allowance was not the most appropriate solution as it was not pensionable. Management Side responded to advise that the

Minister had considered the points made by Central Trade Union Side but had decided to press ahead to have a governance policy in place for business cases for recruitment and retention allowances. The policy was published on 6 March and Permanent Secretaries/Heads of Professions were advised of the change.

In May, Management Side initiated discussions on a proposed business case in the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) concerning the implementation of a recruitment and retention allowance for their Youth and Social workers. The Business case cited that the allowance aimed to address skills shortages as well as pay disparities with other public sector employers, such as the Health and Social Care Trusts and the Probation Board which had impacted on the YJA's ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. Central Trade Union Side liaised with the seconded officer and official for the area who had been involved in earlier discussions with YJA. Correspondence issued to Management Side that called for the recruitment and retention issues to be addressed through increased pay awards and for the allowance to be pensionable, with a review built in to gauge its success. The Management Side response cited a pensionable allowance would not be achievable at this stage. While Central Trade Union Side maintained the allowance should be pensionable it was thought it was not in the best interests of members to delay the implementation any further and would continue to monitor the impact on recruitment and retention and would raise any concerns that would arise.

In July a further proposal was received in relation to Internal Audit in DOF. The same approach was taken by Trade Union Side in terms of what we expected for our members and liaison with the seconded office and official was picked up. It was agreed that Trade Union Side would ensure that all related matters would be taken forward in future pay negotiations.

Increase to On-Call and Standby Allowances, some Fixed Rate Allowances and Overtime Caps: Further increases to the above allowances linked to the 2025 element of the pay award took effect from 1 August 2025. The enhanced rates were welcomed by Trade Union Side and members were informed of the enhanced rates in a Branch Secretary Circular dated 25 July.

TVO/VOT Pay: Pay negotiations had started mid-year for a group of Vets who were employed under a specific contract in which a daily standard rate (uplifted by the yearly pay awards) and a headage rate (applied to the number of animals tested) combined to form their salary. As the headage element had not been increased for many years, negotiations opened in the year with Management Side to increase pay for these members. Discussions were ongoing and taking account of the lengthy timescales, the aim of Trade Union Side was to have the matter resolved as soon as possible in the new year.

Agency Workers Issues: Trade Union Side continued to seek assurances on all pay related matters for Agency members and that there were not undue delays in the payment of their 2025 pay award.

B1.3 Pensions

The NICS Scheme Advisory Board: Continued to meet in-year to ensure matters of policy and proposed scheme changes were fully discussed and assessed for impact on the scheme and members.

The NICS Pensions Forum: The Pensions forum involves the recognised Civil Service Trade Unions meeting Management Side on all pensions related issues. The main issues for the Forum continued to include the McCloud retrospective remedy in line with the legislation to restore eligible pension members with service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, to a position they would have been in had the age discrimination not occurred. Giving them a choice of Alpha or PCS (NI) benefits for 2015-2022. In December Trade Union Side received a letter to advise that consultation was opening on proposed amendments to the Public Service (Civil Servants and Others) Pensions (Remediable Service) regulations NI 2023. The letter outlined the purpose of the amendments and that they were necessary to make amendments to the remediable service regulations which implemented the retrospective stages of the McCloud remedy. These technical amendments would clarify policy intent with statutory additions to allow policy implementation and contingent decisions. Importantly the Management Side letter provided reassurance that the amendments were

minor, clarifying existing regulations and would not introduce any new policy nor adversely impact on the scheme members. As the cabinet office had previously undertaken a similar exercise with the GB unions advice was sought and considered by Trade Union Side for use in the response to the consultation.

The NICS Pensions Board: NIPSA has employee representatives on the NICS Pensions Board. The Board has responsibility for assisting the scheme manager in the effective administration of the NICS pension arrangement and assisting the Department in securing compliance and good governance. The focus for the Board in-year continued to be McCloud, staffing and resources, legislative requirements, the Pensions Dashboard programme and business as usual work that was ongoing.

North South Pension Scheme: The NIPSA representatives on the N/S scheme collective consultation working group continued to ensure the interests of members were met in all scheme arrangements. This included a consultation on the Alpha member contribution rates that proposed to mirror the NICS Pensions decision to adjust the percentage contribution rates and to follow the convention to replicate the NICS scheme amendments given to the close modelling on the NI Scheme.

B1.4 Public Service Management

The Central Whitley Council Sub-Committee continued to meet with the Integr8 project at monthly meetings with a schedule agreed throughout the year. The project is now nearly fully staffed and the planning continued on the various policy reviews to complete in time to assist the design of the HR and Finance digital platform. This will enable NICS to bring in-house many of the functions previously outsourced to HR Connect, with the exception of Payroll which will remain outsourced.

Central Trade Union Side have received an updated Policy Review timetable at year end and this programme of reviews continued to result in a demanding period of consultations, due to progress over the next 12 to 18 months.

B2 Personnel Management

B2.1 Employee Relations

The Committee increased its schedule of meetings, moving to a monthly basis throughout the year, to deal with the additional policy reviews. The wide ranging collection of reviews ahead of the design of the Transformation Integr8 project and platform build continued and include:

Competency Framework Review: Central Trade Union Side (CTUS) received sight of the benchmarking exercise as NICS have indicated their desire to review the Competency Framework. Trade Union Side in principle welcomed the review and await to scrutinise the detail. It is understood that the direction of travel looked likely to be to a more 'behaviours' based process with Management Side drafting a Success Profile Framework including procedures for candidates and line managers expected.

Dignity at Work Draft Policy: The Dignity at Work policy has now been agreed and will be implemented in early 2026 supported by a new APEX case-work system. This will hopefully shorten the time taken to progress and conclude investigations into complaints. The minor amendments on the Code of Ethics have also been agreed and published at end of October. Central Trade Union Side also submitted comments on the 5-year People Strategy and 2-year action plan.

Review of the Hybrid Working Policy: The Review of the Hybrid Working policy issued with Permanent Secretaries pressing for a mandatory attendance in the offices. Management Side underlined the Review cements the practice and future use of Hybrid working in NICS. Central Trade Union Side responded that the Hybrid Working policy was working effectively, that there were no productivity or capacity issues and business was being managed and delivered well. Central Trade Union Side did not accept the evidence provided by Management Side for the need for change. Subsequently Management Side agreed the strengthening of DDA wording, provided clarity on the use of Connect2 hubs, on taking Annual Leave on 'scheduled days in' the office and requirement for senior management to explain as well as communicate decisions on attendance requirements. Central Trade Union Side were unable to agree with the

proposed Policy changes and these were imposed to be effective by 1st November. CTUS remained in discussions to ensure that the members interests were defended and that issues around implementation would be brought to MS for resolution. Issues around requests for Reasonable Adjustments could be escalated while CTUS monitored any delays in consideration of such requests.

Review of Inefficiency Sickness Absence Policy: Management Side advised that work had concluded on the review of the Inefficiency Sickness Absence policy and was with the Minister for approval before consultation with Central Trade Union Side could begin. Management Side further advised that it was hoped that the draft policy would soon be shared. Central Trade Union Side highlighted the issue of language used, in particular, the wording around the term inefficiency which they had raised previously and should be replaced by improved terminology. Management Side have agreed in principle with that view and the draft policy was awaited.

Grievance and Standards of Conduct Policy Update: Management Side previously noted that the final draft policy has been agreed with Central Trade Union Side and that Central Trade Union Side had agreed to sign off the Joint Declaration of Protection outlining our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in an atmosphere where all are treated with dignity and respect. The agreed Grievance policy is likely to issue and go live at the beginning of 2026. This will include prior testing on APEX-FACES (the case management system) and communications were shared prior to issue with Central Trade Union Side. NIPSA and Civil Service unions will sign up to the new Standards of Conduct agreement.

Performance Management Policy Update: Management Side had previously shared the findings from the performance management engagement sessions and advised that the preference was for a more continuous informal model. Central Trade Union Side stated that the current performance management system needed improvement and should be more meaningful. CTUS pressed for a simpler, user friendly system with more ongoing feedback and discussions between members and

line managers. Management Side had previously advised they were preparing the new report on the Review of the Performance Management policy and would share with Central Trade Union Side - this is still unfinished but will be shared when complete.

Reasonable Adjustments: Central Trade Union Side have queried the delay on the draft Reasonable Adjustment policy, noting the good work done by the Working group to date with Management and Trade Union representatives. Some line managers required further support to understand their legal requirements. Management Side advised they hoped to have a final draft ready to circulate by early 2026 with a view to commencing consultation.

Discipline Policy: The draft policy was shared with Central Trade Union Side in August and CTUS received a walkthrough of the documents from Management Side on 14th October. These were further discussed on the Employee Relations CWC meeting of 30th October and CTUS issued their response to Management Side. Although there are some improvements to current policy and procedure, Management Side have been informed that current conference policy determined our response particularly in relation to Delegation of Decision making in Discipline cases to the line management structure. MS are evaluating and drawing up their response to CTUS, expected in early 2026.

Paternity Leave: CTUS have raised the issue of improvements to current provision to follow those made recently to Maternity Leave and associated provisions. Management Side undertook to consider the matter and begin early thinking on this. CTUS shared Benchmarking information on this with Management Side.

Sickness Policy: A new Sickness policy is being drafted and will be shared in early 2026. Some improvements are expected but is likely to also see delegation of decision making to line managers.

NICSHR-Employee Relations Restructuring: Management Side provided an update of the work ongoing regarding the restructuring of Employee Relations, Trade Union Side had been consulted and changes were implemented during the year.

B2.2 Resourcing and Talent Management

Trade Union Side has continued discussions with Management Side regarding recruitment, workforce planning, and the need for fair internal opportunities. Concerns have been repeatedly raised about recent recruitment exercises and the balance between internal and external competition.

Grade 6 & 7 Competitions: Central Trade Union Side raised several concerns regarding the recent recruitment process, particularly around the online testing, sift stage, and appeals, noting that these issues were echoed by a number of applicants and require further analysis and greater transparency to ensure fairness and confidence in the process. CTUS highlighted declining online test pass rates with age and asked whether any analysis had been carried out to assess potential age related bias, as well as raising concerns about the high sift failure rate, the narrow five working day appeal window, and the limited feedback provided to unsuccessful candidates. Questions were also raised about the consistency of the sift process, the level of departmental representation on panels, whether any non civil servants were involved, and the appropriateness of panels taking notes on loose sheets rather than standard interview booklets. CTUS additionally sought clarification on experience based failures, appeal outcomes, the treatment of candidates who narrowly missed test thresholds due to rounding and suggested that future competitions publish minimum pass scores to support transparency.

DP, SO & E01 Recruitment: Management Side advised that recruitment competitions were in the planning stages and they were aiming to launch them throughout the next financial year.

E02 Recruitment: An external E02 recruitment competition was launched, with circa 14,000 applications received. Interviews were held during November & December.

A0 Recruitment: Central Trade Union Side continued to raise issues concerning the 2024 A0 competition such as, high numbers of candidates failing for conduct concerns, stating the suspected use of notes or proxy help, candidates being ruled out due to incomplete video submissions and

B2 Personnel Management

the loss of access to HireVue recordings after the contract ended. Management Side acknowledged that the process was flawed and agreed to consider improvements

A0 Recruitment Pilot: Management Side examined entry level recruitment through a Task and Finish Group, with the aim of reducing reliance on agency staff through targeted recruitment activity, including region specific pilots.

Trade Union Side raised concerns about the lack of timely consultation and noted the NICS position on the pilot.

Trade Union Side also raised concerns about the use of the company, Talent Dog, to sift applications.

A full evaluation of the pilot will be completed by Management Side with Trade Union Side involvement.

Workforce Mobility, Planning, and Retention Initiatives: Consultation continued on the Employee Mobility Policy which will replace six existing policies including Elective Transfers, vacancy management & career development.

Consultation continued with Management Side on the development of a NICS Strategic Workforce Planning Guide and Professions Framework.

Management Side continued their work on the Retention Project looking into the reasons why staff are leaving the NICS.

Interview Panel Diversity: Concerns had been raised regarding diversity representation on interview panels. Assurances had been given that changes in demographics should not have prevented participation from individuals who did not fall into traditional community background categories.

Cross Departmental Mental Health Forum: The Cross Departmental Mental Health Forum continued its role in supporting mental health activity and collaboration across departments.

B2.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy Development: Central Trade Union Side continued to engage with Management Side as they progressed several key policy areas. These included drafting Terms of Reference for the Menopause Policy and continuing to develop the Reasonable Adjustments Policy, which would include set timelines and e learning resources. Work was also underway on the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Policy, supported by an increased number of Safe Space advocates. Further initiatives included the Women's Mental Health Survey and the exploration of a bereavement support network. Management Side advised that they were continuing to develop initiatives to strengthen the visibility of mental health and wellbeing across the NICS.

B3 Group Reports

B3.1 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Consultation

Trade Union Side (TUS) continued to liaise directly every three weeks, with the Grade 3 in Corporate Strategy and Corporate Support Group (SPCSG) and other members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) on a range of complex issues from across the Department.

Although there was a change in Grade 3 personnel, the engagement remained very constructive, and TUS continued to collaborate effectively with Management Side (MS) on a wide range of issues.

The Climate Change, Science & Innovation Group (CCSIG) Whitley met on 5 occasions during the year. The Director confirmed that the new structures for the CCSIG have been completed and that they were still bedding in the changes and would continue to do so. The group continues to work towards their Business Plan targets and Minister's priorities. The People (staff) survey results were received, and these will be worked through over the time. It was agreed with TUS that once the results were considered in detail, a more considerate discussion would be worthwhile.

The key areas of work currently underway:

- Climate Action Plan went out for consultation (closed 8th October).
- Support from other departments.
- Carbon budgets out for consultation (Closed 17th Nov).
- Working on draft regulations to establish a JT commission.
- Further scoping of Green Finance.
- Development of IT System for Science.
- Innovation - scoping work underway to inform next steps.

Science Support Provided to Key Policy Areas:

The College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) Whitley met on 4 occasions during the year. TUS continued to be provided with updates on rebuilding at Loughry and Greenmount Campuses. The most up-to-date information is that the contract is out for tender and that work should begin in the Spring of 2026. There will be minimal disruption to staff at Greenmount and none at Loughry. The Director has consulted further with Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) and provided a draft of the CAFRE Administrative Review. Consultation is ongoing with an implementation date of April 2026.

Food Farming and Rural Affairs Group (FFRAG):

Whitley met on 4 occasions during the year and is due to convene again in the New Year. As a means of ongoing progress, the following are the current priorities:

- DAERA Corporate Plan launched setting out Ministerial priorities.
- Food Strategy Framework launched cutting across FFRAG, DAERA and other Government Departments.
- Work ongoing on Rural Policy Framework.
- Delivery of the Sustainable Agriculture Programme.
- Business and policy support by PESD for the new EU/UK reset agreement.

Consultation within the Forest Service (FS) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has shown improvement. However, ongoing difficulties remain within the Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG), particularly within the Marine Fisheries Division (MFD). Trade Union Side continued to raise the lack of effective consultation at the relevant Group Whitley meetings.

Trade Union Side continued to raise concerns with EMFG and NIEA Management Side regarding high levels of sickness absence and requested a Pulse Survey to identify potential hot spots. Management Side acknowledged these concerns and agreed to consider issues arising following analysis of People Survey data.

B3 Group Reports

Marine and Fisheries Division (MFD): Management Side accepted the proposals submitted by Trade Union Side to resolve the registered disagreement on certification and the creation of Aquatic Animal Health Professional (AAHP) posts. This assisted in securing career progression for Fisheries Inspectorate staff. Concerns had also been raised regarding draft Candidate Information Booklets (CIB's) for Deputy Principal and Principal Fisheries Officer roles, specifically changes to eligibility criteria and job titles. This was resolved with management reverting back to the use of previous competition CIB's.

Management Side continued to engage with the Trade Union Side on updates relating to the Windsor Framework, Inland Fisheries work, and the Public Angling Estate (PAE) co-design, and concerns had been raised regarding the timing of Trade Union engagement in the PAE process.

Trade Union Side continued to raise with Management Side concerns regarding the use of agency staff within MFD.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA): Consultation within NIEA continued to improve; however, Trade Union Side continued to raise concerns with Management Side regarding failures to consult on key issues. These included:

- The Temporary Promotion Process.
- The creation of posts.
- The division and/or creation of work streams.
- Whitley meetings are now being conducted at Grade 5 level.

The Independent Review of Environmental Governance in Northern Ireland: Final Report was published on 21st October during the year. <http://nics.intranet.nigov.net/daera/news/independent-review-environmental-governance-northern-ireland-final-report>. Trade Union Side was only made aware of its publication the night before. The Report, along with its 32 recommendations, will have implications for members within the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). Management Side has assured the Trade Union Side of early consultation as the recommendations are implemented.

NIEA Operational Review Programme (ORP): Initial meeting with Management Side has been held. Trade Union Side wrote to Colin McGrath MLA to raise serious concerns about unacceptable and disrespectful comments he made in the Assembly Chamber on 4 November during the year, when he referred to NIEA staff as "useless".

Forest Service (FS): Trade Union Side continued to engage with Management Side in respect of vacancies and recruitment. The Grade 6 competition's method to fill is under review as the last competition did not result in any successful applicants.

Single Portal Inspectorate Unit (SPIU): Trade Union Side is in ongoing discussions with Management Side regarding concerns raised by members within this business area.

Proposed Changes to Shift Patterns at Ports: Trade Union Side is engaging with Management Side and the membership in relation to proposed changes to shift patterns.

Veterinary Service & Animal Health Group (VSAHG): The Renewal Programme continues with substantive engagement on a regular basis. Business Management functions have transferred into what is now Windsor Framework Sanitary & Phyto Sanitary (SPS) Delivery, Group Renewal & Business Management Division. MS and TUS agreed on the main issues that needed to be addressed and established a priority order to focus resources on the highest priority issues first.

Direction to Officers on Veterinary Public Health Programme Duties: The Directions document was initially agreed between MS and TUS in 2012 and set out how matters not covered by NICS policies would be managed for Veterinary and Technical staff working in meat plants, cutting plants and cold stores. Consultation and negotiation on the third review of the document remains subject to ongoing delay. TUS raised concerns about potential equality issues within sections of the document and TUS submitted a letter of complaint to DAERA's Capacity Equality & Diversity Branch (CCE&DB), raising five equality issues. Three complaints were upheld and two were partially upheld. The response from CCE&DB made three

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recommendations which will be taken forward with VSAHG MS. There are signs of progress, with MS indicating that an exercise is underway to remove any sections of the document that restate NICS policy, as suggested by TUS, with a view to reaching agreement on the remaining sections.

On-call rotas: Progress on an exercise to rationalise on-call rotas for veterinarians in VSAHG has progressed slowly. Equality vulnerabilities have been identified, in addition to the level of cover that staff who work part-time are expected to provide. There are also contractual issues, as some staff are not required to participate in on-call rotas. One of the complaints submitted to CCE&DB was the Failure to Appropriately Screen or Review Policies with Equality Implication, in particular On-Call Rota Arrangements in the Veterinary Public Health Directions' policy. This complaint was upheld on the grounds that the Department had not conducted an equality screening of all the on-call arrangements/rotas in place.

Shift Patterns in Portal Operations: Consultation has restarted as VSAHG MS's focus on the introduction of a change in shift pattern for Veterinary, Technical and Industrial staff who complete checks and inspections on relevant goods and livestock entering Northern Ireland through Belfast and Larne ports.

Single Portal Inspection Unit (SPIU): Management Side approached Trade Union Side with a proposal to establish a SPIU within VSAHG's SPS Delivery Directorate, incorporating the portal inspection staff in VSAHG and Forestry Service. GMB were the union that represented the Industrial Staff impacted by the changes. Negotiations were delayed due to slow responses from MS compounded by difficulty with availability for meetings.

Agency Contracts: TUS's concern about the use of agency contracts, including Direct Award Contracts, remains, and is increased by MS's delays in engaging with TUS to resolve the issues with the Veterinary Officer (VO) CIB which is preventing the much-needed recruitment of veterinarian staff.

Digital Services Division (DSD): There continued to be good engagement between MS and TUS across all areas in the Division. MS continued to acknowledge the importance of building good networks and

relationships with staff. Staff engagement continued at Divisional level with groups of staff. Specifically tailored meetings are being held on an ongoing basis. TUS has attended these when available and they have been found to be well organised with good interaction and participation in a wide range of relevant matters. A new Leadership Programme for ICT4, new entrant ICT5 and Deputy Principal staff is at procurement stage. It was hoped that the first course would be held before Christmas or early in the New Year. Whilst there have been issues recruiting staff at ICT5 level and above, the use of more tailored recruitment competitions seemed to have had a positive outcome. A recent ICT5 competition successfully filled all existing vacancies.

DAERA Estate: Sperrin House and Academy House staff moves have been postponed until 2028 at the earliest.

Vacancies: Given the unprecedented level of vacancies across the Department, Trade Union Side continued to raise concerns at every possible opportunity, including Whitley meetings, regarding the hours staff were working and the impact on workload from covering the work of vacant posts, in some cases in addition to the duties of their own post. MS were reminded about the requirement to seek approval from DTUS for all planned overtime working. Management Side continued to prioritise some work, resulting in a pause in a very limited number of work areas. Again, TUS continued to raise concerns at every possible opportunity.

Temporary promotions levels remained very high during this reporting period, resulting in more complaints from our members as they were and still are being prevented from going for certain TPOS because of prioritisation. These complaints are in the main, from within VSAHG and EMFG. The recent review of TPOs has hopefully addressed the issue of staff being prevented from applying for TPOs, although TUS intend to monitor this very closely.

Wellbeing of Staff: The Senior Management Team (SMT) continued to explore various areas to consider the wellbeing of staff while working under the Hybrid working arrangements and the implications this would have on all staff. Trade Union Side (TUS)

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continued to be involved in this area of work. TUS was concerned with the backlog there appeared to be with Occupational Health Service (OHS) appointments. The period from referral to appointment has reduced over the reporting period, but delays remain. TUS are very much still concerned with the building workloads in spite of the reassurances from senior management

Windsor Framework: Trade Union Side (TUS) continued to negotiate on behalf of our members at the ports and in the field offices. There is ongoing consultation with TUS across the Department, at Group level, on the many varied and complex issues raised by Windsor Framework. These issues, which cut across the entire Department, have put extreme pressure on the Secretariat. TUS have had regular meetings with the central Windsor Framework team who oversee and coordinate all Windsor Framework issues across the Department.

DAERA is the Department mostly impacted by the NI Protocol and is now mostly impacted by the Windsor Framework. This continues to cause many issues and challenges for the Department now and in the future, and TUS will continue to work for and protect our members as we navigate through these challenges.

Staff who were seconded to DEFRA have now begun returning to the Department, with those responsible for premises being first to return. The others will return as their Windsor Framework work becomes Business as Usual.

Industrial Relations: Trade Union Side (TUS) worked with Management Side (MS) in Strategic Planning and Corporate Services Group (SPCSG) to develop an Industrial Relations Presentation for Management and Staff, which has rolled out during the year. It has been rolled out as online training. Both TUS and MS will monitor progress, and the presentation is likely to be rolled out annually.

In addition to this, MS agreed to having a NIPSA presentation along with the DAERA online induction programme. The Secretariat has developed a presentation for DAERA and on a number of face-to-face induction days, the secretariat has delivered the presentation with the most recent being the induction day for new recruits of economists.

Trade Union Side Office: Work levels remained high. Administrative support for the TUS Office has been secured and has proved to be of invaluable assistance to the Seconded Officers.

Grading Review in Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG): Following the outcome of the grading of a number of veterinarian posts, in which Veterinary Inspector (VI - Deputy Principal (DP) analogous) and Veterinary Officer (VO - Grade 7 analogous) roles comfortably graded at Grade 7 level, an exercise has been completed and all VIs have been confirmed as substantive VOs.

Negotiations have stalled on addressing some of the findings for both Divisional Veterinary Officer (DVO - Grade 7 analogous) and Senior Principal Veterinary Officer (SPVO - Grade 6 analogous) posts, many of which scored at the top end of the scoring band and on addressing issues that arose from having both VO and DVO grades analogous to Grade 7.

It is hoped that the outcome of the review will improve the recruitment and retention of vets, both of which have been extremely problematic since the re-introduction of recruitment of vets at DP grade. This was identified as an issue by TUS when MS made the proposal and despite TUS opposition MS proceeded to introduce the change.

The continued level of engagement by the officers of Branch 97 was, and is, worthy of note, with many late-night meetings and work outside normal hours being undertaken by the Branch to keep members appraised of developments and involved in the process.

Registered Disagreements (RD): RDs have not been necessary within the last twenty years and are indicative of the issues faced when trying to consult and negotiate with VSAHG MS. Due to equality issues not being recognised and addressed appropriately by VSAHG MS, TUS was compelled to submit a Registered Disagreement with the CIB for a VO recruitment competition.

AAHP RD with MFD: MS accepted a proposal from TUS which helps secure career progression for Fisheries Inspectorate staff.

B3.2 Department for Communities (DfC)

Departmental Whitley Council Committee

The Department for Communities (DfC) Whitley Council met on a quarterly basis. The 2025/26 Budget constraints and recruitment were the main focus of the engagements.

The breakdown by age showed that in DfC staff aged 55 years and over accounted for almost 30% of the workforce, which included 14% aged 60 years and over. An additional 14% were in the 50-54 age band. Long-term sickness cases remained relatively low.

Finance - Resource DEL: The department's post-June Monitoring Budget was £946.5m, an increase of £5.6m from the opening budget position of £940.9m. As part of the June Monitoring exercise, the department submitted £50.4m of Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) bids and received an allocation of £0.6m in earmarked resource for the De-Rating Grant. The department also received £5.0m of net technical adjustments from other departments during this exercise.

Capital DEL: The department's post-June Monitoring Budget was £265.3m, a £4.7m decrease from its opening budget position of £270.0m. As part of the June Monitoring exercise, the department spent £12.7m of reduced requirements in earmarked City Deal funding. Of the £82.0m of Capital DEL bids submitted by the department, it received an allocation of £9.0m for new build social housing to help meet demand. In addition, the finance minister proposed that DfC be given first call of up to £2m of capital funding in future monitoring rounds during the year, for new build social housing. A technical adjustment of £1m was transferred from the department to The Executive Office (TEO) for the Ardoyne Youth Enterprise Hub.

Financial Transactions (FT) Capital: The department returned £6.9m to the Department of Finance (DoF) as FT Capital loan repayments, bringing the post-June Monitoring budget to £41.2m.

Ring-Fenced Resource (Non-Cash): The department received an allocation of £14.5m against a total bid of £15.7m to meet the department's depreciation and impairment pressures.

Transformation Fund: The department submitted three proposals on 8 August to utilise the Public Sector Transformation Fund. The proposals submitted were:

- Pathways to Work Commission
- Community Empowerment - Digital Transformation Project
- Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) digital transformation of the Northern Ireland National Archives

Recruitment: The Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) continued to push for all vacant posts to be filled. The department struggled to fill substantive posts, with 2,510 posts still vacant at the end of the year. By March, employee numbers had increased by 700 full-time equivalents (FTE) to 7,244, with an additional 3,724 recruitment agency staff. Temporary promotions also doubled during the year.

DTUS attended recruitment days in November and December for the North West Administrative Officer (AO) recruitment pilot, which was developed to streamline and speed up the recruitment process. Concerns were raised regarding the lack of consultation, the self-assessment process and the outcome letters. The review of the pilot was scheduled for January, following the reporting period.

The Headquarters Official and Departmental Secretary attended two Departmental Induction sessions.

Hybrid Working: The registered disagreement against the DfC Hybrid Review stood down following the imposition of a revised central policy.

Organisation and Membership: The Trade Union Side (TUS) continued to progress its priorities of:

- i. recruiting agency workers
- ii. training organisers
- iii. increasing female participation

Work to re-establish committees in all branches progressed at pace. Restructuring of the Universal Credit/Jobs and Benefits Network branches was undertaken to reflect changes in management structures. The new branch structures were ratified at annual general meetings (AGMs) during October and November.

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DTUS presented sessions on industrial relations awareness for DfC managers, which were open to all staff.

Awareness sessions on the criteria-based interview process were provided to members during November for the E011 recruitment exercise by seconded officers.

The DfC Female Representatives Forum continued to meet throughout the year.

Housing, Urban Regeneration and Local Government Group (HURLG): During the year, the Trade Union Side (TUS) within the group met with management on a quarterly basis through the group's Whitley structures. TUS remained involved in discussions about Housing Solutions Group (HSG) organisational change and restructuring.

The Appeal Service (TAS) in-house Health and Safety Committee met regularly and discussed issues of concern.

Budgetary constraints and the impact upon both service provision and delivery remained ongoing topics for regular discussions throughout the year.

Move to Universal Credit Project: Move to Universal Credit (MTUC) posed significant problems for Universal Credit (UC), with the date for implementation brought forward by one year to 31 March, following the reporting period. TUS agreed a process which involved DfC temporarily transferring 60,000 established Northern Ireland claims to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) staff based in Lisahally.

To meet the increased demand, dedicated MTUC processing teams were introduced. TUS were consulted and agreed a selection process for these.

In the final quarter, the Management Side (MS) proposed introducing new MTUC telephone teams to manage increased call volumes. This was particularly challenging given the number of staff required, and TUS met with MS on a weekly basis to monitor workloads and implement changes due to the ongoing issues faced.

Finance Support: Throughout the year, TUS met Finance Support (FS) on a quarterly basis at the established Whitley meeting on an ad-hoc basis.

Discretionary support applications remained high throughout the year, with processing times slightly above target.

The online Budgeting Loan process was modernised during the year, which worked well and made the process quicker. The time taken from requesting an application form to receiving payment reduced from 28 days to 2-3 days.

Throughout the year, FS provided telephone support to Universal Credit to assist with the increased workload generated by Move to Universal Credit.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Areas: Due to the ramp-up of the Move to Universal Credit for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) cases, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) agreed to fund 30 staff in Lisahally to work on 60,000 Northern Ireland cases. The cases being worked on in Lisahally were transferred to Belfast Castle Court.

Quarterly Whitley meetings were held with the Management Side (MS) within the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) with seconded officer representation; these meetings incorporated pensions work within Great Northern Tower.

Operational Delivery Group (ODG): The Operational Delivery Group (ODG) Whitley Council met on a regular basis. Work continued with branch representatives to encourage increased participation within some of the less active branches within the group.

Targets were missed in several business areas, with overtime being used in Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to mitigate and business areas having to balance telephony and casework. A Pension Credit uptake campaign was launched on 27 October and focused on media typically used by older people, such as press and radio.

DWP performance and productivity remained good across all business areas, with CMS performance better than the UK average.

A mental health and neurodiversity survey was launched across the directorate, and the report was being compiled, with results scheduled for publication following the reporting period.

Engaged Communities Group: The Group Trade Union Side (GTUS) continued to engage in regular Whitley meetings and continued to discuss and challenge management on budgetary issues and staffing levels.

By the end of the year there were 433 staff working in Engaged Communities Group (ECG). Recruitment agency workers made up 26.1%; 85 (26.6%) were temporary promotions and 91 vacancies. Fifty-five of these vacancies were analogous and required specialist competitions. GTUS and DTUS continued to clear these as quickly as possible.

The group gave up £1.8m resource budget in the December Monitoring round to help meet the department's overcommitment position. This easement was primarily driven by delays in filling vacancies.

ECG was responsible for the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The consultation closed at the end of September; there were over 200 responses from sectoral groups and individuals. A summary report was provided to the Minister for consideration, and the next stage involved considering how to respond and drafting a submission to the Executive.

Corporate Service Group (CSG): Throughout the year, the Trade Union Side (TUS) within the group met with the Management Side (MS) on a quarterly basis through the group's Whitley structures. Between meetings of the group Whitley, TUS were engaged on a variety of matters including staffing and temporary promotion.

Work and Health (W&H) Group: The Group Trade Union Side (GTUS) continued to engage with management through the Whitley framework. 2025 saw a large-scale restructuring in the group. W&H TUS engaged fully with Management Side (MS) to reduce any issues that would affect members.

Universal Credit (UC) Operations: TUS were consulted on the reorganisation of the Jobs and Benefits Office (J&BO) network from three regions to four regions, with an increased structure to reflect the growth of Universal Credit (UC) as full implementation approached, following the reporting period. This involved significant reorganisation of management and staffing structures aligned with the overall reorganisation of the department's structures.

New Whitley structures were established to reflect the new management structure.

Working Age Services & Universal Credit Programme: Migration notices were sent to Income Support (IS) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) customers.

Labour Market Policy and Delivery: Management shared thanks to staff for their commitment to progressing the delivery of the Labour Market Policy. Many positive messages were received from claimants.

Central Services: The Central Services Directorate was created during the year as a result of the restructuring of the W&H Group. W&H TUS engaged in consultation around a W&H Group temporary promotion process to ensure consistency in the group.

Benefit Delivery: Migration was on track to complete by the end of March, following the reporting period. The majority of staff were in post following recent redeployments as a result of Move to Universal Credit, with the remainder due relocation to Universal Credit in January and March, following the reporting period. DfC expressed appreciation for the close working with TUS throughout this process.

Social Security Policy, Legislation and Decision-Making Services (SSPLDMS): The Grade 6 post was filled substantively, and a Grade 7 Policy and Legislation competition was completed, which was expected to fill the three vacant Grade 7 posts substantively in the first quarter following the reporting period. This may create challenges with vacancies at Senior Officer/Deputy Principal (SO/DP). At year end, engagement commenced with Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources (NICS HR) to consider bespoke competitions.

A bespoke training programme for SSPLDMS was being developed.

significant volume of legislation was progressed; highlights included Winter Fuel Payments and Child Funeral Fund. Work continued on the Fraud, Error and Recovery Bill, and DfC agreed to provide a briefing to TUS on the proposed legislation.

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Digitalisation: DfC cases underwent migration testing for the Pension Service Computer System to Get Your State Pension (GySP) in January.

Pension Age Tax Credits - Pension Credit: Tax credits closed on 5 April.

Cliff Edge Coalition (NI): Support as a stakeholder in the Cliff Edge Coalition (NI) continued, and the coalition continued its campaign for its three asks:

- i. resolve the five-week wait in Universal Credit
- ii. mitigate the two-child limit
- iii. provide support to private renters affected by the Local Housing Allowance

The coalition welcomed the Government's commitment to remove the two-child limit from April, following the reporting period. This was expected to positively impact many families and children and lead to a significant reduction in child poverty levels across Northern Ireland.

NIPSA remained a key partner in the coalition, and the Departmental Secretary attended coalition meetings on behalf of NIPSA.

Pathways to Work Green Paper: On 18 March, the Government published its Pathways to Work Green Paper. The consultation ran from 18 March to 30 June. It set out plans and proposals to reform health and disability benefits and employment support.

The proposals in the Green Paper would have resulted in £7 billion of cuts affecting the sickest and disabled people in our communities. In Northern Ireland, it was estimated that it would result in between £100m and £150m being taken out of the local community.

NIPSA submitted a response to the Pathways to Work Green Paper and worked closely with Disabled People's Organisations Northern Ireland (DPAC) and Law Centre NI in opposing the cuts to Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

The Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill were introduced to the House of Commons on 18 June. During the second reading of the Bill on 1 July, the Government faced a rebellion from more than 120 of its own Members of Parliament. It was clear that the Bill would be defeated,

so the Government offered a number of last-minute concessions.

The four-point proposal for the PIP daily living component was removed. The Government announced that no changes would be made to PIP eligibility, activities or descriptors until after a review had been completed. The Government also made a number of concessions on the UC health element.

However, despite these concessions, it was estimated that there would still be £2 billion worth of cuts.

NIPSA in DfC continued to work with the Cliff Edge Coalition and other disability groups to oppose any further cuts.

Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Strategy: NIPSA submitted its response to the long-awaited Anti-Poverty Strategy. Along with other anti-poverty groups, NIPSA called on the draft strategy in its current form to be withdrawn and replaced with a robust, ambitious and fully resourced strategy that built on the work already carried out by the Anti-Poverty Strategy Group and reflected the lived experience of those directly affected.

The current draft Anti-Poverty Strategy fell far short of what was required. It lacked ambition, legal underpinning, and binding commitments. NIPSA urged the Northern Ireland Executive to withdraw it and replace it with a statutory, rights-based and fully resourced strategy centred on the eradication of poverty.

B3.3 Department for the Economy (DfE)

Member Representation: Reps provided representation to members throughout the year on a variety of matters including:

- Hybrid working/Work Style Agreement (WSA) advice
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)/reasonable adjustment requests.
- Managing attendance
- Performance management.

Staffing: Latest information available (end Oct) indicated that the Department for the Economy (DfE) had:

- A headcount of 1,223 (1,124.3 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)).
- 180 Temporary Promotions (TPs) (176.9 FTE, 14.7% of headcount).
- 33 (32.5 FTE) recruitment agency workers in post. This was 2.6% of the Department's headcount, which was a relatively small number when compared with other departments; however, it demonstrated a 32% increase for DfE in the space of a few months.
- 189 vacancies were held by NICS HR as at the end of October.

Of the 189 vacancies, 123 were general service and 66 were non-general service.

Trade Union Side (TUS) raised the very high vacancy level with the Management Side (MS) throughout the year and began to describe the resourcing position in DfE as a "staffing crisis".

TUS met with senior management throughout the latter half of the year to discuss this staffing crisis and ultimately met with the Permanent Secretary to ask what proposals he and his leadership team were considering for addressing the problem. The leadership team recognised TUS' concerns and suggested a number of proposals for consultation to protect the health, safety and welfare of DfE staff in the short term and ultimately address the resourcing pressures.

Budget: In early 2025 TUS were made aware that all DfE business areas had been informed that they would receive 92.1% of the 2024/25 baseline budget.

TUS sought meetings with the Director of Finance to discuss the 2025/26 budgetary position.

Following a series of meetings with the Directors of Finance, the budgetary outlook remained difficult, but assurance was received from departmental MS that all declared vacancies were affordable.

Health & Safety: A system for reporting accidents and incidents directly to Trade Union appointed Health & Safety (H&S) reps was agreed, rather than waiting until quarterly Departmental Whitley meetings.

Branch 31/Adelaide House: Reps met with senior managers regarding the review of several Groups in the Department throughout the year. The Trade Union Side (TUS) and Management Side (MS) at Grade 3 level engaged regularly throughout the process in open and helpful consultation.

TUS engaged with most of the Grade 5s from the Economic Strategy Group in relation to their divisions. This process highlighted the budgetary pressures throughout the group and difficulties in identifying sufficient structures or filling resulting vacancies.

Branch reps received queries from members about hybrid working and Work Style Agreements.

Branch reps and the Departmental Secretary (DS) continued to consult with Management Side (MS) from multiple business areas across the Department on the creation and filling of new posts.

Branch 32/Careers Service: Branch reps and the DS continued to consult and negotiate with Careers Service Management regarding the implementation of a "professional allowance" for Careers Advisers throughout the year. This engagement included providing suggested wording for a job evaluation document as part of the process.

A business case was signed off by management and fully supported by the Grade 3. The business case was submitted to NICS HR for approval. Following engagement between branch reps and MS, several admin/support grades workers from Careers Service undertook accredited qualifications. This further enhanced the role of these workers within the Careers Service, helping to secure their continuation for the medium to long term.

Following consultation with the branch committee and DS, nine new Careers Advisers were recruited from the most recent recruitment competition.

Branch 33, Insolvency Service: The Local Trade Union Side (LTUS) wrote to local Management Side (MS) seeking dates to restart the Local Whitley Committee (LWC) arrangements. A number of LWC meetings were held throughout the year which helped to improve local industrial relations.

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An EY review of the area was completed, and the report was provided to TUS.

TUS agreed to an MS proposed review of the setup of the EY review, due to concerns raised by staff. The process identified a number of issues regarding structures, grading and resourcing across all parts of the business area which TUS continued to discuss with both local and departmental MS throughout the year.

Branch reps and the DS also met with local MS to discuss a number of proposals regarding potential solutions to the staffing crisis in the Insolvency Service. The outworkings of these proposals were finalised with good progress on agreed positions.

Office of the Industrial Tribunal for Employment Tribunals (OITFET): LWC arrangements restarted in the area with the first scheduled meeting held on 20 February, which continued throughout the year (including the first meeting with the new Grade 7 Secretary to the Tribunals). Members in the OITFET welcomed the positive outcomes resulting from the engagement with local management since the resumption of LWC meetings.

Members in the area were provided with advice and representation regarding the implementation of the Hybrid Working Policy.

Branch 35/Trading Standards: The branch committee consulted with local management throughout the year regarding resourcing in the area, some examples of which include:

Several new Enforcement Officers (EOs) started during the year. The Branch Committee considered and agreed to a proposal from MS to convert an existing Trading Standards Service (TSS) Inspector/Trainee Inspector vacancy to a Trading Standards Enforcement Officer post which then enabled MS to take another four EOs off the joint merit list with the Department of Justice (DoJ).

The Branch Committee agreed to an Expression of Interest for a TP opportunity for an E02 post in Consumerline. The post was mainly concerned with monitoring and mentoring Advisors and required at least two years' experience of working as a Consumerline Advisor. It was estimated as being in place for six months.

Branch reps and the DS consulted with NICS HR Resourcing regarding a Competition Information Booklet (CIB) for a Trainee Trading Standards Inspector competition. This consultation highlighted an issue around the wording of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) section of the CIB. This matter was discussed centrally between the Central Trade Union Side (CTUS) and Department of Finance (DoF) People & Organisational Development (P&OD) colleagues and proposed new wording on this topic was awaited.

Reasonable Adjustments and Sub-Group of Diversity Group: Trade Union (TU) reps represented members who were seeking reasonable adjustments throughout the year.

The DS met with the Head of Workforce Management Branch and the NICS HR Business Partner several times to discuss the failures to implement reasonable adjustments and to seek how best to support colleagues.

TUS raised this issue at a meeting of the departmental Diversity Group which they sat on.

MS agreed to set up a sub-committee of that group to consider reasonable adjustments. Terms of Reference for the group were developed, and a number of meetings took place during the year.

TUS consulted with MS on a proposed document themed "Educate, Empower, Embed". While consultation remained ongoing, early indications were that this work would provide positive outcomes for disabled colleagues and line managers in DfE.

DfE Support Worker: TUS and MS consulted and agreed a new E02 "Support Worker" post in DfE which was filled.

This was understood to be the first role of its kind in any NICS employing department and assisted and supported a defined caseload of disabled staff across the Department.

B3.4 Department of Education (DE)

Permanent Secretary

Staff were informed, via the staff webinar, on 26 November that the Acting Permanent Secretary,

Ronnie Armour, would retire at the end of January. There was a Permanent Secretary competition to fill the vacancy and other anticipated vacancies. There was also a Temporary Promotion competition ready should the competition not be concluded on time.

Finance

The Department of Education had a predicted overspend of £280m. To reduce and control spending where possible, the Acting Permanent Secretary issued a memo on 28 October stating that all recruitment activity was paused, including all new and replacement posts. Additionally, any proposed changes to the staffing budget, including temporary promotions, required top management group approval. The Trade Union Side (TUS) met with the Acting Permanent Secretary and the Department of Education Finance Director monthly since the memo was issued.

Accommodation

Rathgael House Complex: Phase 2 of the Rathgael House complex (car parking provision) was due for completion with the car park projected to open on 20 October. On completion, the works programme included:

- new vehicular entrance gates
- removal of existing pedestrian entrance accommodation
- 200 spaces including 13 disabled bays and 2 electric charging points

Work on the car park had been due for completion by June. Phase 3, the creation of the new entrance lobby, commenced with completion anticipated next year.

Senior management within the Department of Education were allocated 17 parking spaces, initially on a trial basis. The car park was designed on a first come first served basis with the policy agreed by the Acting Permanent Secretary, Ronnie Armour. The decision to move away from the previously agreed staff car parking equity arrangements generated significant concern and disappointment among staff. The change was particularly disheartening given that the original approach had been discussed

and endorsed through the Staff Engagement Forum, reflecting a collaborative and inclusive process.

Staff acknowledged the privilege of having access to on-site parking; however, public transport options to Rathgael House were limited and there was no additional parking available to accommodate the change. As a result, the decision was perceived as both impractical and contrary to the spirit of fairness and engagement that staff valued. The Trade Union Side (TUS) raised concerns about the lack of consultation, the impact on visitor parking, particularly on external delegations, and the perceived inconsistency with the department's stated commitment to efficient use of resources. The Management Side (MS) acknowledged the concerns and agreed to raise them, although limited expectation of change was indicated.

A registered dispute arose when the Trade Union Side (TUS) raised concerns about the decision to relocate their office facility, highlighting a lack of consultation and the sensitive nature of their work, which required privacy and secure storage. They argued that proposed solutions, such as desk/room booking systems, did not adequately respect the role of TUS or support confidential conversations. The Management Side (MS) acknowledged the concerns and apologised for any perceived disrespect, explaining that the decision was made to optimise accommodation and that similar arrangements existed across other departments. The Trade Union Side (TUS) emphasised the importance of maintaining a dedicated space to reduce barriers for staff seeking support and questioned the need for allocating the space to two Grade 5s. The issue remained unresolved, and the Management Side (MS) offered to meet separately with the Trade Union Side (TUS) to discuss further.

The Department of Education sought to bring in a desk booking system to support planning and coordination of workspace across Rathgael House. The department recognised the need to consult with the Trade Union Side (TUS) over these issues.

Orchard House: Since moving from Waterside House in Derry, Trade Union Side (TUS) staff had been housed in an office within Orchard House that could only be accessed via the Department of Agriculture,

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Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) office or the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pensions office on the same floor. Some staff with mobility issues experienced difficulty gaining access to their workstations, as staff were advised they could not use the NICS Pensions office to gain access to Trade Union Side (TUS) premises and so had to access the office via the DAERA office. The Trade Union Side (TUS) appreciated the sensitivities regarding information held by NICS Pensions but expected some latitude to be given to staff with disabilities. The matter continued to be monitored and addressed at a local level.

Corporate & Business Planning 2023-24

The Education Strategy set out the Minister's key priorities, some of which emanated from the Independent Review of Education (IRE) and focused on the following core areas:

- curriculum reform
- assessment reform
- qualifications reform
- school improvement
- tackling educational disadvantages

These core areas, coupled with Independent Review of Education (IRE) priority recommendations, were reflected in the Department's Business Plan.

In addition, the Programme for Government (PfG) contained two immediate priorities for education:

- deliver more affordable, accessible, high-quality early learning and childcare
- better support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs

Resourcing and Staffing Matters

When the NICS Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan was launched in February, the Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources (NICSHR) developed a diagnostic tool based on benchmarking and best practice across other public and private sector organisations. The tool had six core elements, and for each element there were a series of statements as to what 'good' would look like. These statements were discussed by focus groups

from Administrative Officer (AO) to Grade 6 across departments, including two groups from the Department of Education, to help inform the strategy. Staff who participated in the Department of Education focus groups provided positive feedback, with the department scoring above average in all six core elements. NICS HR Business Partners continued to work collaboratively with the department to address any specific factors around health and wellbeing.

Staffing shortages within the department had a significant impact on employee health and wellbeing. Due to business needs arising from these shortages, staff were discouraged or denied requests for partial retirement or part-time work. The department operated with a high number of vacancies (140) and a substantial proportion of staff (121) on long-term temporary promotions, undermining branch stability. Delays in recruitment and the lack of regular competitions contributed to sustained pressure on staff, with some waiting years for progression opportunities. Additionally, line managers increasingly handled HR responsibilities previously managed by dedicated HR teams, further exacerbating stress levels. These systemic issues affected morale and operational efficiency, and there was a pressing need for sustainable staffing solutions and improved recruitment processes.

Staff Engagement Forum (SEF)

The Staff Engagement Forum (SEF) launched the Edlines Staff Pinboard on the Department of Education intranet, with an emphasis on topical news items relating to staff, wellbeing and work-life. The Forum was active in establishing and promoting wellbeing activities, considering the use of outside space following the demolition of the tower block, establishing the Department of Education Career Development Scheme and improving the environment in relation to accommodation. The Trade Union Side (TUS) attended SEF meetings. Consideration was given to issues arising from the staff survey results. The Senior Management Team supported staff participation in SEF, although this was not always reflected in staff experiences when requesting time to attend meetings. This issue was raised with the management side and was being addressed.

Hybrid Working

The implementation of the new Hybrid Working Policy, requiring staff to attend their designated workplace for at least 40% of their contractual hours weekly, raised several concerns about staff wellbeing and practical logistics. Feedback from staff highlighted issues such as insufficient seating, lack of standing desks, the need for dual monitors and limited car parking. While management emphasised the importance of flexibility and local agreement in how the policy was applied, they also stressed that the 40% attendance requirement would remain due to business needs and the importance of in-person engagement. The Trade Union Side (TUS) raised concerns about the lack of new office space to support the policy and the potential impact on mental wellbeing. They advocated for built-in flexibility rather than fixed attendance days and called for clearer communication going forward.

Departmental Whitley Committee (DWC) Meetings

The Departmental Whitley Committee (DWC) meetings continued to take place online twice a year. Meeting online helped facilitate participants, some of whom were based in Bangor while others were based in Derry. The meetings this year took place in March and October.

B3.5 Department of Finance (DoF)

The Departmental Committee: Met quarterly throughout the year, having a full complement of Branch reps for the first time in a number of years.

Staffing continued to be an issue with vacancies in many cases being created as soon as they are filled elsewhere. Trade Union Side (TUS) continued to oppose external recruitment and welcomed the fact that the G6 and G7 competitions were run as internal competitions.

DoF Whitley Committee (DWC) continued to meet quarterly with excellent relations between both sides. Issues raised included the poor overall success rates in some competitions with Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) arguing that the aim should be to include not to exclude candidates.

The cleaning contract continued to pose problems particularly in light of the return to the office following the review of the Hybrid Working Policy. Issues around the Hybrid Working policy itself continued to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with managers in many areas showing the required levels of empathy and understanding that staff required, particularly in relation to Reasonable Adjustment Requests.

The headline sick absence figure for 2024/2025 was 10.6 days (average days lost per staff year), an increase from 9.9 days in the previous year.

Consultation covered some areas where surpluses of staff had been identified. The Department dealt with these internally in the first instance as an informal surplus with only formal surpluses going out to the wider NICS.

Integr8 Project: The Integr8 Delivery Partner (IDP) Contract was awarded in August. IDP worked with the Integr8 team to plan and prepare for the transformation which will be delivered through the Programme's Implementation Phase.

Accommodation: Plans continued with the proposed move of Boaz House staff to Omagh County Hall. In Ballymena staff will likely relocate to Academy House following refurbishment works, with a completion date proposed for 2028/29. There was a business case approved for High Street Mall Portadown for replacement accommodation for Marlborough House. The Historic Environment Divisions (HED) listing of Marlborough House was confirmed.

Land and Property Services (LPS)

LPS Valuation: TUS continued to discuss with Management proposed methods of filling vacancies in the Valuation Directorate, with our preference being that internal competitions should be run as opposed to external competitions where a sufficient candidate pool exists. There were significant problems recruiting at all levels but V2 was particularly problematic where candidates could not be attracted even through external competitions and there was an insufficient candidate pool internally. Management introduced a Graduate Trainee Valuer Scheme which they hope will help address this issue over the next 3-4 years and in the interim have proposed an Interim Re-Profiling of Vacancies Plan

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to help address the V2 issue over the next three years. TUS continued to be consulted on this.

Workplace stress continued to be an issue and LTUS continued to liaise with Management around staffing levels and prioritising areas of work for staff.

Valuation staff in Waterside House moved to Orchard House. Most issues identified with the building were resolved.

LTUS continued to press for a resolution to the V2 Pay issue and Management advised they were drafting a business case for V2 Pay.

LPS Land Registry (LRNI): The Digital Transformation project continued to see additional staff recruited with Temporary Promotion opportunities for Trainers etc. New Staff were not recruited in the numbers hoped for but efforts continued. One issue was that the workplace location for much of this work may rule out Hybrid working which is not attractive to new staff. Trade Union Side had ongoing engagement with the Land Registry Special Projects Management Side to ensure greater access to Hybrid Working in the hope to improve recruitment issues. TUS were successful in negotiating with MS a program to acquire additional licences and this meant that a number of the teams in LPS involved in the project could now avail of home working.

LPS Ordnance Survey (OSNI): One of the most significant issues that impacted Branch 7 was the Valuation Pilot. Although this initiative had been ongoing for several years, it continued to be a dominant concern. The pilot required current Ordnance Survey (OS) field staff to take on additional responsibilities during site visits—tasks that would traditionally have been carried out by Valuation staff.

This change raised considerable concerns within the branch, as many members felt uneasy and apprehensive about certain aspects of the role, particularly taking photographs of residents' properties.

The updated Hybrid Working Policy was also a major concern for the LPS OS this year. Due to the relatively short implementation timeframe, many members felt stressed and anxious about returning to the

office after working from home for several years. Whilst the overall policy generated widespread concern, there were also specific issues raised, particularly around existing reasonable adjustment agreements and the potential impact the new hybrid arrangements could have on these. Desk availability and how this would operate was another area of concern. Most issues in the area have now been resolved.

LPS Revenues and Benefits (R&B): There continued to be positive engagement with the Business areas across R&B with many issues around Hybrid Working resolved through discussion with a range of managers. Reasonable Adjustments were the most pressing issue in the workplace. These ranged from staff not being able to attend the office due to health or caring needs, to workplace adjustments for staff who were facing change in their workload or area of work. Once the Hybrid policy was implemented there was a notable increase in issues. Good work on the part of reps in the area resolved most issues. Queries on neurodivergence and its impact on staff due to workloads and concerns in relation to the symptoms of menopause were other areas that were highlighted by members.

Following the move of a few previous committee members the Branch had difficulty attracting new representatives, leading to added pressure on the few representatives in the Branch and their Seconded Officers.

Digital Shared Services: A section-wide staff reorganisation took place, with several teams and individuals moved between the areas of 'Digital' & 'Security' of the wider 'Digital, Security & Finance Shared Services' remit.

V2.0 of the Hybrid Working policy caused a major job of administration for the branch, as ICT was a particular area where there was a general expectation from staff to have the ability to work remotely. As such, the implementation of the revised policy led to a large number of members contacting reps to request assistance. Reasonable Adjustment requests continued to be processed with assistance from TUS.

With 80% of Branch 13 comprised of ICT grades, the ICT Allowance situation remained a significant issue for the branch and the wider NICS ICT Profession. This element of the salary has remained almost static for 20 years. Although promises of a business case to increase the allowance finally offered some hope to ICT members, unless it also addresses the payroll mechanism by which it is paid, it will only ever be a stopgap solution. Any '**allowance**' needs to increase in line with salary increases, as is the case for numerous other specialist professional staff in the NICS.

Pensions Branch: Staffing issues remained a concern in Pensions Branch primarily impacted by the implementation of the McCloud Case Remedy and the additional work created by this.

LTUS argued for additional staff to be recruited to help alleviate the pressure and some additional resources were brought in but pressures still existed due to the training of new staff.

The move from Waterside House to Orchard House was completed with most issues highlighted by LTUS resolved.

The new Hybrid Working Policy was implemented without too many issues for staff.

Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO)/Crown Solicitor's Office (CSO): DSO continued to consult regularly with LTUS on the implementation of the new Digitisation Project to update their current IT systems and work processes. This proved beneficial to both parties. The new system works much better with a significant reduction in system faults.

DSO continued to face staffing pressures due to retirements and temporary promotions. Several senior posts including that of the Departmental Solicitor (Head of Legal Services) and the Deputy Departmental Solicitor continued to be filled by temporary promotion. However, a recruitment scheme is ongoing for a Departmental Solicitor and is due to be completed by February 2026. Regular Whitley meetings continued with CSO, and consultation continued in relation to transformation and other projects.

There were two key issues raised by our membership this year. Issues had arisen from decisions taken in CSO in relation to restrictions on staff applying for lateral transfers by Expression of Interest Notices (EOINs). While it was accepted this was driven by business needs and the high vacancy numbers across the NICS and the workplace pressures being felt across all NICS Departments, LTUS were aware these decisions often cause disappointment and upset to our members who were keen to develop skills and experience in other business areas. LTUS continued to keep the position under review. The second key issue was in relation to the revised Hybrid Working Policy and the mandated two days per week in the office. This was another area that created concern and worry for some of our members and LTUS continued to assist membership with queries in relation to the revised policy.

At the NIPSA DoF Departmental Committee meeting in September, the Committee agreed to a proposal to merge Branch 4 and Branch 5, as per a communiqué issued to both branch members in August. Historically, the Branches had been split on a legal/administrative basis, and it was felt the amalgamation of the branches would be more beneficial to our membership. The merger was formally ratified by the General Council in September, and all former Branch 4 members joined Branch 5.

Greg McKeever, DoF Assistant Departmental Secretary, retired in December 2025. Greg provided invaluable advice and guidance to the Branch Committee and our members over many years on a wide range of issues, and his wise counsel will be greatly missed.

Construction & Procurement Delivery (CPD): Staff continued to work from home where possible in CPD. The approach to the implementation of the New Hybrid Working Policy in Clare House had been discussed between Management and LTUS and management appear to be taking a flexible approach. Staff vacancies particularly in technical grades remained an issue and there were clearly recruitment problems.

TUS also highlighted a number of alleged workplace bullying incidents in Clare House and proposed that additional training be arranged for Line Managers.

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Several meetings took place between CPD senior management, LTUS and HR Managers and several new initiatives were developed. Access to information on Bullying and Harassment for managers and staff was created and made available on the NICSHR website. This proved to be a positive development. Feedback from staff on the content of these information packages was very positive.

Staff adapted to the new Hybrid working policy. Issues with the policy were limited to a couple of enquiries/clarifications from members. A Whitley meeting was held between Senior Management and LTUS to discuss the implementation and management appeared to adopt a flexible and pragmatic approach.

The retention and recruitment of Professional and Technical grades continued to remain an issue however NICHR set-up a dedicated unit to fast-track candidate information booklets with LTUS providing comments quickly and efficiently.

In relation to the transfer of Building Standards branches within CPD to the Department for Communities (DfC), TUS were consulted and there was positive engagement. The move was signed off by all the relevant ministers with a target date of 2027/28.

NISRA: NISRA encountered considerable Budget difficulties (like most Departments) and needed to organise their structure as a result. NISRA management discussed with Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) implementing a Managed Moves process, where NISRA staff on loan to other Departments would be released back to NISRA and could apply for existing vacant priority posts at a variety of grades. DTUS agreed to this innovative proposal and the process was very successful.

A further Managed Moves process was carried out this year and once again proved very successful.

Consultation between LTUS and Management improved significantly on all areas this year with consultation on Expression of Interest Notices, Departmental Transfer Notices, Candidate Information Booklets and office initiatives. This was a very positive development.

LTUS continued to negotiate access to an Environmental Allowance for NISRA staff seconded to the PSNI.

LTUS managed to secure a very positive Pay Agreement for the Survey Interviewers in NISRA. Their Pay & Conditions were greatly improved and for the first time, their annual pay rise reflected the NICS agreement. It is hoped that this will now set a precedent for future pay to reflect the NICS/TUS agreement.

NICSHR: TUS sought regular Local Whitley committee meetings to be established for NICSHR.

Occupational Health Service (OHS) continued to experience staffing pressures but the latest DP Nursing specialist recruitment saw more interest and hopefully will translate into more permanent nurses recruited. TUS will seek a schedule for the review of recruitment at the new Technician grades in 2026. Waiting times for appointments had reduced to 5 weeks but the Review of Hybrid working led to an increased demand for OHS appointments to support applications for Reasonable Adjustments.

Welfare and OHS services are likely to be brought together into an OHS and Wellbeing business area and TUS have been assured of early consultation on these plans. TUS sought consultation on some accommodation plans in Bruce Street because of the 40% in-office requirement.

People & Organisational Development (P&OD) agreed to establish a Local Whitley committee with a schedule of meetings to be arranged and information on Recruitment agency staff to be shared.

FINANCE CORE - Internal Audit: The moratorium on transfers out of Internal Audit was lifted on 31 March. Internal Audit consulted on a Recruitment and Retention allowance for Internal Audit staff. Trade Union Side preferred this to be added to existing salary scales; however, the allowance was introduced and will be reviewed after 3 years.

TUS assisted members in the Audit Authority whose work for the EU related programmes was coming to an end. Discussions with Finance core and Business partners will continue further on this informal surplus situation.

B3.6 Department of Health (DoH)

Member Representation: Reps provided representation to members throughout the year on a range of issues including:

- Hybrid working/Work Style Agreement (WSA) advice.
- Reasonable adjustment requests under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Long-term sickness absence and attendance management.
- Performance management and related employee relations casework.

Reps also engaged with members regarding the Department's staffing crisis, particularly the high number of Temporary Promotions (TPs) and recruitment agency workers.

Staffing: The Department of Health workforce position as at end December 2025 was:

- 603 permanent staff (564.1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)).
- 110 Temporary Promotions (TPs).
- 29 recruitment agency workers in post. 66 vacancies submitted to HR Connect as of 7 January 2026.

The Trade Union Side (TUS) raised significant concerns regarding the volume and duration of TPs. Management Side (MS) advised that the main driver was a lack of supply, particularly at Deputy Principal (DP) and Staff Officer (SO) level. MS agreed to investigate the level and duration of TPs and to provide data to TUS.

TUS also raised concerns regarding the use of agency workers, noting a significant increase in agency numbers and duration in post. MS agreed to provide monthly updates on the length and grade of TPs and agency staff.

Key staffing actions during the year included:

- TUS engagement with MS regarding TP numbers, grade breakdown, duration and associated reviews.
- Agreement that TPs should be reviewed after six months.

- Agreement that TUS would be provided with additional TP and agency data by grade and duration.

- Agreement that a DP recruitment exercise would commence in the last quarter of 2025/26 with SO and E01 competitions planned for the first quarter of 2026/27.

Budget: Finance representatives advised that the Department reported a significant overspend position during the year. The Department's overall overspend was driven primarily by the full implementation of the pay award and other cost pressures.

Admin budget information as at December monitoring included:

- Total admin budget: £47,191k (a reduction of £1.2m from the previous position).
- Admin salary budget: £46,156k.
- General Administrative Expenditure (GAE) budget: £1,009k.
- Provisions: £26k.

The salary budget was overcommitted due to Employer National Insurance (ER NIC) costs being underfunded by the Department of Finance (DoF), resulting in a £666k pressure. This was partially offset by higher vacancy rates across several groups, resulting in a forecast underspend of £656k.

TUS continued to monitor the financial position through regular engagement with MS and raised concerns regarding the impact of financial pressures on staffing and service delivery.

Health & Safety: The Department continued to monitor Health & Safety matters in Castle Buildings and across the Stormont Estate. Key actions included:

Establishment of a system for reporting accidents and incidents to Trade Union appointed Health & Safety (H&S) reps.

An emergency evacuation took place in December, with a staff update issued on evacuation arrangements and fire safety.

A cross-departmental premises and H&S committee was established, with TUS representation.

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Health and Safety training and specialist assessments continued for new and existing staff.

TUS continued to monitor Covid-19 related issues and requested that TUS be informed in the event of any outbreak. No Covid-19-related issues were raised during the year.

Premises Management: TUS raised concerns regarding cleaning standards in Castle Buildings. The Management Services Unit (MSU) confirmed that cleaning standards did not meet contract requirements in June, July and August. MSU engaged with the cleaning contractor, Aramark, and agreed actions to improve performance. Service credits were applied for September and October following continued underperformance. Cleaning standards improved in November and December and met contractual requirements.

Other premises updates included:

- Fire warden cover was provided through appointed fire wardens and departmental volunteers.
- A Stormont estate security review resulted in a project to install an intruder alarm system.
- Ongoing refurbishment and reconfiguration work was undertaken to improve office space and support hybrid working.
- A project for a shower and changing facility was approved and is due to be completed next year.
- A mobile catering service was being explored with DoF Supplies and Services.

Branch 26/DoH Staff Hub & Communications:

TUS continued to develop communication channels with members, including:

- Regular email updates and notices.
- A weekly TUS stall in Castle Buildings reception to increase visibility and membership engagement.
- Ongoing engagement with members on the DoH Staff Hub and requests for a dedicated TUS area.

MS agreed to investigate the feasibility of a dedicated area on the Staff Hub for TUS communications.

Consultation: TUS continued to engage with MS through the Departmental Whitley Council (DWC) and People & Organisational Development (P&OD) meetings.

Key consultation outcomes included:

- Agreement to reinstate regular meetings between TUS and the P&OD team.
- Agreement to review TPs after six months.
- Agreement to provide TUS with detailed TP and agency data.
- Agreement to share the People Plan with TUS following Senior Leadership Team approval.
- Agreement to explore the introduction of Mental Health First Aiders in the Department.
- Agreement to explore a dedicated TUS area on the Staff Hub.

Employee Relations: The Department continued to manage employee relations casework, including:

- Long-term sickness absence cases (20 working days or more).
- Consideration of inefficiency cases following return to work.
- Dignity at work cases.

TUS continued to support members throughout these processes and sought to ensure fair and consistent application of policy.

Future Workforce & Staffing Pressures: TUS continued to raise concerns regarding the staffing crisis and the reliance on TPs and agency staff. TUS highlighted the need for:

- Increased supply and recruitment to reduce TPs.
- More transparent and consistent TP review processes.
- Improved career development opportunities for staff.
- Ongoing engagement with staff to address morale and workload issues.

MS advised that recruitment supply was expected to improve next year, with a planned process to end TPs over the next 12 months.

B3.7 Department for Infrastructure (Dfi)

Clarence Court Facilities - Facilities Review

Delays: Trade Union Side (TUS) raised concerns at Whitley about the progress of the review of James House Facilities team. Management Side (MS) advised that they had taken time to carefully go through the processes, including Terms of Reference, budgeting, and job descriptions, before fieldwork could commence around October during the year.

Management Side stated that they expected the review to take around two months to complete. TUS reported that members had approached them expecting the review to commence in June during the year but accepted that the process should not be rushed.

Management confirmed that regular team briefs had been held with staff and did not expect members to raise questions. This piece of work was complicated, and TUS was advised that a staffing review had been delayed due to several factors, including staff availability.

Security Guards: The guards were negatively impacted by the move to James House in terms of reduced conditioned hours and guaranteed overtime. TUS worked hard to move this issue forward during the year.

Concerns were flagged throughout the year without much progress being made by the management side, resulting in members lodging grievance cases and tribunal proceedings.

This issue progressed very slowly during the year, and the NIPSA section office was contacted weekly by members seeking updates. The matter was lodged with the Labour Relations Agency (LRA), which moved slowly.

Living with Water and the Power of Water: The Living with Water team advised during the year that increased costs were causing difficulties to the schedule of planned works and that there was no prospect of additional funding to take forward any additional schemes. The senior team also confirmed that they had no staffing issues.

Water and Drainage Policy Division (WDPD): A few technical vacancies were filled during the year; however, several administrative vacancies remained unfilled, awaiting NICHHR action.

TUS was advised that the first stage of the Reservoir Act had passed through the Assembly during the year, which was expected to increase the volume of work in that business area.

Planning: NIPSA worked extremely hard to rebuild confidence within the Planning branch members during the year, which resulted in several personal cases being raised.

The first Planning Whitley meeting was held in March during the year and went very well. This was followed by a meeting with the Grade 3 responsible for Planning, who welcomed the new Whitley and were very supportive.

Recruitment of members in Planning was a key issue during the year. Management made progress filling vacancies and signed off on a trainee programme, which brought trainees into Planning for the first time. This was a new experience for the branch.

Additionally, new Senior Professional and Technical Officer (SPTO) and Higher Professional and Technical Officer (HPTO) CIBs were signed off, resulting in more planners joining DFI, which was welcomed.

Vacancy Management Across DFI: Vacancy management was a significant issue during the year across all grades and disciplines in DFI. TUS continued to flag concerns throughout the year with limited success.

Despite efforts to fill vacancies, a large number remained, which was exacerbated by higher salaries in the private sector for similar grades in ICT, Accountancy, Planning, and Civil Engineering. This reduced the pool of available recruits.

Several business units requested filling of professional graded posts with administrative grades due to workloads and vacancies. These requests were rejected by the local Trade Union Side, who noted the vacancies and workloads but felt that such changes would create a quasi-grade, which was a central matter. The issue was raised at DFI Whitley.

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Machinery of Government: The machinery of government caused problems throughout the year as many business areas reported insufficient staff to meet requirements. This issue was flagged at the DFI Whitley.

Age Profile of Staff in DFI: The age profile of staff remained a concern during the year, impacting on vacancy rates. Despite efforts by TUS, HR, and management, one-third of staff were over the age of 55.

Branch Updates: TUS experienced difficulties with branch structures in DFI during the year as proactive members retired, partially retired, became ill, or moved jobs through promotion. This resulted in some branch committees collapsing, leaving the section office to fill gaps at local Whitley meetings.

Accommodation Issues: DFI worked with the Department of Finance (DOF) to provide improved and secure bike facilities in James House. DFI agreed a new car parking policy for James House, which was published and shared with TUS. This allocated five spaces to each Grade 3 structure for business needs only.

TUS inquired how the policy would be managed and policed, and the management side agreed to monitor it carefully to avoid perceptions of elitism.

Hybrid Policy in DFI: The management side advised that the new Hybrid Working Policy introduced during the year would supersede the previous policy when it took effect. TUS noted challenges in James House and were informed that there were 68 workstations on the first floor and 218 on the third floor.

This provided desk space for more than the 650 DFI staff based in James House under the 40% policy, requiring careful management. DFI confirmed that other options could be considered if more space was needed.

TUS flagged concerns that filling vacancies would put pressure on workspaces, particularly for teams such as Planning that required quiet environments. They also suggested better use of Connect2 hubs for staff living outside Belfast. Senior management confirmed that they would monitor how the policy worked in practice.

Organisational/Business Reviews: The senior management team in DFI was reviewed at Grade 5, Grade 3, and Permanent Secretary level due to retirements of the Permanent Secretary, one Grade 3, and several Grade 5s. This resulted in several temporary promotions.

TUS was kept informed, and permanent appointments were expected as soon as possible. Temporary promotions were required until then.

Planning Review: TUS was informed that the management side intended to carry out a review of Planning during the year. NIPSA provided advice and awaited further updates.

Workforce Planning Director's Retirement (WFP): This role was critical to vacancy management strategy during the year. TUS inquired who would fill the Director role in Workforce Planning in the short term, stressing its importance following the retirement.

Management advised that the WFP team would move under another Grade 5 on a temporary basis, with a new Deputy Director (Grade 6) appointed temporarily to allow time to review structures as part of the wider ongoing review. Management confirmed that the team had a full programme of work and remained committed to it.

Transport & Roads Asset Management Group

- Capital Budget: £14.6m
- Resource Budget: £7.1m
- (Total Allocation 25/26)

Tram Whitley/Roads Group: The Tram Whitley met 4 times throughout the year. One of the main issues covered is the ongoing Mercury Project.

The Mercury Project is specific to the TRAM group and has been set up to look at the ongoing problems that we are experiencing in recruitment and retention and how we carry out the current workload. They will look at is there a different way to do things, can we switch work to different disciplines, increase work for administration staff where some of their work is being carried out by Professional and Technical staff. Trade Union Side meet with the Project Team every quarter, but this will be increased

when necessary. The worrying part of the project is the likely increase in work for the external partner consultants and private contractors.

The Roads group continued to meet throughout the year, the focus for the next year:

1. To strengthen the Branches that we have and to see how we can help Branches that are struggling, due to retirements and staff shortages. We want to generate interest from existing staff to join Branch Committees and Local Whitleys.
2. To recruit new members, especially from staff joining on the Professional and Technical side through the Graduate/Apprentice and Sure Skills intake.

Accommodation - Transport & Roads Asset Management Group

1. **Marlborough House:** Staff will move from the building to their new home in High Street Mall, Portadown. They will be joined by staff from Rates, Land and Property Services and a small number of staff from the Department of Communities Training Unit.
2. **Hydebank House:** Staff finally moved from Annexes 6 and 7 at Stormont to the new modern facilities at Hydebank House. The move was completed by the start of 2025. The accommodation is shared with Driver and Vehicle Agency.
3. **County Hall Omagh:** We have been informed that County Hall, Omagh will undergo a complete refurbishment in 2027. Staff will decant to buildings close to County Hall. This will begin in late 2026/early 2027
4. **Other Accommodation Issues:** County Hall, Ballymena will close within the next 3-4 years, staff will move to Academy House. The long-term future of County Hall, Coleraine also seems uncertain.

Water Group Whitley: The Water Group continued to meet in 2025 and held 3 Whitley meetings and an extra meeting in relation to recruitment in Rivers.

Rivers

- Capital Budget: £14,6m
- Resource Budget: £7.1m
- (Total Allocation 25/26)

Rivers continue to implement and develop recommendations from the 6-year plan. It has identified significant staff shortages. If it's to fulfil all its functions going forward in 2026 and beyond and is working with NIPSA to achieve that. They are also working with Water and Drainage Policy Division team in DFI to update the reservoir act, which will create a new administration workload and that will require an increased team to implement, noting that staff shortage in the technical world remains a major concern.

Part of the recommendations will look at how specific work can move across disciplines, from Professional and Technical staff to staff with a scientific background or those with a global positioning system experience and geographical background

The management team explained that the development of the flood forecasting service will take 7-10 years. It will require specialist posts, including data scientists and hydrologists, and must be led by someone with significant hydrology experience. The new centre for this will be in Craigavon.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

NIPSA Branch 71 (DVA): Over the past year, NIPSA Branch 71 actively represented and supported members across a range of issues within the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA). The following summarizes the work that took place: -

Test Centre Equipment Delays: There had been ongoing delays in awarding contracts for equipment at the new test centres in Hydebank and Mallusk. Preparations for installation were underway, with expectations that work would commence in early 2026.

Design Plans for New Centres: Design plans for new test centres at Campsie and Enniskillen continued throughout the year. A formal submission was prepared for presentation to the Minister for approval.

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Digital Systems Development: Significant work was undertaken on several DVA digital systems, including Booking and Rostering, Graduated Driver Learning, and Enforcement. Meetings were held with Fujitsu to progress the development of new AI systems.

Graduated Driver Learning: The introduction of Graduated Driver Learning was advanced during the year, marking the most substantial changes to the driving test process since its inception in 1956. Implementation was scheduled for 2026.

Staff Relations and Working Group: A working group was established by the Trade Union Side (TUS) during the year at the Coleraine Licensing Office to improve staff-management relations. The group met regularly and reported positive outcomes. The appointment of a new Grade 7 manager brought a commitment to innovative working practices, which TUS welcomed.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy: A new Health and Wellbeing strategy was developed and progressed successfully. Staff responded positively, and TUS supported its implementation. Further engagement was planned to identify additional measures to enhance physical and mental wellbeing.

Recruitment and Membership Growth: Staff numbers increased compared to previous years, with efforts focused on recruiting younger employees. Several recruitment competitions were held for vehicle and driving examiners. NIPSA successfully recruited new members through induction sessions and numerous visits to centres.

Temporary Promotions: Concerns persisted regarding the high number of temporary promotions within DVA and the extended duration of some appointments, which lasted several years. These issues were raised with management, who confirmed ongoing work with DFI Business Partners to fill posts substantively.

Health and Safety Initiatives: TUS maintained significant involvement in the DVA Health and Safety Committee. Initiatives included introducing body-worn cameras for driving examiners and updating drug and alcohol policies. A project was launched to review candidate declarations prior to driving

tests and to develop strategies to protect examiners following several assaults on staff during the year.

B3.8 Department of Justice (DoJ)

Departmental Whitley: The Departmental Whitley met during 2025. Issues raised during these meetings included the number of temporary promotions that were lasting over 4 years within the department, NICS People Survey participation in the DOJ, workforce planning and resourcing. Trade Union Side (TUS) submitted a departmental proposal to change the flexible working hours scheme. The Alternative and Flexible Working Patterns Policy allows for scope for variation provided schemes are agreed with Departmental Trade Union Side. This is being considered by management side.

Hybrid Working Policy: Trade Union Side continued to monitor how new ways of working was being implemented within the department following the introduction of the revised hybrid working policy and continued to raise any issues that arose. The NICS policy regarding hybrid working was implemented on 31 October; staff in DOJ were completing 2 days per week under the previous policy but TUS will continue to monitor this issue.

Department of Justice Health & Wellbeing: TUS met with HR on 14 January 2025 to discuss the contents of the Health and Wellbeing document and sent comments on the Action Plan which were then incorporated into the Action Plan. DTUS focused on health and wellbeing within the department and sought a proactive approach to be taken by line management and management regarding tackling the sources of workplace stress with support from NICSHR. The Plan was launched in April 2025 and outlined key priorities for the Department for improving the health and wellbeing of staff which will focus on the following measures:

- To promote a positive Health and Wellbeing culture.
- Place greater emphasis on the preventative Health and Wellbeing interventions,
- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion providing a clear rationale and case for change.

Pay: DTUS assisted all branches within the department in holding pay meetings in January 2025 and arranging a guest speaker, for consultation on the Civil Service Group Executive's recommendation regarding the pay offer from August 24 - April 2026. TUS ensured that all branches submitted a response to the pay claim based on the meeting in their respective branch.

'Making Hybrid Work' Working Group: A working group was set up with the terms of reference to share best practice and support successful implementation of the hybrid working policy. This group met twice since June 2025 and TUS felt that the meetings were useful.

Climate Change Survey: A survey of staff was completed by Estates and Sustainability Branch in June to understand the following:

- Staff understanding of Net Xero,
- Staff understanding of how relevant legislation impacts on their work,
- What training staff have undertaken or are aware of in relation to climate legislation.

The survey found that staff lacked awareness on the above bullet points and Estates and Sustainability Branch agreed develop a training piece for staff to enhance their understanding of Net Zero and how this and other relevant legislation impacts and applies to the work of the department.

DOJ Core

Castle Buildings Refurbishment Project: The contract for the work on Block B was signed 30 September. An additional fire escape route for staff near the old canteen was created and the old fire escape at Block B reception remained in place. Work on the block A façade at the entrance to Block A was carried out and there was no access to block A during this period. Work on the Block E store commenced in October 2025 and is due to be completed by February 2026.

Legal Services Agency (LSA)

Reasonable Adjustments: Trade Union Side (TUS) were contacted by members who had submitted reasonable adjustment requests and been referred

to OHS despite submitting strong and comprehensive medical evidence with their reasonable adjustment request which had been done on the advice of NICSHR. TUS believed this was due to the revised Hybrid Working Policy being introduced with a mandatory 2 day a week office attendance which had influenced managements approach to reasonable adjustments. TUS met with NICSHR and LSA management who advised the cases were deemed complex and suitable for OHS to provide medical reports on. TUS were able to secure interim arrangements for staff that matched the reasonable adjustments needed in advance of reports being received from OHS.

Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS)

Staff Survey: There were three reviews undertaken in consultation with Trade Union Side -

- Health & Safety Review, which was completed and is with Local Trade Union Side,
- Prisoner Development Unit (PDU) Review,
- Psychology Review.

TUS await the outcome of these reviews.

Youth Justice Agency (YJA)

Pay (comparable to similar roles in other areas of public service): Retained Practitioners marked time was due to erode following the implementation of the 2025/26 NICS Pay Award in August 2025. TUS were in discussion with HR/Payroll over the correct placement on the EO1 pay scale in advance of this date (advice provided to members who had sought advice on an individual basis from NICSHR was that they would move to the bottom of the pay scale which was standard practice in such cases) TUS argued this was a unique situation for this group of staff and that they should be moved to the top of the EO1 pay scale and this was accepted by management. The same issue will arise for retained Co-ordinators who are on a higher retained pay scale which may be eclipsed by the EO1 scale in the next few years, and this has been raised with Central Trade Union Side.

Retention Allowance: A retention allowance business case was approved and paid to affected staff.

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B3.9 The Executive Office (TEO)

The Executive Office Whitley met quarterly during the year, and the Permanent Secretary attended and participated in the October Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Whilst there was ongoing scrutiny of standing issues such as Budget and Staffing, the working relationship between TUS and MS continued in a positive tone overall.

Like the rest of the NICS, the major contention of the year revolved around the revision of the hybrid working arrangements, but early and positive interaction with management led to a sensible and pragmatic application of the revised guidance.

TUS continued to scrutinise vacancies and the use of TP and Agency Workers was a regular issue for discussion. Workloads are not reducing and the demand on staff continued to increase. Healthy communication helps both TUS and MS find common ground with TUS involvement invited and welcomed.

B3.10 Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)

Public Summary Submission

NIPSA Annual Review 2025: Trade Union Side recognises the complex and demanding operational environment within which AFBI delivers its public service functions and remains committed to constructive, professional engagement that supports staff wellbeing, organisational effectiveness, and public confidence.

Engagement and Consultation: During the year, Trade Union Side experienced limitations in opportunities for structured engagement through formal organisational consultation mechanisms. This reduced the scope for progressing some issues through established forums designed to support dialogue, shared understanding, and early resolution.

Notwithstanding these constraints, Trade Union Side continued to engage constructively at operational level in a number of areas, particularly with Human Resources and within certain divisions and

sites. These engagements demonstrated the value of regular communication and local partnership working in supporting stability and addressing practical workplace matters.

From the perspective of Trade Union Side, the re-establishment of consistent, scheduled consultation arrangements would support improved communication, transparency, and governance, in line with recognised good practice across the public sector.

Workforce Sustainability: Recruitment and Retention: Trade Union Side continued to raise concerns relating to workforce sustainability, including recruitment and retention pressures, during the reporting period. Feedback received by Trade Union Side from members indicated that staff turnover, particularly in some locations, remains a challenge affecting continuity, capacity, and staff experience.

Trade Union Side has highlighted to management the importance of understanding the factors influencing staff decisions to leave, including workload pressures, organisational change, and staff perceptions of workplace support. To assist in this, Trade Union Side has consistently encouraged the use of structured exit feedback and the development of a coordinated retention approach informed by staff experiences.

Engagement between Trade Union Side and management took place on aspects of recruitment practice, including qualification frameworks, with some positive outcomes in improving consistency and clarity. From the perspective of Trade Union Side, further embedding of agreed principles would help to strengthen confidence in recruitment and progression processes and support longer term workforce planning.

Industrial Relations Environment: Trade Union Side noted examples of positive industrial relations practice during the year, particularly in parts of the organisation where regular engagement between managers, staff, and trade union representatives continued. These examples demonstrated that collaborative approaches could support effective problem solving, staff morale, and service delivery.

Trade Union Side also observed that broader organisational engagement was more limited during the

year, affecting the consistency of communication and the ability to progress some issues efficiently. Staff and representatives expressed to Trade Union Side the value of visible leadership engagement and clear consultation routes in maintaining trust and shared understanding.

Trade Union Side continues to support initiatives aimed at strengthening awareness of industrial relations good practice, including training and development for managers, and remains committed to working constructively to improve workplace relations across AFBI.

Mental Health and Wellbeing: Mental health and wellbeing remained a priority issue raised with Trade Union Side during 2024. Members continued to report experiences of work related stress and mental health challenges, including sickness absence associated with workplace pressures.

Trade Union Side has consistently emphasised the importance of comprehensive and proportionate workplace wellbeing risk assessments aligned with recognised standards, supported by consultation and clear action planning. Trade Union Side recognises that work in this area is ongoing and has encouraged continued engagement at both organisational and local levels.

From the perspective of Trade Union Side, proactive management of mental health and wellbeing supports not only staff welfare but also staff retention, performance, and organisational sustainability.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Trade Union Side continued to engage with AFBI on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) matters, supporting members and working constructively with Human Resources. Issues raised with Trade Union Side during the year included disability, reasonable adjustments, neurodiversity, and recognition of international qualifications.

Feedback provided to Trade Union Side by members indicated that staff experiences in these areas can vary across the organisation. Trade Union Side has therefore highlighted the importance of accessible guidance, timely support, and consistent approaches for both staff and managers.

Trade Union Side continues to view consultation on EDI matters as a key mechanism for supporting inclusive practice, meeting statutory responsibilities, and ensuring confidence in organisational processes.

Health and Safety: Health and safety remained a significant area of joint activity for Trade Union Side, reflecting the diverse operational risk profile of AFBI. Trade Union Safety Representatives continued to engage positively with management and staff on training, risk management, and safety committee activity.

Trade Union Side observed that collaborative approaches in some divisions and sites delivered positive outcomes and enhanced staff confidence in health and safety arrangements. At the same time, members raised with Trade Union Side concerns related to workload, working hours, and access to information in certain contexts.

From the perspective of Trade Union Side, continued openness, information sharing, and consultation remain central to effective health and safety management. Trade Union Side has also sought to share examples of effective practice across sites to support organisational learning.

Workplace Processes and Culture: During the reporting period, staff raised with Trade Union Side issues relating to workplace processes, including grievance handling, dignity at work procedures, and communication. Trade Union Side has consistently highlighted the importance of clarity, timeliness, and transparency in these processes in maintaining staff confidence and trust.

Trade Union Side continues to support members constructively in navigating workplace processes and encourages regular review of existing arrangements to ensure they remain effective, fair, and accessible.

Organisational Development and Future Engagement: Trade Union Side engaged positively with AFBI on estates developments and operational projects where early consultation took place. These experiences demonstrated the benefits of collaborative planning and regular communication.

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Looking ahead, Trade Union Side remains committed to partnership working and to contributing positively to organisational development within AFBI. Trade Union Side considers that consistent consultation mechanisms and open channels of communication would support workforce stability, staff wellbeing, and the organisation's ability to fulfil its public service objectives.

B3.11 Arts Council Northern Ireland (ACNI)

Organisational Review: Late last year, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) commissioned an external review of its organisational structure, undertaken by FEI. The review was initiated to assess whether the organisation was appropriately aligned to deliver its 10-Year Strategic Plan (2024-34) and to operate effectively within available resources.

The review process involved staff engagement through discovery workshops, meetings, and surveys, followed by a "design sprint" focused on three key areas:

- Sector development
- Working together
- Capturing impact

All staff were required to attend the final FEI workshop on 7 February. NIPSA raised concerns regarding the timing of this session, given the existence of ongoing assessment processes.

NIPSA engaged actively throughout the review. This included submitting a recorded video response setting out members' views, responding to concerns raised by staff, and liaising with Human Resources on the review process and anticipated implementation stages. While engagement was constructive, NIPSA noted that progress was constrained by limited funding, which impacted the organisation's ability to address issues identified through the review.

Management advised that the consultants' report was considered by the Board, with a small number of drafting points requiring finalisation. It was confirmed that the next stage would involve the appointment of a Change Manager to lead the development of an implementation plan, which would include structured consultation with NIPSA as a key element of the process.

NIPSA confirmed its expectation that the full report would be shared once drafting was complete and emphasised the importance of early and meaningful engagement. NIPSA continued to press for transparency and fairness to ensure that members' interests were protected and that the implementation of any structural changes was subject to proper consultation.

B3.12 Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

Pay: Throughout the year approval was sought from the Department of Finance and the Department for the Economy on alignment to National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales. Agreement was then given to ballot members on alignment these pay scales. This proposal was to have an effective date of September 2023 (the date which the posts were evaluated under the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) Job Evaluation scheme. As a result of this TUS balloted all effected members and this received 100 percent agreement. This was communicated to management and the necessary arrangement put in place to amend salaries and pay all necessary arrears, a process which was completed with minimal issues raised in respect of pay arrangements.

Branch Organisation: Throughout the year the local branch held a number of positive meetings with both members and Management Side (MS). This ensured a minimal level of dispute on collective matters and was evidenced by a successful AGM in the latter part of the year where members expressed their satisfaction with TUS throughout the year.

B3.13 ICT Committee

ICT Allowance Business Case: Work began on the ICT allowance business case which will seek to increase the amount currently paid, introduce one rate for all eligible ICT staff and backpay to reflect the length of time the allowance has remained static. The background, strategic context, existing arrangements and salary benchmarking comparisons with the private and public sector have been completed and data has been sought from HR Connect in relation to staff recruitment & retention and the number of ICT competitions that have ran from 2020.

TUS advised they wish to be consulted on the development of the business case and this was accepted by management.

ICT Competition: TUS raised concerns in relation to issues identified in the ICT 4 and ICT 5 competitions such as applicants being sifted out incorrectly. Management accepted TUS concerns and agreed to investigate them.

There was a significant increase in application numbers for external ICT recruitment competitions in the last year primarily due to increased uncertainty and some job losses within the ICT private sector.

B3.14 Invest NI (INI)

Car Parking: Car parking remained an ongoing issue. Following negotiations Trade Union Side (TUS) agreed to the following:

- a. To reintroduce arrangements for staff who have 'essential car user' status to have their parking provided or reimbursed.
- b. A £10 daily cap introduced for those 'essential car users' claiming back parking for Belfast City.
- c. Staff with a blue badge or medical arrangements not affected

Non-priority users to book EV spaces following the booking procedure and car park priority list.

External Recruitment: TUS raised concerns with Management regarding the use of external competitions to fill vacancies within the organisation. The issue of timeframes for competitions and lack of information provided to applicants during the process from application to final interviews were raised. TUS advised that certain grades of staff were left feeling demoralised with no prospect of career development through internal promotions.

Temporary Promotions: There remained a high volume of temporary promotions within the organisation. TUS raised the matter with Management Side. Management Side advised approval from the Board to fill vacant posts on a permanent basis took a long time and not all post had been approved due to budget pressures. Management Side agreed to

look at the approval process for posts in future.

Working above Grade: TUS raised concerns about staff feeling pressured to take on additional duties within the organisation due to resourcing issues when the priority should be filling vacant posts as quickly as possible. The issue of administrative staff not being replaced was also raised.

Policies: Regular consultation meetings took place between TUS and Management Side to review and update policies, with further consultation to take place next year.

Restructure: A structural review of senior grades in INI was undertaken. Following the review a new Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer and HR Director were appointed.

B3.15 Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI)

Recruitment: During the year, NIPSA was engaged on a number of recruitment matters within the Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI).

A planned external recruitment competition for the post of Principal Inspector was proposed. NIPSA robustly challenged this approach, noting that the role had historically been filled through internal competition, except for the most recent exercise which had been advertised externally and failed to attract a single external applicant. NIPSA also highlighted the unnecessary cost incurred by HSENI in advertising externally, the shorter lifespan of external waiting lists compared to internal lists, and the likelihood that the post could have been filled without external advertising had the previous competition been run internally. Given HSENI's limited budget, NIPSA argued that the proposed approach did not represent a proportionate or effective use of resources. Following engagement, Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources (NICSHR) accepted these arguments and the competition proceeded as an internal exercise.

NIPSA was also consulted on the Competition Information Booklet for the Principal Professional Market Compliance, Chemicals Team post and provided a response as part of the consultation process.

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In addition, NIPSA was consulted on recruitment exercises for the following posts:

- Senior Professional Technical Officer (SPTO).
- Principal Professional Technical Officer (PPTO).

Budget and Staffing: During the year, HSENI continued to operate within a constrained financial position, with the baseline budget insufficient to meet baseline staffing costs. NIPSA raised concerns regarding the impact of this position on the organisation's ability to maintain appropriate staffing levels and to deliver its statutory functions effectively.

Delays in recruitment processes, arising from wider resourcing pressures within NICSHR and HR Connect, resulted in posts remaining vacant for extended periods. While this had the effect of enabling HSENI to remain within its allocated budget, NIPSA highlighted that this was achieved at the expense of timely recruitment and the establishment of a full staffing complement. NIPSA expressed concern that reliance on vacancy management to achieve budgetary balance was unsustainable and risked placing additional pressure on existing staff.

NIPSA Distinguished Service Medal: During the year, Dr Rowland Jones was awarded the NIPSA Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of his decades of service to the union and its members. The award acknowledged his long-standing commitment to trade union principles and his contribution to supporting and representing members within HSENI.

B3.16 Loughs Agency

Budgets: Management Side developed the 2026 Business Plan and begun work on the 2026-28 Corporate Plan. All temporary contracts were ended at their end date due to financial pressures.

Health and Safety: A Health and Safety Manager was appointed and the Health and Safety Consultative and Management Committee was reestablished.

B3.17 National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI)

Terms & Conditions: The changes in T&Cs for new staff on post 2022 contracts continued to have an impact on staff morale, Particularly the variation on BH and overtime payments.

Trade Union Side (TUS) entered into negotiations in 2024 regarding bank holiday working with NMNI General Managers and MS. With concerted efforts a negotiated compromise was reached giving the Members and staff, the ability to express interest and put themselves forward to work Bank and Privilege Holidays, in the first instance. This had been agreed by MS to be implemented fairly on a pro rata system for F/T and P/T staff effected. Both Branches actively engaged in negotiations with the GM on each site to come to an amicable conclusion in this matter. In this reporting period, due to budgetary constraints at UFTM and other factors, members were having previously agreed BH Shifts cancelled at short notice, causing ill feeling. An improved methodology has now been adopted by MS to prevent a more equitable distribution of bank holidays and to prevent a reoccurrence of this in the future, this matter was driven by committee level reps at I.R. meetings. The TUS will continue to monitor this system and poll members as to their level of satisfaction going forward.

The removal of the 12.5% Shift Disturbance Allowance and overtime enhancement continues to have an effect on morale and satisfaction for the members affected.

In October the Management Side (MS) consulted with the TUS on the creation of hybrid contracts at the Ulster Museum, consisting of the combined Job Description of a visitor guide and Front of house at AO grade, for a small number of posts, referred to as Visitor Experience Assistants.

The TUS actively sought the opinions of branch membership at this site and feedback from committee level, whilst having submitted TUS objections and questions to the MS side, ultimately the posts were passed by the MS disregarding the core points of objection from the TUS.

Also, in the latter quarter of the year the MS proposed the removal of the AA Grade and upgrading all staff affected to AO. This not only would be moving out of step with the NICS Pay Claim 2026-2029, the MS did not give sufficient time for a full TUS consultation of its members. This consultation is now ongoing with regular feed back from members being consolidated into a FAQ document which shall be submitted to MS. It is the desire of NIPSA and the branch membership that NMNI would comply with all conditions set out in the 3 year pay offer, as some AA members are concerned that the NMNI offer, whilst welcomed in the current cost of living crisis would offer less favourable terms.

Recruitment: A large recruitment campaign was undertaken over the previous 12 months with the following posts created and filled- Discovery Centre Co-Ordinator Ulster Museum internal Candidate, alongside two Discovery centre facilitators which went to external candidates, Object conservator (NMNI stores,) External Candidate. Six security officer posts on full-time, PT and 800hr contracts to external candidates. Senior Designer, Front of House Assistant Ulster American Folk Park (UAFP), Retail Project Officer, Project Co-Ordinator, Energy Officer and a new post of Harland and Wolff archivist based at NMNI HQ went to external candidates. The Post of volunteer co-ordinator (NMNI HQ) was back filled after the previous post holder's resignation by an internal candidate. Three Front of House assistant posts Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (UFTM) were filled by two external candidates and one internal. A data Validation Officers post was created and filled by an external candidate, The post of Education Officer at UAFP, was filled by an internal candidate. The posts of IT network assistant, Collection's operations Manager and Landscape development officer were filled by external candidates.

Six New positions for Visitor Experience assistant (UM Hybrid roles AO grade) were filled by external candidates.

The Post of Visitor Services Manager UFTM is currently being filled by an internal candidate acting up, from an Expression of Interest (EOI) due to the original post holder's absence, this required further acting up EOI'S for the below positions to

fill the temporarily vacant Assistant Visitor Services Manager post.

The Post of Business Support Administrator (UFM & UTM) is currently being back filled by personnel acting up, As the previous holder is acting up to the role of AVSM.

The above posts have currently been extended to March 2026 to accommodate the handover and return of the Substantive Visitor Services Manager.

An internal candidate successfully gained the 18.5 per week for a Living History Supervisor at UFM as the previous holder is now the Part Time NIPSA Seconded Officer, (21hpw).

The positions of Heritage Painter and Collections Care Manager were not filled in the initial recruitment drive and have therefore been re-advertised.

Pay/Overpayments: As reported in previous reports, a small number of overpayment issues arose. No movement really occurred on this, but that is being seen in a relatively positive light by those affected at this point. A final resolution is still unknown, but the members and NMNI appeared to be on the same page on this matter. There have been no further reports of under or overpayments in this reporting period.

Questions continue to arise on the Progress of the NICS Pay Claim 2026-2029.

Site Issues: Various issues around Industrial Relations, Health and Safety and general terms and condition matters, continued to be at the forefront of TUS activity within the organisation. A positive aspect has been an influx of new activists taking up Committee roles in the two NMNI branches, particularly the high uptake in trade union courses in education and training, making resolution in multiple areas much more easily achieved. Branch 183 elected full committees for 25/26 with the exception of learning Reps, Branch 184 due to the retirement of long serving officers and their Chair Person could not elect a full committee. Branch Organisers continue to strive to fill these positions and current officers are also back filling roles. New Reps were also co-opted for the first time in some cases in both committees. The trade union movement continues to grow in national museums NI with an increase

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of 20.31% for Branch 183 and a 13.0% for branch 184. Leading to 54% of the total NMNI workforce being Unionised. The Section Secretary continues to engage with branch organisers in active recruitment and retention strategies.

B3.18 Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA)

Pay: In March, the pay claim was submitted to Management Side (MS). The claim included an effective date of 1 April with progression for eligible staff. It requested an above-inflation increase based on the February Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 7%, or a £3,000 flat increase. Further elements included:

- i. A review of on-call allowances to ensure fair access, up to Assembly Grade 4.
- ii. A review of overtime rates and extension of eligibility to Assembly Grade 4.
- iii. An increase in annual leave from 30 to 32 days and a re-evaluation of the four-day week proposal.
- iv. Further consideration of a 35-hour week.

Member-wide consultation on the initial offer commenced in July. The Assembly Commission offer included a 3% increase to all pay points and on-call allowances, and a 10% increase to overtime rates and discretionary payments. NIPSA recommended rejection, and 96.7% of the membership voted to reject the offer in a ballot completed in July. A revised offer was received in September which consisted of a 4% increase to all pay points and on-call allowances, alongside the 10% increase to overtime and discretionary payments. It also included a commitment to a working group to address terms and conditions, including modernising the overtime policy. This offer was accepted by the majority of members.

Health and Safety: The Trade Union Side (TUS) Secretary represented members at regular health and safety sub-committee meetings. TUS successfully negotiated for a range of measures to mitigate risks throughout Parliament Buildings, including issues regarding the roof and asbestos in the boiler room.

Recruitment: TUS liaised constructively with MS on the approach to recruitment and selection. Key developments included:

- i. The successful completion of a large number of competitions with few delays.
- ii. The establishment of merit lists for permanent and temporary opportunities.
- iii. Bi-weekly meetings to discuss the recruitment schedule and post priorities.
- iv. The successful argument for several members to be permanently appointed off a list that was close to expiring.

TUS Seconded Position: The funding for the TUS seconded position was reviewed in March. MS acknowledged the continued value and requirement for the post. While the post was to be kept under review, TUS envisioned no issues with ongoing funding.

Employee Relations Group (ERG): The ERG, consisting of the Director of Corporate Services, HR leadership, and TUS, met bi-monthly. These meetings focused on the impact of increasing workload on staff morale, health and wellbeing, and flexible working. TUS worked with MS on staff surveys, internal communications, IT strategy, and vacancy management. Significant employee relations investigations were also dealt with, and feedback was provided to MS.

Policy Development: Policy development with MS progressed quickly, reaching agreement on revised employee relations policies. Proposed changes were mostly focused on housekeeping and modernisation. TUS provided numerous comments and feedback which were agreed by MS. Specific updates included:

- i. Discussions on new Leadership, Wellbeing, and Performance Frameworks.
- ii. A requested review of rates for DSE eye care and prescriptions.
- iii. Updates to Adoption Leave, Probation and Capability, and Flexible Working and Partial Retirement Procedures.

NIPSA Recruitment Event: The branch committee held a recruitment event in the Blue Flax Restaurant on 1 and 2 December. Two lunchtime sessions allowed TUS to engage with existing members and promote

NIPSA to non-members. A ballot for merchandise was conducted, and it was expected that membership would increase by approximately 8% following the event.

B3.19 Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)

Auditor Pay and Grading: Concerns regarding pay and grading within the Auditor grade continued to be a significant issue during the year. While a comprehensive evaluation of roles and job descriptions had been undertaken in 2019, little progress had been made in addressing the issues identified. The staff survey conducted in 2022 further highlighted the need for greater clarity around the respective roles of Auditor and Senior Auditor, as well as ongoing concerns relating to pay and career progression.

Throughout the year, Trade Union Side (TUS) met regularly with members to gather views and establish a clear and consistent position. Engagement also took place with Management Side, during which NIPSA submitted a detailed report setting out the case for a full review of the Auditor grade.

Management Side declined to agree to a full review and instead proposed re-profiling existing roles and reviewing individual cases where staff could demonstrate that they were working above their grade. Following consultation, members considered this approach to be insufficient.

It was agreed that the matter would be pursued through the pay negotiations. During discussions, NIPSA reiterated members' position that the proposals advanced to date were unacceptable. In response, Management Side proposed the commissioning of an independent benchmarking exercise to compare the Auditor grade with comparable roles in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, the National Audit Office, Audit Wales, and Audit Scotland. It was agreed that the benchmarking would be undertaken by an external professional and that the terms of reference would be subject to full consultation with NIPSA. The proposed scope of the exercise included pay and wider terms and conditions, including contractual weekly hours.

Following the rejection of the pay offer by members, Management Side imposed the award. In the period that followed, the benchmarking commitment was not progressed despite members' clear support for it. In October, NIPSA wrote to Management Side seeking confirmation that the benchmarking exercise would proceed. In December, NIPSA was consulted on draft terms of reference for the benchmarking exercise, confirming that the work would be taken forward.

Pay: During the year, NIPSA submitted a formal pay claim for 2025-26 on behalf of members. The claim comprised a number of elements, including a consolidated pay increase, changes to hybrid working arrangements, a reduction in contractual working hours, improvements to parental leave, and measures to address pay parity and allowances.

A series of meetings took place between Trade Union Side (TUS) and Management Side as part of the negotiation process. Management Side initially proposed a pay increase of 3.5%, which was subsequently revised to 4%. None of the other elements of the claim were agreed, with Management Side citing financial and operational constraints.

In response to NIPSA's proposals, Management Side also advanced a proposal to commission an independent benchmarking exercise. This was intended to compare roles and terms and conditions within the Northern Ireland Audit Office with comparable posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, the National Audit Office, Audit Wales, and Audit Scotland. It was proposed that the exercise would be undertaken by an external professional, that the terms of reference would be subject to full consultation with NIPSA, and that the scope would extend beyond pay to include contractual working hours.

Given that the substantive elements of the pay claim were not met, NIPSA recommended that members reject the final offer. Members voted to reject the offer and, following this, Management Side imposed the award.

Subsequent engagement took place between NIPSA and Management Side to explore whether progress could be made on outstanding issues arising from the pay round. Discussions included consideration

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of a trial reduction in working hours as a potential initial step towards the longer-term objective of a reduced working week. While these discussions did not result in agreement, both sides engaged constructively on the issues raised.

Staff Survey Steering Group: Following the publication of the Northern Ireland Audit Office staff survey, Management Side invited NIPSA Headquarters, with the agreement of the local branch committee, to participate in the Staff Survey Steering Group established to oversee the organisational response to the findings.

NIPSA welcomed the opportunity to engage at this level, recognising the importance of union involvement in strategic decision-making and in shaping the organisation's response to staff feedback. A Headquarters official participated on the steering group, and it was agreed that local NIPSA representatives would also be represented on each of the associated working groups.

The steering group met on a number of occasions during the year. NIPSA played an active role in these discussions, working with Management Side to identify the key issues affecting members and to develop proposals aimed at improving working practices and the overall working environment within the office. NIPSA also provided constructive challenge and scrutiny to ensure that actions arising from the survey were meaningful, measurable, and capable of delivering real improvement.

In parallel, a series of working groups were established to progress specific areas of work arising from the survey. Approximately 40 staff participated across these groups, each of which included NIPSA representation. This approach was viewed positively and reflected a genuine commitment to partnership working, ensuring that staff views were embedded throughout the process and that the union was engaged at both strategic and operational levels.

NIPSA Distinguished Service Medal: During the year, the local branch nominated Finula Magowan for the award of the NIPSA Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of her long-standing service to the union and its members. Finula made a significant contribution to improving the working lives of

members within the Northern Ireland Audit Office and played an important role in fostering and maintaining constructive industrial relations between the employer and Trade Union Side.

B3.20 Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)

Following an initial meeting held between the acting chief executive and Trade Union Side (TUS) throughout the year an agreed schedule on matters for consultation was agreed. Local branch representative remain engaged in the day to day working of matter relating to the branch and these members were re-elected at a well-attended AGM in the latter part of the year. TUS and Management Side (MS) met in late 2025 to discuss the overpayment of a working from home allowance which was issue during the COVID 19 period of home working. These matters were discussed at length and TUS engaged with MS in engagement and written communications with staff in respect of this. TUS continue to engage on this matter with specific concern to potential tax and budget implications.

B3.21 Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Services (NICTS)

Vision 2030 | Estates Modernisation: Royal Courts of Justice (RCJ), Trade Union Side (TUS) attended an online presentation to discuss the concept design in March. Design stages 0, 1 and 2 of an 8-stage design process have now been completed and Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) attended a further update meeting in November.

Relocation to AIB Building: The administrative support for the Tribunals Hearing Centre relocated in December to the AIB Building, Belfast. Hearings are still listed in RCJ currently.

Relocation to Orchard House: The Customer Service Centre based in Richmond Chambers relocated its 20 staff to the second floor of Orchard House, Londonderry in August.

Themis: Trade Union Side engagement with the Senior Responsible Owner and Themis Programme Manager continued, on a quarterly basis, with the last meeting taking place in September.

Small Claims: the 'go live' was deferred to 2026. Current focus is on the preparation of training materials, training course content and user guidance for Small Claims implementation. The Training Plan sets out that approximately 100 users will be trained in person over a 5-week period.

Tribunals: Detailed design work was held for all 14 Tribunals. Blueprints for 6 Tribunals, Availability and Scheduling, Common Pathway, Reporting, Application Fees and Panel Fees were endorsed and approved.

Target Operating Model: The high-level Target Operating Model (TOM) was approved by the Programme Board in August. This workstream sets out how services will be delivered through Themis, and how NICTS will be organised to deliver them

Change Champions: were established at each court office to assist with the Small Claims implementation.

Legislation Review: Over 4,000 pieces of legislation were reviewed to date for potential barriers to digital and transformed ways of working. Focus is currently on Tribunals legislation.

Programme Team: Additional staff were recruited to the Team via DOJ Departmental Transfers and NICTS temporary promotion opportunities.

Justice Video Platform: The SightLink product used across all courts to facilitate remote and hybrid hearings was replaced with the NICTS Justice Video Platform (JVP). Courts were migrated to JVP on a per venue basis so that additional support could be provided on site by the project team during go live.

Jury Information Videos: Members contributed to and welcomed a series of Jury Information Videos developed to provide jurors, and potential jurors, with important information about jury service including how jurors are selected and what jury duty involves.

Business Areas:

Coroners Service (CSNI): Following TUS agreement of the Stress Risk Assessment Action Plan, the first HR-led staff engagement session took place in July. Participants considered the session to be beneficial, and a subsequent session was suggested for the Autumn, but it did not take place.

Truth Recovery Redress Service (TRRS): In 2018, the Department of Health commissioned research into the operation of Mother and Baby Institutions and Magdalene Laundries in Northern Ireland. The Health Minister established the Truth Recovery Design Panel (TRDP) in 2021 and tasked it with developing options for an independent investigation / inquiry into Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries. The TRDP report recommendations included the establishment of an Independent Panel, a public inquiry and a redress scheme. The Executive accepted these recommendations in November 2021. The Justice Minister confirmed that she is content, in principle, with her department taking on the role. In practice, NICTS was tasked with supporting the development, implementation and operation of the TRRS. Once established, the Redress Service will be responsible for receiving and processing applications for, and awarding payments of, compensation to victims and survivors. There will be two distinct phases to the TRRS project, namely, the development / implementation phase and the operational phase. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary (Grade 6 and 7) were appointed to commence work setting up the new Service and DTUS met with them in April to discuss early plans for the new Service.

Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board: DTUS met with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary in October to discuss the redeployment of Redress Board staff. The redeployment process began around February but had to be suspended when there was a surge in new cases in the last few weeks of the Scheme which closed on 2 April. After the new applications had undergone initial processing, the redeployment plan re-commenced on a staged basis i.e. identifying the stages of applications still to be processed in the final months and the activities of the closure programme and then matching them with the staff skilled in those areas. Some of the team were redeployed by the end of December and others will be redeployed after April 2026. A very small number of staff will remain into the summer months to complete the corporate and governance stages of closing down the Board.

Fine Collection and Enforcement Service (FCS): In response to concerns raised by members, DTUS conducted a Review of the FCS working environment.

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A Report based on feedback from members was prepared and an overview of the findings was discussed with the Head of Branch.

An Action Plan aligning to the Health and Safety Executive (NI) Management Standards was developed by DTUS and the Head of Business. The Plan issued to members in December and includes regular review points.

Planning Appeal Commission and Water Appeals Commission (PACWAC) Commissioners: The NICS Pay Awards 2024/25 and 2025/26 had to go through a DOF approval process for two separate pay remits i.e. one for each pay award which resulted in a delay in implantation. Both pay awards' revalorisation and arrears were eventually paid in November. DTUS also held a meeting with Finance Branch in November to explore if there is any way of speeding up the implementation process.

Health and Safety:

Inspections: TUS continued to accompany Estates Branch at Inspections throughout the province. Areas of concern included failure to complete Display Screen Assessments, improper stacking and storage of boxes waiting for removal to off-site storage. Until the boxes are removed, TUS has issued interim guidance with information regarding weight distribution, stability and safe access.

Training: Due to the high reliance on paper and storage of documents, a bespoke LInKS training course is to be developed for DOJ staff on the safe use of step stools and ladders.

Health and Safety Forum: The Workplace Health Committee was relaunched as the Health and Safety Forum and met twice this year.

Heating: Issues with thermal comfort at RCJ and the Ground Floor of Laganside House were addressed.

Staffing:

Temporary Promotion Opportunities: DTUS liaised with the Business Partner at the end of March to ensure the correct content is contained in Temporary Promotion Notices and that all managers were made aware of the position.

Permission is required for Elective Transfers and Departmental Vacancy/ Transfer Notices only - which are permanent but at the same grade. The Career Opportunities and Promotion Policy (Para 17 Deputising and Temporary Promotion) do not require applicants to seek approval to apply for temporary promotions.

NICTS People Strategy Year Two (2024-25): The End Year Summary Report issued in April, highlighting achievements of the last 12 months.

NICTS People Strategy Year Three (2025-26): The Delivery Plan was published on 11 September and includes practical actions which will enhance induction, increase opportunities for learning and development, improve communication, support wellbeing and help secure the resources needed to deliver strategic objectives.

Recruitment: DTUS attended NICTS Induction Sessions in Belfast and Craigavon throughout the year.

E01 Court Clerks: NICTS Operational Support Branch (OSB) led two training programmes for newly appointed E01 Court Clerks focusing on Magistrates Courts and Crown Courts.

The bespoke recruitment scheme has seen 31 staff appointed so far and further candidates remain on the list.

B3.22 Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)

Following a recommendation from an independent review conducted in the previous year, a proposal was put to Trade Union Side (TUS) which would see NIHRC members placed on equivalent pay scales to their GB counterpart. TUS and MS have met and corresponded on this matter and at the end of the year had agreed a schedule of consultation which would allow for joint MS and staff meetings on the proposal as well as one to one meetings between MS and staff, a full consultation between TUS and members and a ballot of all members for acceptance or refusal.

B3.23 Northern Ireland Public Sector Ombudsman (NIPSO)

Pay: Following a consultation exercise it was agreed that a revised pay structure for NIPSO members would be implemented effective May 2025. This revised structure would see NIPSO members align with National Joint Council Scales (NJC) pay scales. This revised structure was implemented with minimal errors in the payment of salaries and in a timely manner.

Policy Review: Throughout the year it was identified that a number of existing NIPSO policies required review and Trade Union Side (TUS) consultation. As a result of this a number of policies were issued to TUS for comment. Through engagement between TUS and Management Side (MS) a schedule of priority policies were agreed for review with TUS providing comment on a large number of high priority policies to date and continuing to work on comments on the remainder of the priority list.

Branch Organisation: Throughout the year the local branch representatives continue to be engaged in representation on a local level along with Nipsa HQ. Further to this a joint meetings between MS and TUS have been explored with a view to arranging more regular joint meetings in order to identify and resolve areas of concern. These include: organisation concerns, the use of agency and fixed term workers and understaffing.

B3.24 Northern Ireland Water (NIW)

Option B/C Pay: Option B/C staff were balloted in relation to their 23/24 pay offer with members voting in favour of both strike action and action short of strike action. A successful day of strike action took place in June followed by action short of strike action which continued throughout the year. A further ballot took place in December relating to the pay offer seeking a further 1% and a failure by the employer to recognise two bargaining units, which they had created with the new pay structure. This resulted in a decisive yes vote and a very successful day of strike action on 31st December followed by action short of strike action. Members were also considering selective action in early 2026.

Option A Pay: A two-year pay claim covering the period 24/25 & 25/26 for Option A staff was submitted on behalf of this bargaining unit which had been created by the Management with the introduction of the new pay structure. However, Management refused to enter into negotiations unless the pay claim was resubmitted on behalf of both bargaining units. NIPSA Members in Option A were balloted for industrial action with members voting decisively in favour of taking action. Industrial action began on the 31 December with a day of strike action and action short of strike action. Members were also considering selective action in early 2026.

Analytical Services: A review of Analytical Services was undertaken to look at strengthening data decision making, enhance operations support, grow regulatory demands, improve people development and operation performance and to support team structure and support new working patterns. A number of structural changes to the grading of roles were proposed alongside proposals on the employee transition process. TUS raised concerns and questions in relation to the review, such as how the new structure was decided upon, the practicalities of how the proposals would work in practice, starting pay on promotion queries, sought details of the difference in roles between the two grades etc. An FAQ document was produced and shared with affected staff.

B3.25 NSL/APCOA

Following an unsuccessful tender bid in 2025, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) parking enforcement contract previously held by NSL was awarded to APCOA effective from November 2025. As a result of this a number of consultation meetings were held between NSL and APCOA Management, effected staff and Trade Union Side (TUS). These consultation meetings focused on a number of areas including:

- Revised organisational structure;
- Potential redundancies;
- TUPE protections; and
- Working arrangements going forward.

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As a result of these meetings TUS in consultation with impacted members were able to raise a number of concerns regarding the proposed revised staffing structure. This led to an extended consultation process regarding a structure that was considered fit for purpose. Following this extended consultation process and a number of joint meetings between TUS and MS an agreement was secured which resulted in a dramatically reduced loss of posts. Further to this TUS were able to ensure that all posts lost by way of redundancy were on a voluntary basis as opposed to moving to a forced redundancy position.

Following on from the effective date of November 2025 TUS continued to raise a number of concerns which were identified by members including health and safety implications as a result of changes to working practice, the suitability of base sites and rota arrangements. TUS have met with management on these matters and seen successful resolutions in the majority of cases. A number of outstanding issues remain under negotiation between TUS and MS with regular meetings being scheduled to advance these issues.

B3.26 Police Ombudsman Northern Ireland

Holiday Pay: The long-standing issue of holiday pay under the Working Time Directive remained a key matter during the year within the Office of the Police Ombudsman. A business case seeking approval for a resolution was submitted on two occasions to the Department of Justice (DoJ) in its capacity as the sponsoring department.

Trade Union Side (TUS) pressed for interim arrangements to be introduced to address the ongoing impact on staff as wider settlement discussions continued while MTB Solicitors were engaged in progressing negotiations on the broader settlement agreements.

At the July Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC) agreement was reached on an interim measure where overtime worked would be included in salary calculations for the purposes of holiday pay. This represented a significant and positive development in addressing the issue.

Hybrid Working Policy: During the year, Trade Union Side (TUS) engaged with the Office of the Police Ombudsman on the development of its hybrid working policy. NIPSA consistently advocated for the policy to be aligned with the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) arrangements.

A survey of members conducted in late 2024 demonstrated overwhelming support for alignment with the NICS model. In advancing this position, TUS highlighted the operational and wellbeing benefits of a flexible approach and argued that greater discretion should be afforded to managers to determine attendance requirements appropriate to their respective business areas.

Despite the clear preference expressed by staff and the evidence presented, management remained committed to a policy requiring staff to be present in the office for most of their working time.

The issue was discussed at the July Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC), where it was agreed that NIPSA would submit a formal position paper and proposal aimed at resolving the matter. Both sides acknowledged that the dispute had not escalated to the stage requiring external intervention, although the Labour Relations Agency (LRA) remained available should mediation be required.

Progress during the latter part of the year was limited following the departure of the local NIPSA representative in September, which resulted in an absence of on-site union representation. Consequently, the full-time official prioritised individual casework. A draft position paper was prepared but required further refinement before submission.

Policies: During the year, NIPSA engaged on a range of workplace policies and procedures within the Office of the Police Ombudsman. The Recruitment Policy and Procedures Manual was received in March for consultation and comment. Given the significance of this policy, Trade Union Side (TUS) undertook a detailed review to assess its impact on fairness, transparency, and internal progression. Emphasis was placed on maximising internal recruitment opportunities, strengthening career pathways for existing staff, and ensuring alignment with best practice across comparable public sector organisations.

More generally, NIPSA reviewed workplace policies throughout the year and was largely successful in securing improvements, with management side remaining receptive to proposed changes.

A significant issue arose in relation to the inefficiency absence policy, particularly its compensation element. While the policy mirrored the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) arrangements, NIPSA raised concerns regarding its applicability within an Arm's Length Body (ALB) such as the Office of the Police Ombudsman, given the absence of access to the Civil Service Appeals Board. This led to a prolonged period of challenge and correspondence, during which NIPSA argued that the entitlement formed an integral part of the policy and must be applied accordingly.

The matter was considered at the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC) in December, where management side confirmed that the compensation provision applied and that payment would be made in the case which gave rise to the issue. This confirmed NIPSA's position and represented a positive outcome following sustained engagement during the year.

Investigation Officer Grading: Throughout the year, NIPSA engaged on the issue of pay and grading for Investigation Officers (IOs), reflecting ongoing concerns regarding pay levels and staff retention. Trade Union Side (TUS) explored options for improvement, drawing on developments at the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) as a potential model.

NIPSO had identified staff retention as a significant risk and secured funding for an external pay review. An independent assessor conducted the review in September and October of the previous year and concluded that IOs should be placed on the National Joint Council (NJC) P02 pay scale, with a revised salary range of £38,626 to £41,511. The recommendation was approved by both the relevant Stormont committee and the Department of Finance, with implementation scheduled from 1 April. IOs were to remain within the existing Civil Service pension scheme.

At the July Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC), management side confirmed that they were actively working on the issue. However, progress was limited following the departure of the local NIPSA representative in September, which left the office without local representation and led to the postponement of the JNCC.

The matter was considered again at the JNCC in December, where management side decided not to proceed with a job evaluation of the IO role despite the level of staff turnover during the year and the ongoing retention concerns. The issue therefore remained an active priority for NIPSA, given the number of staff who left the organisation during the year and the view that pay and grading was a contributing factor.

Human Resources: During the year, NIPSA dealt with a significant volume of human resources (HR) matters across the office. Trade Union Side (TUS) engaged with management on a range of issues to ensure fair and transparent HR practices that supported staff wellbeing and career progression. These matters included:

- Concerns regarding the E01 application process.
- Concerns regarding the Grade 7 application process and recruitment.
- Management of long-term sickness absences and return-to-work procedures.
- The application and interpretation of the attendance management policy.
- Advocacy for the introduction of structured and meaningful exit interviews.
- Ensuring consistency in job application assessments.
- Addressing inconsistencies in the deployment of agency staff.

In addition, NIPSA was consulted on a number of recruitment exercises across the office. These included:

- DP Investigations (temporary six-month position), established to assist with the onboarding of new staff, with the role split between two existing staff members who received temporary promotion for a three-month period.

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- DP Investigations (permanent position) within the Investigations team.
- Grade 7 Head of Finance (permanent position), overseeing the organisation's financial operations.
- Intelligence Research Officer (permanent position) advertised internally.
- Audit and Risk Committee member, through an external recruitment exercise.

B3.27 Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI)

Revised Environmental Allowance (REA) - Annual Uplift: A major success in 2024 was securing the long awaited increase to the Revised Environmental Allowance for members. As part of this agreement, NIPSA negotiated an annual review mechanism to ensure continued uplift.

NIPSA also secured an update to the relevant policy document to formally link the REA to the Police Officer Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA). This means that when the officers' allowance increases, staff will receive a corresponding uplift, with the percentage increase directly aligned.

This linkage provides significant long term protection for our members, tying their allowance to the outcomes of the 6,500 officers whose NITA is reviewed annually.

Attendance Management Review: Management initiated a review of the attendance management process with the stated aim of reducing costs while supporting staff returning from sickness absence. Benchmarking demonstrated that PSNI's sickness policy was more enhanced than those of comparable local agencies, including the NICS.

On this basis, management proposed reducing the sickness triggers to mirror NICS levels. NIPSA robustly challenged this proposal, providing extensive evidence of the negative impact such a reduction would have on staff wellbeing and organisational fairness.

As a result of NIPSA's intervention, the existing triggers were retained. In addition, the policy was strengthened to include clearly documented welfare processes, ensuring better support for staff.

Flexible Working Review: NIPSA pressed for a review of the Flexible Working Policy to reflect recent changes implemented on the mainland. Our team ensured that these updates were adopted within PSNI in a timely and consistent manner.

Importantly, NIPSA also secured the introduction of "day one rights" for flexible working applications ahead of the NICS, ensuring PSNI staff benefitted from this enhancement without delay.

Introduction of a Local Job Evaluation Department: NIPSA has long advocated for a dedicated internal Job Evaluation Unit to address the growing mismatch between evolving job roles and outdated grading structures. Many roles within PSNI have changed significantly since their original evaluations, and reliance on external assessors such as Beamans had resulted in unacceptable delays to staff.

The new Job Evaluation Unit has been operational since December 2025. To date, two roles have been reviewed and upgraded to reflect their true responsibilities, marking an important step forward in ensuring fair and timely evaluation for all staff.

B3.28 Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI)

Pensions Legal Case: The ongoing admin pension case remains unresolved. Local Trade Union Side (TUS) have met with Nipsa solicitors with a view to receiving updates to member queries and advancing the issue. Further to this Nipsa Solicitors have provided a presentation at the branch AGM and addressed direct queries from the membership outlining the process and estimated timeframes.

Job Evaluation: Throughout the year TUS have provided comments on a draft job evaluation proposal which is currently out for wider consultation. This process would provide an agreed framework to evaluate posts in line with the GLPC Job Evaluation scheme. If implemented the proposal would see TUS represented on all job evaluation exercises going forward. A small number of issues have been identified from a previous job evaluation exercise and these are being advanced by TUS with a view to resolving all outstanding issues as a matter of urgency.

Reporting: In the latter part of the year TUS provided comments to management on a request for NIPB members to complete reports on categories of prisoners which were previously completed by an external organisation. TUS raised concerns regarding the potential security implications to members and these were well received by management. TUS are awaiting a final response to these concerns.

Branch Organisation: TUS and Management Side (MS) continue to meet on a monthly basis in respect of local issues, these meetings include colleagues from the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO). These meetings have provide constructive and have provided a welcome forum on operational matters as well as matters such as training. The Nipsa Branch Committee remain active in matters such as personal representation and attendance at Joint Negotiation and Consultative Committee (JNCC). The branch recently held a successful AGM which resulted in a number of new members being elected to the Branch Committee in a number of offices.

B3.29 Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland (PPSNI)

The total budget for the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) in 2024/25 was approximately £44M which was a £2m increase on 2023/2024 budget, although additional funding was once again offset by increased costs of specific modernisation and reform initiatives. The Department continued to operate on an under-capacity basis throughout 2025 and that presented many difficulties for NIPSA members tasked with delivering departmental objectives.

IT Projects

Electronic Signing of Summonses: This IT project sought to design and implement methods for Prosecutors to sign and authorise legal documents electronically. Trade Union Side engaged in lengthy written and oral consultation with Management throughout the year. Project Initiation Document (PID) and Process Mapping stages were completed but Digital Presentation and implementation remain outstanding. The project was expected to roll-out in

the first 3-6 months of 2025 but delays continued to occur due to significant IT issues. When those issues are resolved, electronic summons signing should offer considerable short and medium-term benefits for members in terms of increased efficiency and avoidance of cumbersome and duplicated work processes. However, TUS must remain vigilant regarding implementation of AI.

File Quality & Disclosure Project: This was identified as one of three strands of the joint PPS/PSNI Working Together Project (along with Modernisation & Transformation and Out of Court Disposals). In depth progress updates were provided and the topic was a constant agenda item at Whitley meetings. Numerous reports examined the issue of file quality and avoidable delay in recent years across the Criminal Justice system and in November 2025 the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) again looked at the issue in their report on 'The Management of Organizational Performance in the PPSNI'. A number of recommendations were made across several areas and TUS continues to engage with Management Side on those issues in the hope of better working conditions for members and a better service for victims, witnesses and the wider public.

Gateway: Trade Union Side attended several briefings throughout 2025 where members of the Strategic Improvement Team outlined the departments aims to deliver a more modern and efficient PPS. Funding was secured and legal & admin sections of the Gateway Team were established. Trade Union Side continually raised concerns around grading and the requirement for additional posts to expand the team. On-going at year end.

Volume Crime: A 6-month Pilot scheme for Volume Crime Cases was launched on 04/11/2024 and completed in May 2025, looking at the types and volumes of cases submitted to the PPS. A similar pilot launched on 03/11/2025 looking at Indictable Volume Crime Cases in the Crown court. TUS engaged with Management Side throughout the year. It is apparent that volumes of cases remained steady but the intricacy and complexity increased significantly. TUS sought assurances that unachievable expectations were not placed on members,

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and an interim capacity review for legal grades was carried out. Several briefings and presentations were provided to TUS for input and in September the review concluded with welcome results. Recommendations for additional legal posts in both Public Prosecutor and Senior Public Prosecutor grades were noted which should assist lawyers with backlogs and workload. That is on-going and TUS continue to press management for progress on the review of admin functions, with the aim for additional admin resources also.

Several other innovative IT measures were presented and progressed throughout the year. They included the on-going Modernising Services programme, the five-year Strategic Plan for the PPS called 'PPS 2027'. The delivery of key operational PPS projects and interagency initiatives under the Service Improvement and Innovation Programme (such as Committal Reform, Remote Evidence Centres, Sight-link facilities, and the Joint Digital Justice Strategy) and the implementation of ICT Strategy objectives. The proposals were about transforming the PPS into a more modern prosecution service, including the greater use of digital and IT processes. Trade Union Side continued to engage in Consultation with Management Side at the year end.

Review of Admin Processes: In 2024, Resource Management Team (RMT) laid out plans for an internal review of all administrative processes, born out of a recommendation from the external PA Consulting review of the department in September 2023. This Organisational Development initiative saw RMT tasked with a review within the regional functions of Case Prep, Case Work Support, Court Support and Crown section and to recommend meaningful performance metrics, identify pressures, bottlenecks and delays, remove inefficiencies, streamline processes, suggest improvements and scope for digitisation. Trade Union Side met with members across all mentioned areas and responded to Management Side, raising concerns regarding the targeting of admin staff, misuse of performance metrics, micro-management, as well as Management Sides non-acceptance of other recommendations which would benefit members. TUS had in-depth consultation with Management Side and

an agreed way forward was eventually found late in 2024. New legislation and policy changes impacted the way several business areas carried out their functions and this resulted in some initial delay. However, staff shortages halted the review after completion of just one business area. After consultation, the project was re-directed to the NICS Innovation and Consultancy Services Team and the project is on-going.

Health & Safety (H&S) and Risk Assessments:

Trade Union Side (TUS) were represented on the Departmental Health & Safety Committee throughout the year, attending meetings, conducting risk assessments, and ensuring matters were resolved satisfactorily. The department remained in breach of Health & Safety legislation as the organisation did not have an up-to-date H&S policy, signed by an existing member of the Senior team. Personnel changes contributed to lengthy delay, but it is hoped this will be rectified early in 2026, with the inclusion of TUS proposals. Matter ongoing.

Trade Union Side members of the PPS Health & Safety Committee engaged in issues involving all aspects of mental and physical Health, Safety, Security, Welfare and wellbeing.

Staff safety and welfare concerns were highlighted in TUS risk assessments regarding threats to NIPSA members at court offices and a lack of access to welfare facilities. In September 2025, the PPS's failure to comply with several sections of protective H&S legislation prompted TUS engagement with the Health & Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) to force compliance.

Security was an on-going issue in 2025 as several security incidents occurred, prompting significant engagement with the departmental security officer, senior management and the HSE.

Levels of sickness absence in the PPS were another major cause for concern for TUS. Mental ill-health is the leading contributor to sickness absence rates, with members suffering from exposure to graphic and disturbing evidence as well as difficult workloads. The PPS remain among the highest levels of sickness absence in the NICS.

Whitley: Trade Union Side engaged in regular consultation with Management Side (in person and remotely). Agenda items were varied and included Hybrid Working, PPS 20th Anniversary Conference, Indictable File Build, Legal Trainee Scheme, Committal Reform, PPS/PSNI Working Together Project, Digital Strategy, Recruitment and Promotion, Performance Management, Agency Workers, Special Leave and Carers rights at work among other issues. Other agenda items arose through the out-workings of the plethora of subgroups and committees in PPS. The Senior Management Group (SMG), People & Resources Committee (PRC), Performance and Delivery Committee (PDC), Policy & Quality Committee (PQC), Strategic Improvement Board (SIB), Performance and Accountability Meetings (PAM's), Health and Safety Committee as well as issues generated through NICSHR, produced a significant workload for the Departmental Committee. In depth consultation and negotiation occurred throughout the year, delivering favourable outcomes for members across multiple topics.

New Ways of working (NWW): TUS raised a number of concerns throughout 2025 as issues of management deviation from agreed processes were reported by members throughout the year. Further issues arose as the policy evolved to implement a 40% attendance rule. Trade Union Side engaged successfully with several business areas to ensure that attendance at court contributed to the 40% requirement. Most posts in the PPS continued to offer Hybrid Working, with welcome increases noted in some areas after successful negotiation. Trade Union Side will continue to monitor the situation as the policy evolves further.

Policy, Legislation, and Change: The introduction of significant volumes of new legislation and policy (13 Staff Instructions (SI's) and 13 Policy Information notes (PIN's) were implemented this year) was a source of conflict throughout the year. Naturally, members struggled with the constant changes having already attempted to navigate 19 new internal policies introduced in 2024. The ever-changing landscape of the PPS saw implementation of legislation across several complex, sensitive, and difficult topics, including Domestic

Abuse, Trafficking and Hate Crime among others. Trade Union Side continued to lobby Management Side throughout 2025 as a combination of issues caused significant difficulty for many members. Among the issues raised by Trade Union Side were the volume of policy change, the level and length of vacancies across the department, long-term temporary promotion and back fills, lack of induction & training, widespread use of Agency workers, high turnover of staff, volume of legislative change and unrealistic expectations placed on staff. These were all contributing factors to a poor year for the PPS in terms of significant sickness absence. Mental ill health was once again noted as the main cause of sickness absence across the department.

People Plan: The People Plan for 2024-25 year was developed to focus on four priorities:

- Workforce Planning and Organisational Development.
- Health and Wellbeing
- Leadership
- Communication and Engagement.

Pay & Industrial Action: The disparity in pay between admin and legal work in PPS remained in what has been a constant and long-standing issue.

The 2024/25 Pay award was welcomed by members of Branch 53 who voted unanimously to accept. Also welcome were the increases to Maternity/Adoption leave and the increase to on-call allowance rates which benefit many members in PPS.

Several other issues are also ongoing. They included issues arising from Groups and Committees such as the Criminal Justice Partnership Consultations Group, Operational User Group, the Business Managers Forum and numerous pieces of departmental policy being drafted by the Policy & Information Unit (PIU). These types of issues were constant matters and work was on-going across all the areas.

B3.30 Sport NI

Joint Negotiation and Consultative Committee (JNCC): Following a period where the formal JNCC structure were replaced by monthly informal meetings between Management Side (MS) and Trade

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Union Side (TUS), formal JNCC meetings were reinitiated in their place in the latter part of the year at the request of MS. The first of these meetings was held in the latter part of 2025 and proved a generally productive exercise.

Staff Survey: Following a members survey issued by Nipsa results were received and assessed by Nipsa HQ and the local branch. Whilst these results largely mirrored the comments outlined in the management led survey a number of worrying concerns were outlined. These are being raised between TUS and management with a view to resolving outstanding issues.

All Hours Worked Allowance: Following on from the most recent meeting of the JNCC the issue was raised by MS on the payment of All hours worked allowance for members at grade Staff Officer and above. To date no progress has been made by MS on the removal of this allowance and TUS remain committed to the maintenance of this allowance for all eligible staff, through negotiation with MS and the host department.

B3.31 Tourism Ireland (TI)

Organisational Review: An organisational review was undertaken to look at current roles, structures and process within Tourism Ireland (TI). The review will also look to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the current capacity, make recommendations to align the organisation with strategic priorities and enhance efficiency, agility and innovation. The comprehensive organisational capacity review will look at all 168 full time equivalent posts within TI. The terms of reference cover the following:

- Overall staffing levels.
- Management structure.
- Team structure.
- Core competencies.
- Skill mix.
- Resilience of Operation Model.

An external partner to help with the organisational review was secured. Except for minor operational

changes all other recommendations will need North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) approval.

Intern Programme: 25 people began their internship in roles in areas such as IT, marketing and business.

B3.32 Utility Regulator

Pay: Following a final pay offer of:

- One step progression subject to scale maximum;
- All spinal points on all scales revalorised by 4.7%;
- For all staff in receipt of a salary in excess of a scale maximum, the 4.7% would be based on the scale maximum.

Trade Union Side (TUS) made further representations to management with a view to increasing the offer, unfortunately this request was refused and the final offer above was out to a ballot of members. As a result a majority of members voted in favour of the proposal, acceptance was communicated to management. Following this arrangements were put in place for the uplifting of salaries and payment of arrears. All members received payment in the October pay run.

Policy Review: Following a joint meeting of Management Side (MS) and TUS approximately 70 policies were scheduled for review over the coming year. As a result of this meeting it was agreed that TUS and MS would continue to engage on the priority policy reviews on an ongoing basis and potential draft a schedule of policies for review in the short to medium term. Such a schedule would consider legislative changes and areas of staff concern. It has been agreed that this will be scheduled at all joint meetings of MS and TUS for consideration.

B3.33 Waterways Ireland

Budget: There were significant funding pressures particularly in relation to the resource budget and strategic decisions were required to manage resources effectively. Some inescapable unbudgeted costs earlier in 2025, linked to the ten-encampment issue contributed significantly to the budget pressures.

Organisational Review: There were delays in progressing the Organisational Review. The Oversight Committee met to discuss the report and to reach consensus on the areas of responsibility, decision making, staffing levels and the implementation of the recommendations over multiple years. The CEO will bring the strategic priorities to the Sponsor Departments for approval. TUS repeated their request for sight of the report and the recommendations and the CEO agreed to consult with TUS on any elements of the report that can / are being implemented. Management advised that the Senior Management Team (SMT) meet with all staff in different locations 7 times last year and will continue to update staff of any progress at these meetings.

Enterprise Resource Planning: Several providers were identified following tender to implement an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to integrate Finance, Asset Management, Project Management and Works Management with the aim of improving efficiency, automation of processes and enhance data-driven decision making. A business case is being developed which will require approval from both Sponsor Departments. The existing systems are over 20 years old and present a high operational risk.

Response Emergency Service: The Response Emergency Service responded to over 100 calls since going live. There are 24 on-call duty managers on the rota with support from H&S also available.

People Strategy: A review of the Performance Development Review (PDR) process and Competency Framework took place. Baker Tilly was appointed to support the work. Approval was granted for three placement students and two apprentices in Waterways Ireland.

Working Well Committee: A women's wellbeing event was held in October and attended by almost 50% of women in the organisation. A men's wellbeing event also took place in December.

Travel & Subsistence: The business case to help address cost issues for staff who are required to travel North to South for work purposes was rejected by the Department of Finance (DoF) despite being approved by the Sponsor Department. DoF rejected

the business case as there is a planned review of the Travel & Subsistence policy due and they did not want to approve a deviation from the existing policy for one area only.

Section C

Public Officers

Education & Further/Higher Education

Health and Social Care

Libraries NI

Local Authorities

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Other Bodies

C1 Education & Further/Higher Education

C1.1 Education Authority - 2025

Pay and Grading Review

This year marked the conclusion of the Pay and Grading Review, with assimilation to the new pay scales scheduled for 2024 and the non-consolidated payment due in April 2025. Resolution of these matters brought an end to the industrial action experienced in the previous year.

Key element of the review involved establishing a Job Evaluation process following the historic moratorium on job evaluations. Progress has been made in developing this process, with business cases submitted and approved by the Department. Regular discussions have continued, implementing the evaluation arrangements first outlined in 2019.

NIPSA anticipates that the Job Evaluation process will be fully integrated into EA policies and procedures over the coming year.

Financial position:

- Current Position
- Opening Budget: £3,112m
- Funding Gap: £306m (Sept)
- Started at £325m in April

Key Pressures:

- NJC pay award: +3.2%
- Pay & Grading Review adjustments
- Teaching pay award impact pending

Schools' Financial Health:

- 2024-25: 60% in deficit
- Projected 2025-26: 70%

Savings:

- £15.6m identified
- Insufficient to close £306m gap

Risk & Conclusion:

- No major in-year allocations expected
- High risk of overspend
- Additional funding essential

Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) and Directorate Forums: The JNC has prioritised the following areas during the reporting year:

- SEND and SEND Transformation Programme
- Classroom Assistant Reform
- Addressing significant budget deficits

NIPSA continues to hold representation on both the SEND and SEND Transformation Boards, which have now moved into the implementation phase. This includes the roll-out of Local Integrated Teams (LITs) designed to provide **early intervention and early support for children with special educational needs** without requiring progression to the statutory statementing process.

Classroom Assistant reform remains a central issue within both the SEND programme and the ongoing review. While proposals have been submitted, NIPSA is disappointed that the longstanding concerns regarding grading and Special Needs Classroom Assistant allowances remain unresolved.

Children and Young People Directorate: A major exercise was undertaken to stabilise the workforce following the identification of large numbers of temporary staff occupying long term positions, some for over four years, and often without formal recruitment processes.

The EA commenced issuing notifications to convert long term temporary staff to permanent status. However, NIPSA has identified significant concerns:

Newly permanent staff are **not being offered the right to move to 52 week contracts**, contrary to previous agreements. This risks creating **inequity within the workforce**, with new permanent staff receiving fewer rights than current colleagues. While the initial goal was positive, the current implementation may lead to structural unfairness unless addressed.

Operations and Estates: Work within Operations and Estates has focused on:

- Implementing the Corporate Building Strategy
- Redeploying staff linked to changes in buildings and school usage

- Proposals to use Antrim and Dundonald sites for SEND purposes

NIPSA has been actively involved in ensuring staff redeployment takes place with proper engagement and minimal adverse impact on employees.

Weather related disruptions, including storms affecting transport and buildings, required significant effort to protect staff and pupils. NIPSA has supported members throughout these events.

Transformation within Maintenance has commenced, which is designed to combat ongoing pay discrepancies resulting from the Pay and Grading Review.

Policies and Procedures

Flexitime/TOIL Policy: A new Flexitime and TOIL policy was introduced without agreement, due to what NIPSA describes as insufficient consultation. Concerns remain around any newly introduced provisions that may negatively affect staff. Despite objections, the EA implemented the policy in September. NIPSA continues to support members facing issues and is working to ensure no one is detrimentally affected.

Assimilation Policy: Due to recurring issues arising from organisational transformation, NIPSA proposed a new Assimilation Policy. Staff have frequently been required to apply for posts identical to their current roles, even when no changes in duties exist—causing unnecessary administrative burdens and stress. NIPSA's proposed policy would allow automatic assimilation to new roles where duties remain the same and assimilation even where a grade uplift occurs. Discussions remain in early stages but are expected to benefit both staff and the EA administratively.

Essential Car User & Travel Policy: Industrial relations have been strained around proposed changes to Essential Car User (ECU) status and travel/subsistence allowances. In April, the EA proposed changes that would:

- Alter the definition of an ECU
- Remove the allowance from a number of staff
- Reduce mileage rates

These proposals deviate from NJC Green Book terms and conditions and were strongly opposed by NIPSA. Negotiations subsequently broke down, and the EA issued notice of unilateral changes. A revised document—marked confidential—was circulated by management, restricting union consultation. The EA leadership has refused further engagement or consideration of counterproposals.

NIPSA now intends to initiate a **trade dispute**, seeking legal advice to protect members from detrimental changes.

Conclusion: The past year has involved significant transformation, challenges in industrial relations, and major workforce issues. Key achievements include progress toward implementing the Job Evaluation process and stabilising the temporary workforce. However, serious concerns remain around:

- Unagreed policy changes
- The Essential Car User dispute
- Ongoing issues in Classroom Assistant grading
- Potential new inequalities arising from employment stabilisation

NIPSA continues to work to ensure fair treatment, protect members' terms and conditions, and minimise negative impacts from organisational changes.

C1.2 Education Authority Belfast Region (EABR)

Following the implementation of NJC Pay in December, members were kept informed of the date for movement to the new scale, 1st April. Furthermore, NJC payment arrears were successfully made in September to avoid too much interference with members benefits.

Consultation has continued within directorates in relation to any reorganisation/transformation proposals. Members have been fully consulted in the transformation of services with EA region wide. Multiple volunteers have opted to sit on subgroups to feed into the EA Review.

Members are being kept fully informed of the potential relocation of Academy Street EA HQ. No relocation site has yet been identified and this process is ongoing. Furthermore, members in Antrim Board Centre

C1 Education & Further/Higher Education

(ABC) have also been informed of a move from their building. Ongoing consultation has identified a potential site at Antrim Civic Centre, however, this has not yet been confirmed. Meanwhile to facilitate work beginning at ABC the branch office has been identified as needing to temporary move within the premises. NIPSA continues to consult on the future relocation site, possible decant process and members individual needs.

Methodist College outsourced their cleaning services to Bidvest Noonan with a move to the new contract late last year. During the year it became apparent that members had not been assimilated correctly on the NJC scale. Following discussion this was rectified in October 2025 and back pay awarded.

C1.3 Education Authority Northern Region (EANR)

NIPSA supported and represented members at all stages in the processes of school closures, mergers and amalgamations.

NIPSA continued to represent its members' interests regarding redeployments and reductions in hours and engaged with HR, school management and members at each stage of the processes offering guidance and support.

NIPSA responded to and followed up on member's queries following Education Authority's implementation of the pay and grading non-consolidated payment in April.

NIPSA responded and followed up on members queries re the Education Welfare Service (EWS) restructure, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)/Local Impact Teams restructure, Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) job description and the consultation on the review of Travel and Subsistence and forwarded queries to the Assistant Secretary as appropriate for follow on, advice and action.

NIPSA attended a meeting in October with Music Service management, HR and members to clarify the outcome to a grievance on travel reimbursement.

NIPSA supported members at meetings with management on a number of issues to informally

seek resolution to avoid entering into formal procedures.

NIPSA followed up directly with EA re queries from members who consider they have not been paid correctly.

NIPSA supported and advised members on a range of specific issues including; hybrid working, job evaluation requests and processes, flexible retirement applications and ill health retirement processes. NIPSA also supported members with LRA facilitated conciliation and independent appeal processes.

Branch AGM took place in November and saw the election of a new committee.

NIPSA continued to support members with personal cases under policies and procedures including Absence at Work, Dignity at Work, Disciplinarys, individual/ collective grievances and appeals.

NIPSA referred a number of members to Platinum Financial Advisors for pension advice.

NIPSA sought legal advice from MTB on a number of cases.

C1.4 Education Authority South Eastern Region (EASER)

Individual representations: There have been a number of issues raised with NIPSA, mostly personal cases from the integrated and voluntary grammar sector. The full-time official has taken on and managed the majority of these with most having been resolved successfully, although some remain ongoing across various locations in the EA South Eastern Region, with issues ranging from managing attendance to dismissal.

Assumption Grammar School: NIPSA members at Assumption Grammar School contacted NIPSA about low staff morale and conditions following calls by the staff for an independent review of the school's governance structures. NIPSA has been working with Trade Union Officials from INTO and NASUWT to address these concerns. A meeting was conducted between INTO and NIPSA, resulting in an agreement to collectively urge the Board of Governors to complete an audit of industrial relations in the school to tackle ongoing issues and facilitate resolution.

Correspondence was sent to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors on behalf of the three unions. NIPSA also requested a meeting with the Board of Governors and the three Trade Union officials to facilitate the audit and discuss how the school would manage the survey results. This comes on the back of concerning behaviour when parents of pupils at the school contacted MLAs regarding an interim report by the Education Authority that alleged financial irregularities and governance issues.

Clifton Special Education School: NIPSA members in Clifton Special Education School expressed concerns about a lack of information and improper procedures concerning EpiPen usage. NIPSA addressed these issues with the principal, which led to their resolution.

Accounts Payable: Various meetings were held regarding issues with the accounts payable work area, during which members contributed to a broader consultation on the issues.

Essential Car User Allowance: Members raised concerns regarding the removal of the essential car user allowance, specifically highlighting how members in non-rural areas felt disadvantaged by the minimum mileage criteria and also the large amounts of monies lost to staff in EANI. Meetings convened at members' requests to discuss these concerns.

Mechanical Staff: Trade Union Side engaged with management about concerns that mechanical staff were requested to participate in electrical work. Discussions on training requirements continued as this issue was addressed.

Redundancy issues: Trade Union Side also managed inquiries about potential redundancy situations, which were largely resolved to members' satisfaction.

C1.5 Education Authority Southern Region (EASR)

During 2025, NIPSA Branch 521 continued to provide representation and support to members across the Education Authority (Southern Region) in a wide range of workplace matters. Representation was provided throughout the year in relation to redundancy processes, organisational restructures, and

individual casework, including grievance and disciplinary matters. The branch ensured members were supported and represented at all stages of relevant procedures, working closely with NIPSA full-time officials where appropriate.

The branch remained actively involved in complex organisational change matters during the year. This included engagement in the TUPE transfer of staff from PFI arrangements to the Education Authority at Drumglass High School following the conclusion of a long-standing private partnership. Branch 521 also continued to deal with ongoing TUPE-related issues arising from previous school transfers, ensuring members' terms and conditions were protected.

During 2025, Branch 521 provided support and representation to members affected by school closures, including the closure of Dreincourt Primary School in August. The branch assisted members through the redeployment process and supported those impacted by redundancy-related procedures, ensuring that members were advised and represented throughout.

Throughout the year, Branch 521 remained actively engaged in matters relating to pay and grading affecting members employed under NJC terms and conditions within the Education Authority. Members were kept informed of developments arising from national and local negotiations, including updates issued by NIPSA and information provided by the Education Authority regarding the implementation of agreed pay and grading arrangements. This included communication in relation to the Pay and Grading Review, the implementation of Stage 2 of the agreement accepted by members in September 2024, and the processing of the non-consolidated payment scheduled for April 2025.

Branch 521 continued to engage with the Education Authority on a range of operational and policy issues impacting members, including flexible and agile working arrangements, essential car user status, protected pay, mileage allowances, and the application of policies across different roles and grades. Where concerns arose regarding clarity or consistency, the branch sought clarification and improvements to ensure members were treated fairly and in line with agreed procedures.

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Throughout 2025, NIPSA publicly opposed proposed cost-saving measures within the Education Authority that could impact staff and services. Branch 521 supported this position, kept members informed of union statements and engagement, and supported wider trade union campaigning, including protest activity at Stormont, highlighting the need for adequate funding for education services and the protection of members' pay, conditions, and workloads.

Throughout the year, Branch 521 continued to represent the largest membership within NIPSA, maintaining a strong and engaged membership base across the Education Authority (Southern Region). Despite natural workforce movement, the branch remained active in representing members and supporting wider union campaigns during a period of continued financial pressure and organisational change within the education sector.

C1.6 Education Authority Western Region (EAWR)

NIPSA supported and represented members at all stages in the processes of school closures, mergers and amalgamations.

NIPSA continued to represent its members' interests regarding redeployments and reductions in hours and engaged with HR, school management and members at each stage of the processes offering guidance and support.

NIPSA responded to and followed up on member queries following Education Authority's implementation of the pay and grading non-consolidated payment in April.

NIPSA responded and followed up on member queries re the Education Welfare Service (EWS) restructure, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) / Local Impact Teams restructure, Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) job description and the consultation on the review of Travel and Subsistence and forwarded queries to the Assistant Secretary as appropriate for follow on, advice and action.

NIPSA wrote to the HR Director in May to raise concerns as to the delays in processing Dignity at

Work complaints and grievances highlighting the impact of the delays on members. HR Director passed this to the HR AD to follow up. NIPSA emailed again in July as there was no follow up and a meeting was then arranged. Meeting took place in October and HR AD agreed to progress agreed actions.

In June the branch linked with the Assistant Secretary to take forward concerns raised on the introduction of a new appraisal process and on concerns raised by members re management meetings and restructure in the Health & Safety Department.

NIPSA supported members at meetings with management to informally seek resolution to issues to avoid entering into formal procedures.

NIPSA supported a member with a complaint to the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) re: the delays and a lack of follow up to a grievance submitted in 2023 and further supported a complaint to the Ombudsman following continued lack of follow up to both original complaint and CCMS complaint.

NIPSA supported and advised members on a range of specific issues including; hybrid working issues, job evaluation requests and processes, flexible retirement applications and ill health retirement processes. NIPSA also supported members with LRA facilitated conciliation and independent appeal processes.

NIPSA continued to support members with personal cases under policies and procedures including Absence at Work, Dignity at Work, Disciplinarys, individual/ collective grievances and appeals.

NIPSA referred a number of members to Platinum Financial Advisors for pension advice.

NIPSA sought legal advice from MTB on a number of cases.

C1.7 Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC)

BMC reported budget shortages that would not affect the everyday running of the College but would halt plans to elevate each campus as a potential Centre of Excellence. Some extra funding was made available during the year which was allocated to the Learning & Development of staff.

In the aftermath of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme both restructuring and job evaluation (JE) exercise was initiated. Whilst some departments have assimilated staff to different roles others have been issued a process flow chart and JE request proforma. Members who wished to have their role assessed are in the process of doing so. This remains an ongoing process.

Following consultation members were advised that during the summer break the need to be in the office would reduce. Subject to business needs, staff would be afforded two days working from home. Members welcomed this increase of an extra day.

BMC needed to recruit over the summer months to fully staff the college for the beginning of the next academic year. Following consultation NIPSA agreed to a pilot scheme where recruitment using a smaller panel and fully supported by trained HR staff would be used. The outworking of the pilot scheme has significantly reduced the length of time taken to recruit.

The College has experienced consistent growth in the number of courses and student enrolment. A review of the number of staff needed to deliver the various programs has been undertaken. This included a revision of job descriptions and subsequently a job evaluation exercise.

C1.8 Northern Regional College (NRC)

Attempts to have a Joint Consultative Committee were pursued by NIPSA with both management side and sister unions throughout the year and remained ongoing at end year point.

NIPSA supported members based in the reception area of the new building who are experiencing thermal discomfort and carried out a site visit in May and followed with a number of requests for a meeting with management. There was a lack of engagement from management side, however a meeting then took place in August but the outcome fell short of any satisfactory solution. NIPSA wrote to management again in October and November by way of follow up with a view to escalating further with no response. NIPSA continued to raise and in December the college arranged for contractors to conduct a site visit, with follow up on this expected early 2026.

NIPSA continued to email on behalf of members re: individual representations on a number of issues with little response or follow-up received. Due to the continued lack of follow-up and non-engagement NIPSA wrote to the Principal in June and raised concerns on behalf of joint TU side and requested a meeting to discuss. The Principal responded promptly and requested details of issues to be forwarded. NIPSA liaised with UNISON and UNITE and agreed the focus of the meeting would be to deal with the issue of non-follow up in a general way and to improve this going forward. NIPSA followed up on individual queries copying in the Principal. Responses to these and follow-up started to come through in July.

NIPSA supported members at meetings with management to informally seek resolution to issues to avoid entering into formal procedures.

NIPSA supported and advised members on a range of specific issues including; hybrid working, job evaluation requests and processes and appeals, flexible working requests, flexible retirement applications and ill health retirement processes. NIPSA supported members with LRA independent appeal processes.

NIPSA continued to support members with personal cases under policies and procedures including Absence at Work, Dignity at Work, Disciplinarys, individual/ collective grievances and appeals.

NIPSA referred a number of members to Platinum Financial Advisors for pension advice.

NIPSA sought legal advice from MTB on a number of cases.

C1.9 North West Regional College (NWRC)

NIPSA continued to meet throughout the year with HR where updates have been given on the College's financial position, digital transformation in HR, recruitment & selection, health & wellbeing initiatives and learning and development. Updates were given on holiday pay namely that the sector was currently consulting with trade unions regarding pay going forward.

NIPSA also requested that policies for review be shared with TU side and followed this up with a written request for the same.

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Branch AGM was held in January, and a new committee was duly elected.

NIPSA requested information from the College following the Executive's budget position for the 2025/26 financial year that set out the College's draft opening position and requested consideration and returns back from the College by 18th February. Update given in February.

NIPSA supported craft technician members in the review of their job description and with the submission of a job evaluation request which unfortunately was unsuccessful. NIPSA then supported members with their pre appeal review.

NIPSA wrote to HR in November to seek clarity on implementation of in-year pay award and back monies and HR confirmed all to be paid in November.

Following the Assistant Secretary writing to all principals in November re the non-application of the increase in the first aid allowance NIPSA raised this in December at a meeting with HR. HR informed NIPSA that there was a local agreement in place. NIPSA requested a copy of this with follow up expected in the New Year.

NIPSA continued to support members with personal cases under policies and procedures including Absence at Work, Dignity at Work, job evaluation processes and appeals, disciplinaries, investigations, suspensions and individual/collective grievances.

C1.10 South Eastern Regional College (SERC)

During 2025, NIPSA continued to represent and support members across South Eastern Regional College, engaging proactively with management and HR on a wide range of workplace issues. Branch 552 has continued to strengthen its activity and presence across the college, working consistently to protect members' interests and to ensure fair and consistent application of agreed policies and procedures.

Throughout the year, NIPSA maintained regular engagement with HR in relation to a number of policy and operational matters, including annual leave, flexible working, working hours, and the application of flexi-time arrangements.

The branch represented members affected by inconsistencies in the application of leave entitlements and start-time arrangements, ensuring that these matters remained under active discussion with management.

NIPSA also continued to support members through individual casework, including grievance and dignity at work matters. Concerns were raised regarding the handling of such cases, and the branch remained actively involved in supporting members through these processes, including participation in mediation and consultation meetings. Further engagement with HR has taken place to progress outstanding issues and to seek improvements in how these matters are managed.

Organisational change and workload pressures were also key areas of focus during 2025. NIPSA engaged with management regarding restructuring proposals and the impact of changes on members' roles and responsibilities. The branch sought clarity around role definition, recognition of additional duties, and appropriate support for staff affected by changes, including issues relating to travel between campuses and the application of flexible working arrangements.

Health and Safety matters continued to be a priority for Branch 552. NIPSA remained actively involved in responding to incidents across college sites and continued to press for improved communication and adherence to established safety procedures. Representation was also provided for members involved in complex or sensitive incidents, including those requiring liaison with external agencies.

The branch continued to meet regularly and maintain close contact with members to gather feedback and raise collective concerns. Branch representatives have worked closely with NIPSA officials to support members and to strengthen branch activity. Membership within Branch 552 has continued to grow during the year, reflecting ongoing engagement, visibility, and confidence in the branch's work.

Overall, Branch 552 remained active throughout 2025 in representing members, engaging constructively with management, and supporting NIPSA's wider objectives within the Further Education sector.

C1.11 Southern Regional College (SRC)

During 2025, NIPSA continued to represent and support members at Southern Regional College across a wide range of workplace matters. Branch 554 has continued to develop as a strong and increasingly active branch, working hard to support members and to ensure that their interests are effectively represented. The branch remained engaged with management and HR throughout the year to promote fair treatment and the consistent application of agreed policies and procedures.

A key area of work during the year was flexible working. NIPSA worked closely with HR on a number of flexible working cases, and through representation and engagement, members were successful in securing appropriate flexible working arrangements in line with policy. The branch also continued to support members in individual cases, providing advice, guidance, and representation in accordance with agreed procedures.

Pay-related issues formed an important part of the branch's activity during 2025. NIPSA raised concerns regarding the First Aid allowance at SRC, which was identified as being the lowest among the six Further Education colleges. As a result of this issue being raised by the branch, the matter was escalated within NIPSA and correspondence was issued by the Assistant Secretary to principals across the FE sector, seeking confirmation that the correct NJC-aligned First Aid allowance is applied and that any necessary back pay is made to affected staff. This represents a significant step forward in progressing the issue on behalf of members.

In addition to collective issues, NIPSA continued to represent members in a range of personal and individual matters throughout the year, offering support and representation under relevant policies and procedures. The branch has also focused on strengthening working relationships with HR and management at SRC, supporting constructive engagement and improved outcomes for members.

Branch representatives have continued to build capacity and confidence, taking up opportunities for further training and working closely with NIPSA officials. There has also been a continued focus on recruitment and engagement, with membership within Branch 554 growing during the year. This reflects the ongoing work of branch representatives and the increasing visibility and effectiveness of the branch across the college.

Overall, Branch 554 remained active throughout 2025 in representing members, engaging with management, and contributing to NIPSA's wider objectives within the Further Education sector.

C1.12 South West College (SWRC)

NIPSA attended joint Trade Union and management meetings throughout the year. Updates given on recruitment, sickness absence, fixed term contracts, appraisal process, culture and engagement, employee engagement surveys, the College development plan, quality improvement plan, annual schedule and budget update for 2025/26.

The terms of reference for joint TU meetings were agreed in February.

Following the budget update discussed at joint TU meeting in February NIPSA wrote to the College in February requesting a copy of the document previously circulated to TU side as access had been removed. The document set out the Executive's budget position for the 2025/26 financial year as well as the College's draft opening financial position and had requested the College to assess potential impacts including equality impact assessment and to have responses back by 18th February. The College responded to NIPSA's request saying that they were not happy to share the document given it was policy under consideration.

NIPSA have continued to pursue the lack of any job evaluation process in the College. Meeting took place to agree an initial draft in January and a second draft was then sent to NIPSA in February. NIPSA further wrote to management in February and requested that in light of there being no current process agreed on job evaluation that members should not be disadvantaged by this and requested

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that the College log these requests. Management responded saying that they would make members aware of the process once agreed. NIPSA highlighted that this was not simply an exercise in making members aware. NIPSA subsequently met with management a number of times to further discuss the wording of the draft document. A final draft was taken to joint TU meeting in October, and NIPSA responded with comments to the Principal in November and objected to the terminology used and the lack of appeal in the proposed process. NIPSA also stated that we were not in a position to agree the draft document so there was a failure to agree situation, but were happy to meet to discuss. No reply received from the Principal. The situation remained unresolved at end of year point.

NIPSA wrote to management in February on behalf of classroom assistants re issues on pay and training. Management responded in March saying they would follow up on the training issue but that pay sat within any agreed job evaluation process.

An update was given in October on the work that had been ongoing with regard to an issue with ventilation and air quality in the Erne campus kitchens. Following an intensive period of consultation with the HSE and the College, including Occupational Health and technical assessments, reassurance was given to safety, staff were returned to the kitchen following all remedial work. NIPSA supported individual members with any issues.

An update was also given on an issue with regard to T&C's of some support staff in relation to anomalies on number of hours actually worked and number of hours contracted for. Individual communication went to members in October that clarified their particular situations with options to continue with number of hours or to decrease number of hours. Reassurance given to NIPSA that the college would not seek to recuperate past monies overpaid for number of hours worked.

NIPSA responded with feedback to a number of policies under review including Flexi-Scheme for support staff and a new Redeployment Policy.

NIPSA wrote to the Principal in November to seek

reassurance on the implementation of the in-year pay ward and back monies. The Principal replied and confirmed these would be paid in November.

The Branch AGM took place in December, and a new committee was duly elected.

NIPSA continued to support members with personal cases under policies and procedures including Absence at Work, Dignity at Work, job evaluation processes, disciplinaries, medical redeployments and individual/collective grievances.

C1.13 Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

Following a successful year of JCNC meetings the Branch were asked to review and agree the Terms of Reference going forward. All parties concluded that no changes were deemed necessary and agreement was reached.

A Pay and Grading Review has been discussed with a commitment to fully address this matter secured. Whilst some local level work has been actioned this remains and ongoing process which was somewhat hindered by workload and necessary recruitment. Newly appointed staff are now in post and a Business Case is under development.

Work related stress has been an issue within the service. Meetings with management were held to highlight the issue which resulted in additional resource and an agreement to look at a medium and longer term solution. Engagement with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in terms of providing training, advice and support to action Stress Risk Assessment (SRA) has been delivered. The Absence Policy is under revision to include the steps needed to incorporate SRA for members.

At the beginning of the year the employer reported a significant number of Fixed-Term Contracts (FTC). Through consultation some areas of the business have been restructured, maintaining a focus on job protection. This work was welcomed by members as it also addressed job security. As of December the number of FTCs has significantly reduced.

NIPSA sought consultation to clarify the finer details

of the Agile Working Policy with built in plans to review before final implementation. Agreement was reached that members would be expected in the office 40% of the time. It was also agreed that this would be a flexible arrangement due to the nature of the business. An appeals process has also been built in to ensure fairness. The process is due to begin next year.

acceptance and agreement was reached. Back dated increased allowances and contract buy-outs were paid during the summer.

NIPSA in-house trainer delivered a short half-day "Introduction to NIPSA" training in July to the Branch Committee.

C1.14 Queens University Belfast (QUB)

Following the Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) the branch saw a small reduction in numbers. To counteract this the Branch Committee have been holding regular recruitment drives on campus which has seen an increase in numbers.

As the University has moved to digital notice boards, NIPSA raised the issue of how we can communicate events to members. Following consultation the University confirmed they will list NIPSA as one of the recognised Trade Unions with a link to the branch website.

Throughout the year NIPSA engaged extensively with management under the umbrella of JCC. Issues raised, some of which are ongoing, include parking, access for disabled members, job evaluation, electric vehicles, recruitment boards and the digitalisation of the personal development review.

NIPSA raised a query regarding the planned reduction in student nursery subsidies, the university have confirmed that continuing students will get the discounted rate. New students will have increased fees which are scheduled to increase in line with inflation.

Issues were raised on the inconsistent management of the agile working scheme. After discussions Management advised the three days per week requirement was not fixed and should be flexible.

C1.15 Stranmillis University College

Management proposed changes to standardise how weekend, unsociable hours and shift allowances was paid to members. NIPSA held meetings with affected members to understand their opinions. Following negotiations a ballot of the members effected returned an overwhelmingly

C2 Health and Social Care

C2.1 NIPSA Health Branches

A Challenging Year for Members and Representatives: This year was characterised by sustained pressure, intense negotiation and significant campaigning across the Health and Social Care sector. It began with the introduction of a new team of Health and Social Care officials within NIPSA—Eamon Farrell, Ian Boersma and Lorraine Maguire—who, following their induction, were quickly immersed in the realities of sector-wide multi union activism. Despite the scale and complexity of the challenges they faced, the team played a vital role in supporting local campaigns and advancing complex individual casework on behalf of their respective branches, achieving substantial progress in a relatively short period of time.

Throughout the year, members faced increasing workloads, persistent staffing shortages and prolonged uncertainty regarding pay and conditions. At the same time, NIPSA representatives carried an exceptional burden, balancing demanding casework, prolonged disputes and system-wide reform alongside their own substantive roles.

The scale and intensity of campaigning inevitably took a toll on activists and officers alike. However, the collective resolve of members and representatives never wavered. Their determination to stand firm, engage constructively where possible and escalate action when necessary, directly contributed to the progress achieved. The outcomes outlined in this report are a testament to that commitment and to the strength of collective organisation within NIPSA and the wider trade union movement.

Pay 2024/25 and 2025/26: During the year, NIPSA and the Health Trade Unions received formal confirmation from the Health Minister that approval had been given for payment of the Agenda for Change pay award, backdated to 1 April 2025.

Health Trade Unions acknowledged the efforts of the Minister in securing the necessary funding. However, it was also clear that sustained pressure from Agenda for Change unions was critical in achieving this outcome. Throughout the year, NIPSA consistently pressed the case for full implementation, ensuring that health workers received their full entitlement.

Separate assurances were received from the Department of Health confirming that Agenda for Change staff would receive the outstanding payments as part of their March pay. Nonetheless, NIPSA remained concerned that budgetary pressures resulted in unacceptable delays, with resolution only reached as the end of the financial year approached.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, NIPSA has been clear that dedicated funding must be in place from the outset and that a fair and timely pay award must be delivered far more swiftly for Health and Social Care workers providing a vital public service.

Real Living Wage in Health and Social Care: Throughout pay negotiations, NIPSA repeatedly highlighted the unacceptable position of Health and Social Care staff being paid at or below the minimum wage, reliant on compliance payments to maintain legal pay rates. Even with the proposed uplift, some staff would have remained below the Real Living Wage.

NIPSA and sister unions deemed this situation indefensible, particularly given that Health and Social Care remains the only public sector employer not paying the Real Living Wage, despite private sector employers such as major retailers already doing so. While the Minister acknowledged the unsustainability of the situation, no concrete action had been taken by year end.

NIPSA therefore confirmed its readiness to lead a campaign to ensure Health and Social Care becomes a Real Living Wage employer. Where meaningful progress could not be achieved through negotiation, escalation to industrial action remained a clear option.

Working Time Directive (WTD) Payments: There were no significant developments regarding retrospective WTD payments during the year. The Joint Trade Union Side continued engagement with management through established forums, alongside ongoing discussions with legal advisers.

However, positive progress was made in ensuring that allowances and enhancements are properly reflected during periods of leave or sickness. New arrangements required managers to include relevant wage types on time sheets, supported by monthly Average Payment Spreadsheets issued by

HR to calculate 13-week averages. This represented an important step forward in pay accuracy and compliance.

Senior Executive Pay: This year marked a significant and hard-won victory for NIPSA members in this Grade, with the formal approval by the Department of Health Minister of a comprehensive reform of the Senior Executive (SE) Pay Structure. This represents the most substantial improvement to senior pay, progression, and fairness in many years.

At the core of the agreement is the introduction of a structured incremental pay scale, effective from 1 April 2023, replacing the previous static arrangements. This delivers greater transparency, predictability, and progression, directly addressing longstanding concerns raised by NIPSA regarding senior pay stagnation and inequity.

Key gains secured for senior members include:

- Immediate pay protection and uplift, with a 5% increase from April 2023, and an additional 1% uplift for longer-serving members, subject to performance.
- A clear, progressive incremental structure, initially introduced as an 8-point scale and transitioning to a 5-point scale by 2026, ensuring faster progression to the top of scale.
- Guaranteed placement on higher pay points for experienced staff, recognising service and preventing senior members from being placed at the bottom of scales.
- Further substantial revalorisation of 6.33% in April 2024, with a further 6.33% planned for 2025/26, subject to Ministerial approval.
- A commitment that future uplifts will be linked, at a minimum, to Agenda for Change uplifts, ensuring senior pay does not fall behind the wider workforce.
- The removal of performance-related pay and bonuses, replacing them with a fairer, more transparent system based on incremental progression.
- Clear rules governing appointments, promotions, temporary promotions, and acting-up

arrangements, ending inconsistency and unfair discretion.

Importantly, these reforms significantly improve starting salaries, strengthen recruitment and retention, and ensure that senior experience and responsibility are properly valued across the Health and Social Care system.

While a separate review of Senior Executive structures will be undertaken, NIPSA secured firm assurances that this will not undermine or dilute the agreed pay improvements.

Wakefulness: NIPSA wrote to HSC Trusts seeking clarification on judgments relating to sleep-in claims affecting all HSC Trusts. The correspondence requested clarity on:

1. The definition of “wakefulness”;
2. The process for submitting claims; and
3. The forms and documentation required.

Management provided a response, (summarised below) which went out for consultation with the relevant branches.

Summary of Managements Response.

Sleep-In Shift: As outlined in HSC (JNF) (8) 2011, a sleep-in shift normally runs from 11pm to 7am and is widely used across a range of Trust services.

A sleep-in shift typically consists of three elements:

- Wakefulness.
- Sleep.
- Work Done.

Definition: “Wakefulness” refers to the period during which an employee, though scheduled for rest, is unable to sleep due to work-related circumstances – for example:

- Disturbances caused by service users;
- Awaiting the return of a young person; or
- Ongoing incidents or disruptions.

Any emergency work carried out during this period is categorised separately as “Work Done” and paid at a higher rate (see below).

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Rates:

- **Wakefulness:** Paid at the National Minimum Wage (currently £12.21/hour).
- **Sleep-In Allowance:** £40.06 as per the most recent pay award.
- **Work Done:** Paid at time and a half of the individual's hourly rate (double time on bank holidays).

Emergency work during the sleep-in period will be paid at the normal job rate (time + 1/2), with a minimum payment of one hour for the first call. Subsequent calls within the same shift will be paid for actual time worked, rounded up to the nearest 15 minutes.

Process: Claims for sleep-in shifts and any supplementary payments (e.g. wakefulness or work done) are submitted via the ETMO2 Timesheet, selecting from the following dropdown options:

- Sleep-In Emergency (Mon-Sun): Paid at time + 1/2
- Sleep-In Emergency (Bank Holiday): Paid at double time.

Forms: Payroll departments issue standardised forms to all Trusts, which can also be accessed via each Trust's intranet. These forms cover all relevant staff within a given month and are submitted to a generic payroll email address for processing and authorisation.

NIPSA, however, remains concerned about the forms being used and are still seeking suitable alternatives through the established forum.

Safe Staffing and ASOSA: NIPSA continued Action Short of Strike Action (ASOSA) as part of the ongoing Safe Staffing dispute. This approach proved effective in compelling management to address workforce pressures, resulting in tangible improvements such as resource reallocation, caseload reviews and temporary support deployments.

Despite these gains, high vacancy rates persisted, preventing sustainable safe staffing. NIPSA consistently argued that short-term fixes were insufficient and pressed for a strategic workforce plan focused on recruitment, retention and workload equity. ASOSA remained in place pending meaningful, long-term solutions.

Family and Childcare (FAC): Significant progress was achieved in the Family and Childcare sector following protests and intensive negotiations at the Labour Relations Agency. Outcomes from these talks were under consideration by the Central Panel Strike Committee and Branch Secretaries at year end. While confidentiality restricted disclosure, the developments represented a meaningful step towards addressing unsafe workloads and staffing shortages.

Flexible Retirement: Major progress was achieved in the implementation of new retirement flexibilities introduced in April 2024. These changes followed extensive negotiation, with NIPSA playing a central role.

Guidance issued in December 2024 supported staff in accessing partial retirement and flexible working options. Uptake exceeded expectations, with thousands of member enquiries handled and strong engagement across all Trusts. Processing challenges were identified but addressed through additional resourcing, marking a significant success for members approaching retirement.

Negotiation Forums, Internal Training and Organisational Development: A Standard Operating Process (SOP) for the allocation of representation was fully implemented across all Health Branches. The SOP introduced a consistent, transparent, and structured approach to case allocation and escalation.

The introduction of the SOP addressed concerns regarding members bypassing branch procedures, cases progressing to legal stages without appropriate representation, and Head Office (HQ) becoming involved in late-stage matters outside agreed processes.

Under the SOP, members were required to seek initial assistance from their local Branch Representative. Branch Secretaries were responsible for verifying membership, completing the Rules of Representation Form, and determining whether cases could be managed locally or required escalation. Only cases meeting agreed criteria were referred to HQ, supported by a completed referral form clearly outlining the issue and justification for escalation.

Following initial implementation challenges, the SOP was refined and reissued, with additional guidance provided to support consistent completion and processing of documentation.

Significant Changes to Consultative Forums - Health Branches: Following extensive consultation and feedback from Health Branches, NIPSA implemented significant reforms to strengthen engagement, coordination and collective influence across the health sector.

A monthly Consultative Forum was established alongside a more structured HSC Central Panel. These arrangements have already demonstrated their effectiveness, most notably during recent pay negotiations. The revised framework also enabled ad-hoc meetings to be convened at short notice to address urgent issues, reducing reliance on formal Central Panel procedures.

These reforms represented a substantial step forward in ensuring a coordinated, consistent, and influential voice for NIPSA Health Branches across all consultative and negotiating structures.

Facility-Related Business Cases: Following extensive consultation with HSC Branches, it became evident that existing levels of facility release were insufficient given the scale of membership, geographical coverage, and increasing volume of consultative activity within each Trust.

Feedback highlighted that current arrangements were based on outdated data, in some cases more than 20 years old, and did not reflect the significant growth in NIPSA membership, forums, meetings, and consultation requirements. One branch reported participation in over 35 forums and committees supported by a single full-time facility release officer, an arrangement identified as unsustainable and contributing to work-related stress and illness.

In response, NIPSA developed detailed, Trust-specific business cases setting out a clear evidence base and rationale for increased facility release time. These submissions aimed to ensure effective representation, support officer wellbeing, and sustain meaningful engagement across all consultative structures.

NIPSA HSC Training: This year also marked the commencement of Health's Internal Bespoke Training Programme. As part of this programme, specialist training was delivered on disciplinary and grievance procedures, recognising that these processes operate differently within health compared to other areas of the public sector. In addition, Northern Ireland Social Care Council procedural training was provided by the organisation to support our reps working in this complex and highly regulated environment.

Job evaluation training was delivered to our reps by regional job evaluation officers, ensuring consistency, expertise, and effective representation for members engaged in these processes.

A pilot representative induction programme was delivered in HQ for the South Eastern Health Branch. This was positively received and will now be rolled out across all Health branches on a quarterly basis, strengthening early engagement and awareness for new representatives.

Further training on all of these areas is planned for the coming year, including additional bespoke job evaluation/matching advocacy training. This will equip representatives with enhanced knowledge and practical tools to guide and support members effectively through the job evaluation process and related discussions.

This year demanded resilience, solidarity and determination from members and representatives alike. While the challenges were substantial, the progress achieved demonstrates the power of collective organisation and sustained pressure. NIPSA enters the next year in Health and Social Care prepared to continue campaigning for fair pay, safe staffing, dignity at work and the proper recognition of our members rights.

C2.2 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT)

Approved Social Workers: During the year, Approved Social Worker members agreed to pause industrial action for an eight-week period to allow the trial of a new Trust Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) intended to address the ongoing issue of

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delayed psychiatric admissions and related Health & Safety concerns. This development followed intensive negotiations led by Branch representatives seeking immediate safeguards and improvements for members working under unacceptable operational pressures. The Branch maintained oversight throughout the trial period and reaffirmed that industrial action would recommence if the SOP did not deliver meaningful and sustained improvement or if member safety remained at risk.

Bullying Culture in the Belfast Health Trust: 2025 saw significant public and political scrutiny of BHST following allegations of a bullying culture, widely linked to the cardiac surgery investigation. The Branch acted to ensure members were supported and protected during this period of heightened external attention. Alongside other unions, NIPSA engaged with both Trust management and the Health Minister on emerging responses and proposed reforms, emphasising the need for credible action and enforceable measures which improve workplace culture and protect staff from mistreatment. The Branch issued a formal statement reaffirming NIPSA's commitment to tackling bullying and securing safe, respectful workplaces.

Violence to Staff: Concerns regarding violence against staff remained prominent throughout the year, particularly in areas where members reported repeated incidents and increasing exposure to risk. NIPSA continued to press for strengthened protective measures, effective training, and clear management accountability. The Branch reiterated that no worker should face threats or harm while undertaking their duties and that preventative and responsive measures must be consistently applied across services.

Recruitment and Organising: Recruitment and organising activity continued across the year with a focus on enhancing Branch visibility, strengthening workplace presence and engagement, and improving communication through social media channels. Participation in Trust events supported further outreach and membership engagement, reflecting the Branch's priority of strengthening organisation to support members effectively during ongoing workforce pressures.

Workgroups: The Branch continued to represent members across a number of Trust workgroups, particularly those focused on social care and administrative grades. These forums addressed issues including recruitment, retention, staffing pressures and workload. NIPSA ensured that members' experiences and frontline realities were central to discussions and that proposed solutions were practical, credible and supportive of staff wellbeing.

C2.3 Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT)

Management of Change - Brook Supported Living Scheme (Coleraine): A formal Management of Change process commenced at the Brook Supported Living Scheme in Coleraine. NIPSA engaged actively with management and HR to protect members' roles, terms and conditions, and to ensure service users were not adversely impacted. Throughout the year, the union pressed for transparency in the change process, fair treatment for staff, and compliance with agreed organisational change policies.

Threats to Social Workers in Ballymena: A serious situation arose when members in Ballymena Children's Teams were forced to vacate offices following direct threats connected to their statutory involvement in care arrangements for Roma families, in the context of the Ballymena riots. This marked a significant escalation in the risk faced by staff carrying out public protection and safeguarding duties. NIPSA engaged with Trust management to seek robust security responses and appropriate supports for members, emphasising that staff safety must be treated as an operational priority and not left to individual employees to manage.

Online Intimidation of Social Workers - Ballymena: Members were also subjected to an online intimidation campaign following the circulation of a TikTok video reportedly reaching over 1.2 million views. Staff reported feeling exposed and vulnerable, with substantial concern regarding personal safety and the potential impacts on professional standing. NIPSA attended meetings with the Trust and affected members. The Trust initially indicated engagement with solicitors but subsequently stated the matter was "not a Trust matter", advising staff

to pursue injunctions privately. NIPSA challenged this position as inadequate and inconsistent with the Trust's duty of care. The union maintained that the matter required an organisational response.

Management of Change - Nurse Bank Administration (7-day working proposal): The Trust proposed extending Nurse Bank Administration services to a seven-day working pattern, including weekends and bank holidays. The proposal has major implications for members because six legacy staff remain on contracts which do not include weekend/bank holiday working, and they formally declined to change their terms and conditions.

In contrast, six newer staff (including one temporary) are on flexible contracts that already include weekend/bank holiday cover. Management attempted to persuade legacy staff to voluntarily amend contracts; NIPSA opposed any attempt to alter contractual terms or impose changes. The Trust acknowledged that without the cooperation of legacy staff the seven-day model would be unviable. NIPSA also robustly challenged informal management discussion of redeployment for those unwilling to accept changes.

One of the six legacy staff members is due to commence maternity leave at the end of November, further complicating staffing capacity. NIPSA continued to defend members' contractual rights while engaging in discussions to identify workable solutions that meet service need without disadvantaging staff.

Chart Abstraction - Medical Secretaries:

Following rollout of Encompass, medical secretaries were instructed to undertake chart abstraction tasks, involving transferring and interpreting clinical information (including patient illnesses and allergies) into Encompass.

NIPSA raised strong objections on the basis that chart abstraction involves clinical judgement, falls outside the competence framework and job description of medical secretarial staff, and creates both a patient safety risk and an inappropriate role boundary breach. NIPSA continued engagement with Trust management, pressing for cessation of this requirement until a formal review of duties,

responsibilities and banding is completed, emphasising the need for clear separation between administrative and clinical functions. Management have also produce a scanning policy which is not an issue but they are now requesting medical secretaries to audit other colleagues work in relation to this. This falls outside the remit of medical secretary role and will cause division in the teams

Term-Time and Flexible Working - Translation and Access Issues (Polish-speaking members):

Concerns were raised regarding term-time working arrangements affecting Polish-speaking members, including reports of inconsistent and incorrect application of the Trust's Flexible Working Policy. Some members were incorrectly informed that term-time working could only be granted for a maximum of two weeks, contrary to established policy.

NIPSA requested that the Trust translate the Flexible Working Policy into Polish to ensure equitable access and understanding. HR refused, citing a translation cost of approximately £2,500, despite equality duties relating to accessibility of information. In the short term, support was stabilised through newly appointed Polish NIPSA representatives assisting members in interpreting and understanding policy provisions. However, NIPSA recorded that this was not sustainable and confirmed the matter would be raised regionally through the JNCF, seeking a consistent approach across Trusts and compliance with statutory equality obligations.

C2.4 South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHST)

Encompass and Service Improvement: Progress is ongoing in relation to task and finish groups established under Encompass, with the move from stabilisation to an optimisation taking phase. Regular meetings are now taking place while the Branch continues to closely scrutinise progress to ensure that commitments translate into measurable improvements for NIPSA members and do not place additional pressure on staff.

Safe Staffing and Staff Safety: The Trust maintains that staff safety is a priority, however, NIPSA continues to raise serious concerns regarding

unsafe staffing levels across a number of services. Staffing is monitored daily by management, with an ongoing reliance on bank staff and agency workers to maintain service delivery. Agency expenditure remains excessive at approximately £4 million per month, underlining the urgent need for substantive recruitment and retention measures to provide safe, sustainable staffing solutions.

There has been a significant and unacceptable increase in physical assaults on NIPSA members throughout the year, particularly within the Lakewood Unit, where staffing levels were at one point critically unsafe. Similar incidents have since been reported in other areas, including Marmion. Legal advice has been sought with a view to exploring escalation across all Trusts, as these issues are clearly not confined to one Trust. NIPSA is clear that violence towards staff is unacceptable and that the Trust must take immediate and effective action to protect workers.

Within residential care homes, longstanding concerns raised by NIPSA members regarding understaffing and the heightened risk of violence from residents have regrettably been realised. Several members have been assaulted, leading to injuries and subsequent absences from work. As a result, limits have been placed on resident admissions. NIPSA will continue to pursue safe staffing levels, robust risk assessments and meaningful preventative measures to safeguard members.

Policy and Consultation: Following extreme weather incidents throughout the year, the Trust has advised that it will engage with local Trade Unions, including NIPSA, on revisions to the Adverse Weather Policy. The Branch expects this consultation to be meaningful and reflective of the experiences and safety concerns of members.

The Trust has also launched consultations on a number of policies, including Annual Leave and Secondment. NIPSA has submitted responses and continues to engage on areas of concern.

Older People's Services: Management attempted to introduce a time and motion survey within Older People's Services without prior consultation with recognised Trade Unions. NIPSA challenged this

approach as wholly inappropriate, and following intervention, the proposal was withdrawn. This reinforces the necessity for early engagement and adherence to agreed consultation frameworks.

Industrial Action: Action short of strike action, as mandated by NIPSA, continues to be fully observed by members across all relevant areas and remains under regular review. This action has proven effective in highlighting members' concerns, particularly within children's residential care settings, leading to increased engagement from management.

Finance: The Trust continues to report significant challenges in delivering required savings, with a target of 5% overall savings identified at the outset of the year. NIPSA notes that the scale of ongoing management of change consultations makes the achievement of these savings increasingly unrealistic. NIPSA continues to rigorously challenge any proposals that threaten staffing levels, terms and conditions, or the safety and wellbeing of members.

C2.5 Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT)

Finance: Management reported that the Trust recorded a £650,000 surplus and remained on track to meet its forecast savings position. Despite this, NIPSA continued to raise serious concerns regarding the longer-term financial consequences for staffing levels, service sustainability, and members' terms and conditions.

The Trust's wider financial position remained unchanged, with ongoing discussions with the Department of Health on funding the £200 million pay award. Notwithstanding the reported surplus, the Trust was instructed to deliver £16.4 million in recurrent savings in the latter half of the financial year. Proposed measures included a recruitment embargo, suppression of posts, reductions in nursing agency expenditure, and increased canteen and car parking charges, all of which carried clear risks for staff and patient services.

Management confirmed that the savings plan would not be shared with the Joint Trade Union Side (JTUS) prior to submission to the Department of Health. NIPSA strongly criticised this approach,

highlighting a continued lack of transparency and the absence of meaningful consultation. Senior management engaged individually with Directors to identify further savings and invited proposals from JTUS, however, NIPSA regarded this process as inappropriate and cautioned against trade unions being drawn into measures that could undermine staffing and services.

Children's Care: The Trust reported that the number of children in full-time care has risen significantly, exceeding 700 compared to approximately 300 in 2012. When challenged, management was unable to provide a clear explanation for this increase. NIPSA has raised serious concerns that the complexity of need among children in care is having a direct and adverse impact on members, with increased reports of workplace injuries and related absences. These pressures remain a significant concern for the Branch.

Staffing and Senior Management: Due to the resignation of the permanent Chief Executive, Steve Sporrey was appointed to fill this on a temporary basis ranging from 12 and 16 months, after which a permanent appointment process will be undertaken. NIPSA continues to monitor the impact of leadership changes on staff and organisational stability.

Health and Safety: Health and safety updates continue to be communicated to staff via Trust portals. Throughout the year NIPSA raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of online training particularly for critical issues such as ligature awareness given the serious risks involved. Management confirmed that the online sessions are intended as information briefings, with practical training to follow. NIPSA continues to highlight members' concerns on the effectiveness of the current training framework.

Encompass: Encompass went live in the Trust in May 2025 with it been described as the largest IT system implementation across the Health Service although it still remains a significant concern for NIPSA with no cognisance being given to issues such as disability access, making it potentially discriminatory. Interim measures have been put in place to manage this while a permanent solution is worked towards. NIPSA continues to monitor progress to

ensure compliance with equality obligations.

Residential Care Homes: NIPSA continues to raise ongoing concerns regarding staffing pressures within residential care homes. Regular meetings continue to be facilitated by management to provide updates on staffing improvements. Current mitigation measures include increased use of agency staff and expressions of interest. While these steps may offer short-term relief, NIPSA has stressed that insufficient consideration has been given to the cumulative impact of these pressures on members' mental health and wellbeing. Management of change processes are ongoing in several areas regarding changes to shift patterns to accommodate cost savings imposed by the Department.

IT System Failure: A major IT system outage in September caused significant disruption for members and resulted in the short-notice cancellation of planned procedures and surgeries. While management has downplayed the incident and stated it was not related to Encompass, attributing it instead to a planned system upgrade. To date no definitive explanation has yet been provided.

C2.6 Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT)

Adverse and Extreme Weather Guidance: The Trust updated their Adverse and Extreme Weather guidance due to instances of record-breaking and extreme weather becoming commonplace over the last number of years. This was updated on Sharepoint and supersedes any previous guidance.

Workforce and Service Developments: During the reporting period, the Trust launched a consultation on a proposed workforce change within Clinical Health Psychology. The proposal sought to make permanent the Consultant Clinical Psychology Band 8c post in the Southern Sector, which had been funded on a temporary basis. The impact on NIPSA members was minimal.

A further consultation commenced in relation to the financial assessment processes used by the Trust to determine client contributions towards residential and nursing home fees. In response to increased workload pressures, the proposal aimed to ensure

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the department was able to manage demand effectively, while also supporting timely payments to care homes and the efficient collection of client contributions towards the cost of care.

South West Acute Hospital (SWAH): At the beginning of October, the Trust made the decision to pause and reconsider the public consultation on the permanent removal of emergency general surgery services at SWAH. These services remained suspended during the reporting period. The Trust worked with relevant stakeholders to develop a vision and support plan to ensure SWAH could meet the current and future needs of the local population. The Chief Executive acknowledged shortcomings in how the original consultation process had been undertaken.

Encompass Programme: Issues affecting Medical Secretaries in relation to the Encompass system were resolved following consultation with local line management and as the software became embedded into day-to-day operations.

Finance and Efficiency Measures: Following a request from the Minister to identify cost-saving measures, the Trust reviewed several areas that were not expected to have a direct impact on members. These included tightening contractual arrangements with external providers, particularly within adult mental health and community care services. The Trust also considered the renegotiation of rates paid for agency staff.

While a complete recruitment moratorium was not proposed, vacancy controls were considered, with approval required for the filling of posts.

The Trust also reviewed the targeting of absence management triggers, which could result in a stricter application of existing policies and potentially present additional challenges for members. Further concerns were noted in relation to references to efficiency savings within the 2026/27 financial plan, including potential savings associated with the future introduction of artificial intelligence.

Business Services Organisation (BSO)

Encompass Trainers Dispute: A dispute emerged within the Encompass programme involving trainers

based at Clarendon Dock, Belfast, who voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action due to unsafe and unfair working practices. A key issue was the requirement for trainers to travel up to four hours daily in addition to contracted working hours, without recognition of travel time as working time (despite mileage reimbursement). Members reported serious impacts on health, fatigue and work-life balance. Following sustained negotiations, and immediately prior to the commencement of industrial action, a revised offer was secured and accepted by members. The outcome represented a significant improvement in working practices and addressed the central dispute issue regarding travel expectations and fairness.

Industrial Relations - Procurement and Logistics Services, Boucher Crescent: Industrial relations deteriorated significantly in the Procurement and Logistics Services warehouse at Boucher Crescent. NIPSA obtained documentary evidence through Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SARs) indicating alleged anti-union activity and potential unlawful victimisation of NIPSA representatives. These developments damaged staff confidence and workplace morale. Throughout the year, the Branch continued to engage in good faith with management with the objective of restoring fair and constructive industrial relations. However, the situation remained highly strained. NIPSA made clear that unless meaningful improvement is achieved, including cessation of anti-union practices and fair treatment of representatives.

C3 Libraries NI

Job Evaluations: Job Evaluations for NIPSA members commenced in December and terms of reference for these job evaluations have been agreed with JTUS. Monthly meetings with NI Libraries' Management Side are ongoing in regard to various issues including staffing levels, job descriptions and contracts of employment.

Policies: The new pay and grading review policy is currently being negotiated with Joint trade Union side and Senior management. Completion is anticipated by May 2026.

C4 Local Authorities

C4.1 Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC)

Terms and Conditions: The alignment of terms and conditions within Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has dominated talks with management this year. Management tabled a new proposal early in 2025 stating that all previous discussions and proposals are no longer affordable. Initial analysis of the new proposal showed considerable detriment for our members, this proposal was universally rejected by NIPSA and Joint Trade Union Side, forcing management back to the drawing board. NIPSA rejection of the proposal and subsequent iterations of this came to a head mid-year when a line was drawn and management were told we would take their deal to our membership. At this point additional elements were added to the offer that prevented the level of detriment previously proposed.

Town hall meetings were held with members in order to brief them on the status of negotiations however key details were not available at this time given the ongoing discussions. It was also at this point that NIPSA made it clear that we were now meeting on a one item agenda i.e. the alignment of terms and conditions.

Late this year when it became clear that management were no longer going to move any further on the tabled offer, NIPSA proposed that they put their best offer to Council for approval and we would take this to members. At the time of writing members meetings are taking place and plan to ballot is being put in place.

Job Evaluation: While not strictly part of terms and conditions it was made clear to management that T&C could not progress without agreement on in house evaluation scheme. It has been clear for some time that this is long overdue with many members having been promised this five years ago. As of writing progress is being made with many areas of the scheme being agreed however some contentious issues remain and further meetings are planned to address this and bring it to a point where a ballot on the package of offers relating to terms and conditions can go to members for acceptance or rejection.

Voluntary Redundancy: This is a key element of management's strategy to reduce the current wages bill, which they state is not sustainable. Considerable objections were tabled by NIPSA in relation to this however it was launched in June and number of staff have now been informed that they can go. Now that the first staff approved to go have left the organisation the knock on effect is being felt with members raising concerns on workload and the cascading of duties to lower grades. Representation is being made to management ahead of further releases in order to stave off any further pressures being passed on to our membership.

C4.2 Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC)

Leisure Services: The Council held workshops for council members regarding the future operating models of Leisure services within the borough. Legacy Ards Council which would include Blair Mayne, Comber and Portaferry Leisure Centres are provide inhouse, and Legacy North Down Council which would include, Aurora Bangor, Queen's Leisure Hollywood, Sea Park, and Bangor Sportsplex are outsourced. Four possible models Hybrid (as it is now), all outsourced, all inhouse, or a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) which were being discussed and reviewed.

The 3 unions involved NIPSA, GMB and UNITE jointly wrote to all political parties and independent councillors and had engagement with them all.

Contact was made with local community groups, looking for support. Press releases resulting in articles in the local newspapers over several weeks and both radio and television interviews helped to raise awareness and garner support for the campaign.

Two very successful protests were held at Ards & North Down Council meetings at City Hall Bangor on 27th August 2025 and the 18th of September at which time the decision would have to be made, as this would allow time for the tendering process, if outsourcing all or part of the service, or for bringing it all inhouse.

At the special meeting of the Council the decision on the future of Leisure services within the borough

was made with a majority of councillors voting to keep the service as it is now, with the former Ards Council facilities remaining in-house, and the former North Down Council facilities being outsourced the contract is currently with SERCO. We will continue to support members in this area through the tendering process and move to new employer if necessary.

Holiday Pay Case: The Holiday pay issue has been settled for those who were included in the Holiday Pay Cases taken through MTB, and any monies due paid. The Council then arranged for the rest of the workforce to be paid on the same negotiated formula, through conciliated meetings through the LRA. Any monies owing to employees was paid to them in their December Pay.

C4.3 Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ACBC)

Environmental Waste Services: After extensive negotiation between management and Trade Union Side a proposal from management on the reform of environmental waste services in the Council went forward for members vote on. The new arrangement would bring together the three legacy council operational working patterns and cover for bank holidays etc. Members in the three unions, voted on the proposals with NIPSA and GMB members voting to accept, and UNITE members rejecting the proposals. Further negotiations between management and TUS are ongoing, to address the concerns of UNITE members while not changing the overall proposals, that NIPSA and GMB have agreed to. UNITE are to ballot again in early January 2026.

Job Evaluation: Progress has been made regarding Job Evaluation. The terms of reference have been agreed regarding verification of posts still outstanding from RPA. Verification will cover posts that have gone down in grade, posts that have altered with a significant change but remained on the same grade, and posts that identify a direct comparator within the same job family that is on a higher grade, and outstanding JE requests lodged before the 31st of January 2025.

JE requests after January 2025 will also be paused, until the JE framework is in place.

Job evaluation training with GLPC was completed for both management and Trade union side.

Negotiation has commenced in December on the detail of the Local conventions specifically for ABC Council.

Industrial Relations framework: The Council reached out to John Corey to help establish an Industrial Relations framework, which will mirror the framework already established in Belfast City Council. It is expected this will be completed early 2026.

In the meantime, a local rep from NIPSA, GMB and Unite were released full time for one year to take forward a programme of work still outstanding from the amalgamation of the three councils into one. This has proved to be very successful, all three unions are working well together to progress issues for members, however there has been delays due to management team issues.

C4.4 Belfast City Council (BCC)

Irish Language Policy: Following consultation, the Council passed a motion regarding the Irish Language and its inclusion on Stationary, Buildings, transport and uniforms etc. Trade Union Side (TUS) has advised that a trilingual approach -English, Irish and Ulster Scots would better support worker safety and inclusivity.

A Call-In has been submitted, and the motion is currently under legal review by the Council's Barrister. All related work is paused pending the outcome. Further engagement with TUS is Planned

Four Day Week: Management continues to engage with TUS through the JNCC on the Council's four-day-week motion. TUS remains committed to piloting the initiative within a front-facing service area and is working with management to identify a suitable location. Progress has been limited due to management's reservations about the proposal.

Occupational Health and Sickness Provision: After receiving notice from the current provider, the Council initiated procurement for a new Occupational

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Health and Sickness service. It was determined that no provider could offer the same level of service previously available. As a result, some functions such as form-filling assistance or access to information on additional benefits - will now be signposted to external organisations for an individual to source themselves.

The new provider, based outside Northern Ireland, initially offered online assessments only. Following concerns raised with management, limited face-to-face appointments are now available when the OH consultant is on-site. TUS continues to monitor the situation.

C4.5 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CCGBC)

LRA Observer: This observer, initially brought in to oversee management TUS meetings following a breakdown in industrial relations, finally released their report on possible mechanisms designed to improve industrial relations. Given their limited input over this last two years, suggestions were somewhat limited and low level in nature. While TUS had some reservations and questions in relation to the report the time taken to receive it had allowed a more natural resolution of tensions and normalisation of industrial relations.

Structure: Despite a number of areas where RPA restructuring had yet to complete management presented a number of areas which they sought to restructure. This was rejected by TUS citing a need to complete the RPA structure prior to any further changes. Final RPA changes are now being completed and discussions are ongoing in relation to new areas or restructure.

JCNC/Working Groups: A number of these meetings have been postponed due to the failure to meet a quorum and as a result Working Group meeting have become the de-facto JCNC. To address this consideration is being given to reviewing the constitution and quorum arrangements for JCNC in order that key business is progress.

Job Evaluation: Management have agreed to begin the process of developing an in-house job evaluation scheme based on the standard GLPC scheme. This is

very early in the process with the terms of reference just agreed for the working group. It is expected that work will begin in earnest in the coming months with a 12 month development time, something that NIPSA seek to shorten.

C4.6 Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC)

NIPSA were in attendance at all JCNCs this year representing the interests of our members and challenging management on a number of issues relating to operational and procedural concerns. While management often view this as a briefing for Trade Union Side it also provides opportunity to raise concerns with The Chief Executive not addressed at lower levels of management.

Policy Development: This remains a key part of the engagement with management and credit needs to go to the Branch Officers who take this work in their stride. A number of key policies have been considered this year and a number have been pushed back on by the Branch and Full-time Official resulting in a halting of further discussion on change. More positively a Hybrid Working policy has now been agreed and this is now being run as a pilot.

Pay and Grading: Despite this being an issue raised by the previous Full-time Official, and being a standing item on JCNC, the matter of extending the changes to the pay and grading structure for those Officers beyond the PO6 remain unresolved. The matter was again raised in December and despite no commitment management have agreed to put a paper forward to Trade Union Side in the New Year, we await their proposals.

Job Evaluation: Job Evaluation remains a standing item for discussion however no progress has been made. Given the momentum on this matter across the sector it is expected that progress will be made in the coming months.

C4.7 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC)

Task and Finish: After a long period of consultation and subsequent ballot of members, agreement was reached on the ending of task and finish

arrangements within the waste services team. Agreements have been signed and members have received the agreed compensatory payment for the move to new working arrangements.

The Forum Redevelopment: Plans to redevelop the Forum site and build new facilities were agreed by Council and discussions began in earnest to re-deploy staff from the site ahead of its closure. All staff have now been relocated in alternate sites and maintain the existing terms and conditions. The site has now been closed and cleared for the rebuild to begin, which is expected to take approximately three years.

Essential Car Users: The Council unilaterally decided to review and remove essential car user status from a number of members working in statutory roles within the Council. This was seen as an opportunity to save money however, it has resulted in considerable pushback from some members who with the support of NIPSA have taken the step of lodging Industrial Tribunal claims to protect their long standing terms and conditions. These claims are currently progressing through the tribunal process and a full hearing is planned for mid-2026.

Job Evaluation: The Council have very recently engaged in discussions around the development of an in house job evaluation scheme. It is very early in the process however early indications suggest that this will not be an easy process with management stating it is theirs to manage. Initial documentation has been shared in relation to the managements position on the process, this has been rejected by all Trade Unions and a response returned by NIPSA on behalf of Joint Trade Union Side. Further talks are yet to be planned but all sides are keen to see a move towards an in-house model.

C4.8 Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)

Job Evaluation: The Job Evaluation sub group met throughout 2025 and while progress is slow the group are working through the local conventions of the GLPC Scheme, and the specifics that relate to Lisburn and Castlereagh Council.

TU Co-Ordinator Post: The Council have agreed to release a TU Rep to act as a Trade Union Side Co-ordinator as a Pilot for six months. After consultation with local representatives, from NIPSA, Unite and GMB, it was agreed that a Unite member would take up the facilitated post. Office space has been for use of the Co-Ordinator and for TUS to be able to meet, it is hoped that this will be ready January 26.

C4.9 Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC)

Corporate Restructure: While the year started with management launching the final area of restructure Corporate Support Services it has taken until the time of writing to complete this final directorate. Management took an approach that was outwith their procedures as well as the green book in terms of suitable alternative employment offers. This caused considerable tension between management and NIPSA as despite all protestations they carried on with their own agenda. When it came to the last and largest cohorts of this grouping agreement was finally reached and NIPSA supported all members through the transition and slotting in process.

With this complete the focus moved to fill the first tier management posts at Director level. Three new Directors have been appointed with one still outstanding. It is anticipated that this will be trawled in the coming months as the current acting Director is scheduled to leave the organisation in June, with the acting Chief executive leaving June 27.

Job Evaluation: MEABC have begun the process of developing an in house model of job evaluation based on the GLPC scheme. A consultant has been appointed to project manage the process and a number of meetings have already taken place. A number of key elements of the scheme may prove to be difficult to overcome as management lay out their expectations however, engagement is ongoing and NIPSA are keen to see an in house model developed for the benefit of our members.

Leisure: It has become clear to NIPSA, Management meetings with private contractors as well as recent press coverage, are seeking alternative solutions to fund and potentially run leisure services within the

C4 Local Authorities

borough. This has been strongly contested by NIPSA and despite assurances from the current Chief Executive that there will not be privatization in their time, statements to the press and press coverage suggest different. This will be a significant area of work for NIPSA in the coming year with a focus on keeping public services public.

C4.10 Mid-Ulster District Council (MUDC)

Seamus Heaney Home Place: The decision by Council to privatise the centre has been a key point of discussion throughout this last year with NIPSA taking the lead on this. The new owners “Homebawn” will be a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council so considerable influence will remain with the Council though members will now have a new employer. A number of meetings have been held along with introduction meetings with the new Board. The transfer of staff will take effect from the 1 April 2026 and TUPE arrangements will apply. Discussions with staff, members of the Board and Council management have been productive and no significant changes/measures are being considered prior to the transfer. Final transfer meetings are being arranged to ensure information is correct prior to handover.

HR Policy Group: This continues to meet regularly and a number of key policies have been reviewed including, Holiday Pay calculations, Menopause Policy and Guidance, Domestic Violence/Abuse, Travel and Subsistence as well as Drugs, Substance and Alcohol Support Policy. It is this last policy that has caused considerable contention among Joint Trade Union Side as it seeks to introduce random testing throughout the workforce. Discussions are currently stalled but it is expected that management will seek to put that back on the agenda in the coming months.

Restructuring: At the time of writing two restructures have been launched for consultation with Trade Union Side. Despite early engagement with staff one of these has raised considerable questions from our membership and these are with management for a response. NIPSA have also raised issues in regard to how these are carried out as very rigid timescales for feedback to be provided have been set by management. On this occasion extensions

have been agreed and a meeting is being planned to discuss how the process of consultation can be changed to be more inclusive and realistic in order to avoid these last minute challenges.

C4.11 Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC)

Industrial Relations Framework: Throughout the year discussions continued regarding the creation of an IR Framework. This framework is aimed at creating an updated constitution for consultation and negotiation mechanisms, creating an inter union protocol and hopefully solidifying the role of the two TU representatives on full time release. This process is being led by ex NIPSA General Secretary John Corey and is following the model adopted within Belfast City Council. This has been a lengthy process, but it is hoped that it will conclude early 2026, and subsequently the reestablishment of Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee meetings.

Full-time Co-Ordinator Posts: There has been ongoing negotiation on these posts, currently held by SIPTU and NIPSA. The council have agreed to make this a permanent arrangement with the allocation of two full time co-ordinators from Trade Union Side. Job descriptions are in the process of being agreed and this is being facilitated as part of the remit of John Corry and the industrial relations framework.

Cleansing Service Review: Council approved the recruitment of additional staff into the District Cleansing Service. These staff will be based in the Downpatrick area.

Management Side agreed to proposals from JTUS in relation to the use of conditioned overtime across District Cleansing. There was also a recruitment campaign to fill existing vacancies on a permanent basis within District Cleansing.

As part of the recruitment process, there is an opportunity for existing permanent NMDDC staff members to express an interest in voluntarily transferring to an alternative working pattern including conditioned overtime or to choose to remain on their existing working pattern.

C5 Northern Ireland Housing Executive

NIHE Budget and Revitalisation: TUS concluded the series of meetings with MLAs & MP Party Leaders with the final meeting being held with DfC Minister Gordon Lyons. TUS strongly highlighted the impact of a derisory budget on NIHE tenants, customers & citizens including Section 75 citizens. TUS made clear that public housing must be the priority with the NIHE being permitted to build again as an entirely public entity without status change. The Minister agreed with this and reaffirmed his commitment to NIHE as a public landlord and echoed our contention regarding building again and reduction of Homelessness across Northern Ireland. The Minister advised of awaiting decisions and information on discussions with Treasury. TUS also discussed their concerns regarding rental costs and the new Intermediate Rent Scheme and how that would be delivered but most concerningly accessed & allocated to citizens. The Minister agreed to return to TUS with items relating to the conversation.

TUS pressed a range of political parties that had responded to our invite on the future of Public Housing and the need for public borrowing to be reinstated for NIHE. TUS met with leaders from PBP, SDLP, DUP, Alliance & UUP. All those leaders stated their support for NIHE as an organisation, the wider work carried out by NIHE and their desire to see NIHE building again.

Throughout the year NIPSA sought assurances around the ongoing budgetary concerns, Senior Management advised it has been a difficult year however they have delivered services within the allocated budget. Submission of a draft budget has been sent to DfC, and a response is awaited.

NIPSA Officials and the Seconded Officer received a Finance briefing on the financial structures within NIHE which explained how their funding model works and how the program of Revitalisation will fit into this. Key concerns regarding short and long term borrowing options were discussed and assurances provided that agreement by Treasury to permit borrowing would not impact the designation or status of NIHE.

CEO advised TUS she awaits Treasury decision and will keep us updated.

Pay and Grading Review: Due to legal advices received TUS does not enter into discussions nor consultation with Management Side on this issue.

The legal cases continue with separate tranches relating to various grades (now bands) in NIHE with more than 6 pay points in their respective scales. MTB has been provided with all information required. Members have been contacted directly by MTB to supply individual details via MTB portal.

Policy Development: This remains a key element of the interface with management at a local level, various policies are in review and consultation with TUS such as, Car parking, Carer's Policy, Call Recording Policy, Abusive Behaviours Policy and Job Evaluation. Key to these is the assurance that they are fair and equitable in their application and delivery. A number of other policies are in development with Management and we await their presentation for consideration.

A key policy and one that has drawn particular attention is Standby and Call Out which has caused considerable concern within a number of teams who would see a significant drop in potential earnings should this be initiated. To date NIPSA have held firm on this and further talks on how those concerns can be addressed are planned.

Accommodation Strategy: Following plans to amalgamate offices in West Area - Derry/Londonderry a further meeting was held to advise MS near finalisation of selection of an office location. TUS again made it clear that we cannot agree to closing an office on one side of the City, stakeholders would/do not agree and the ethos of the organisation is to serve every part of the community. MS invited the Branch, seconded officer & groups of various members to visit the proposed location and feed into the plans. MS visited the various offices in NW & held two Town Halls.

South Region accommodation is currently being examined, more information and meetings to follow.

Health & Safety: TUS continues to highlight stress as a key issue for members across the organisation but again particularly those in frontline roles. TUS sit on various working groups and subdivisions of those, this engagement is being reflected by

C5 Northern Ireland Housing Executive

MS undertaking Stress Risk Assessment, Role Risk Assessment and 1 to 1s to allow individual members to highlight their concerns. TUS highlighted concerns MS had not completed mandatory training in relation to SRAs.

Abusive Behaviours group has now been amalgamated into an organizational staff security forum which TUS will be part of with first meeting having taken place in September. This is an essential piece of work for TUS.

C6 Other Bodies

C6.1 Barnardos

Various: Currently there are a number of personal cases ongoing in Barnardo's. Accompaniment by the NIPSA official has resulted in favourable outcomes for our members although the primary challenge for NIPSA is the lack of union recognition by the organisation. However, NIPSA is intending to organise recruitment campaigns during 2026 aimed at increasing our membership which we hope will pave the way for negotiations on formal recognition.

C6.2 Charitable Organisations

Cedar Foundation: Meeting have been held with our members in the Cedar Foundation, as a number of NIPSA members raised concerns about the organisation changing the date of payment for their salaries without consultation. Meetings were also held with Cedar Foundation senior management to discuss the changes to payment terms and a possible breach of contract and to try to agree on an amenable way forward.

C6.3 City of Derry Airport (CoDA)

Funding: Following discussion between City of Derry Airport (CoDA), Derry City and Strabane District Council and the Department of Economy, Management confirmed early in the year that a new three year funding arrangement had been agreed with Stormont taking over direct control of the funding arrangements. This gives peace of mind to our members in knowing that there is increased security around the Airports funding and subsequently their jobs.

Pay Claim: NIPSA took the lead in preparing and submitting a pay claim on behalf of NIPSA and Unite members in CoDA. There were a number of strands to this deal given the diversity of staff and those on legacy contracts. A flat rate of 6% was requested alongside a cost of living uplift of £750 or 2% whichever was greater. Give the divergence of pay over the preceding years a review of pay was also requested as well as a move to the real living wage.

While this claim was not rejected by management they did make it clear that there were limitations to

the budget and what they could legally spend, they also wanted to bolt on to these negotiations a review of the legacy arrangements that a few staff carried over as part of their TUPE arrangements, what they referred to as "flat pay".

A number of meeting were held between management, Trade Union Side and members in order to address the issue of flat pay. Once settled an offer was tabled by management in respect of the pay claim. A offer of 4.15% was presented to members, which was accepted. Plans to review pay structures and address the few remaining anomalies that exist between legacy and new contracts will be picked up in the new year.

Development: Management confirmed that new routes are being developed with much publicity around a new route between Derry and Dublin. This new route is out for tender and is expected to start later in 2026. Management are also developing plans to expand the services delivered at the site in order to grow the business and secure the future of the Airport in the longer term.

C6.4 Disability Action

Pay Claims and Negotiations: Throughout the year, there has been consultation with Disability Action members on pay and a pay claim of 5% was submitted for the financial year. Trade Union Side waited for a management response following a meeting of the Disability Action Executive Committee, with negotiations commencing in April 2025. After lengthy negotiations, a final offer of 2.5% was presented to Trade Union Side. A membership ballot followed and resulted in an overwhelming majority in favour of accepting the offer, which was paid promptly along with the necessary arrears.

Training and Local Representation: Following the 2024 AGM, Disability Action successfully elected local trade union representatives, who then undertook NIPSA training to enhance local representation. The appointment of a permanent HR officer within Disability Action also contributed positively to ongoing improvements in industrial relations.

C6 Other Bodies

Managing Attendance Procedures: Discussions regarding Managing Attendance procedures continued during the year and a favourable outcome was reached with new procedures agreed upon in September.

Zero-Hour Contracts: Concerns were raised by NIPSA regarding the use of zero-hour staff for short-term employment. Disability Action management put forward proposals to dissolve contracts for zero-hour employees who declined unsuitable hours offered to them and plans were made to terminate the working arrangements of staff who refused hours over multiple occasions within an 8-week period. NIPSA engaged in negotiations to have zero-hour contracts permanently removed and advocated for more long-term employment solutions, such as full-time or part-time temporary contracts.

Upcoming Pay Deal Negotiations: Negotiations are scheduled to begin again in January to establish a pay deal for NIPSA members, and members will be kept informed and consulted with throughout this process.

Redundancies Avoided: Trade Union Side has been negotiating with senior management of Disability Action on compulsory redundancies. Through extensive discussions, 20 compulsory redundancies have been avoided and the number of compulsory redundancies has been reduced to 3 voluntary redundancies.

C6.5 EXTERN

Various: Discussions were held throughout the year with management regarding potential issues in relation to the tender process for projects which have reached their end. The local branch raised concerns with management regarding potential TUPE issues and discussions remain ongoing between Nipsa, MS and Funders in this respect General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI)

C6.6 Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)

Following a pay offer from GLL management, members were consulted and subsequently rejected the proposal, triggering a call for industrial action. After management declined an alternative proposal,

NIPSA issued a formal dispute letter and a ballot notice. The ballot returned a 79% turnout, with 100% support for both strike action and action short of strike.

Action short of strike began on the 15 July, during which members ceased using personal devices - such as phones and tablets- for GLL business. This approach was intended to maintain the ballot mandate ahead of scheduled negotiations with the Labour Relations Agency (LRA) on 30 July. The level of disruption revealed the extent to which staff relied on personal equipment for routine operations, including system access, rota management via WhatsApp and music for fitness classes. As a result, management has to supply equipment to each centre. Despite ongoing negotiations, management made little meaningful movement, Prompting NIPSA to escalate to full strike action.

The strike held on the 12th of August was highly successful, receiving strong media attention across local newspapers, radio, and television. This increased visibility and prompted management to return to negotiations with a more constructive approach.

After extensive negotiations facilitated by the Labour Relations Agency, management brought forward a two year pay offer that NIPSA felt they could bring to members. The pay offer comprised of a 3-phase deal as detailed below:

GLL Contract Staff Offer for permanent staff on GLL leisure contracts in the bargaining unit (up to DM):

Phase 1: (22 November 2025) 3-5% pay increase backdated to April 2025.

Phase 2: (22 January 2026) Belfast Pay Table Uplift (52p per hour) backdated to October 2025.

Phase 3: (22 April 2026) 5% annual increase for 2026-7.

TUPE Staff (Bargaining unit staff on TUPE and Hybrid contracts up to DM):

Phase 1: (22 November 2025) TUPE staff to receive cash equivalent to GLL role (first scale point) of April 25 3-5% uplift.

(22 December 2025) - move pay to total pay. £250 one off payment for those accepting total pay.

GLL contracts offered.

Phase 2 (22 January 2026) Belfast Pay Table Uplift (52p per hour) backdated to October 2025.

Phase 3: (22 April 2026) 5% annual increase for 2026-7.

Detailed pay slips are not provided by GLL, the Payroll IT system cannot provide the detail required and it was reported by GLL that to amend the contract and change the IT programme midway through would have a prohibitive additional cost. As a compromise, it was agreed that going forward each employee would receive a letter stating their salary and hourly rate, and an annual update letter would be sent in June after the yearly pay negotiations were completed. When the IT contract was up for renewal GLL would seek to procure a system that could accommodate the information on a monthly payslip.

In a series of joint NIPSA and UNITE meetings the pay offer was explained to members, there was good engagement, and this resulted in a 100% vote from both NIPSA and UNITE members in favour of the Pay deal, the outcome of which was relayed to GLL management on the 31.10.25.

Several historical issues mainly around TUPE and Hybrid contracts were part of the pay claim, a separate negotiation team was set up to take these issues forward, negotiation around these issues continue at the Labour Relations Agency, and it is hoped that they will conclude early 2026.

C6.7 Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS)

NIPSA played a key role in representing and supporting members across the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS). The branch focused on protecting members' rights, enhancing working conditions, and maintaining active engagement with management through negotiations, committee work, and direct representation.

Disciplinary Matters: NIPSA representatives supported members in disciplinary and grievance

matters to ensure fair outcomes. The branch actively participated in Local Joint Negotiating Forum (JNF) meetings, raising issues related to health and safety, working conditions, and flexible working arrangements. Ongoing discussions centered on enhancing flexible and home-working options to better support staff balance and wellbeing.

Pay and Grading Review: A comprehensive Pay and Grading Review was undertaken during the year, jointly overseen by HR, Finance, and trade union representatives. The review aimed to establish a fair, transparent, and consistent pay structure, focusing on several key areas:

- Addressing discrepancies and inefficiencies in pay scales.
- Ensuring fair pay progression and eliminating discriminatory risks.
- Reviewing overtime arrangements and overlapping pay bands.
- Correcting pay anomalies and addressing leapfrogging issues.
- Considering market-related pay supplements where appropriate.
- Advocating for improved maternity and paternity provisions.

As of November 2025, substantial progress was made:

- Forty-five percent of members were regraded, with some members advancing by up to three scales.
- Staff reported advancements across grades, including promotions from Scale 3 to 6 and from P01 to P03/P05 to P07.
- Structural improvements were implemented to correct pay inconsistencies and ensure equity across grades.

Future Focus Areas: Area of focus in the coming year for NIPSA are:

- Finalizing the remaining elements of the Pay and Grading Review.
- Continuing negotiations regarding flexible and home-working policies.

C6 Other Bodies

- Strengthening workplace health and safety measures.
- Securing improved employment terms and conditions for all NIFRS staff.

C6.8 Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC)

Job Evaluations: Job Evaluations for NIPSA members in NILGOSC began in mid-October. The job evaluations arose from a Pay and Grading review which was carried out last year. NILGOSC Management Side only agreed to carry out the Pay & Grading exercise because of the threat of industrial action from NIPSA if the proposals to complete the review were refused. Good progress is being made, and it is planned to have the Job Evaluations completed by early May.

C6.9 Radius Housing Association

Pay Disparity: Concerns were raised regarding the rate of pay for scheme coordinators compared to the industrial staff they managed. Meetings have occurred between management and Trade Union Side, with further engagement sessions scheduled to address this issue. A pensions forum has also been established with Radius Management, and a Trade Union representative was elected. Trade Union Side awaited further meetings of this forum.

Review of the Bradford Factor: A review of the Bradford Factor concerning sickness absence was undertaken. Management confirmed that the use of the Bradford Factor would continue but remain under review for at least 12 months. While it was agreed to maintain its use, enhanced discretion on the part of the manager was also established, and this has shown notable results in favour of NIPSA members.

Managing Attendance Procedures: Negotiations with senior management about Managing Attendance procedures continued to make good progress. It was hoped that an agreement would be reached, with updated procedures settled upon in the New Year.

TOIL Policy Negotiations: Negotiations were also

ongoing with senior management at Radius Housing regarding a new TOIL policy. The early implementation of this policy was postponed, and discussions remain active.

Ongoing Engagement and Representation:

Personal representation remains a priority within Radius Housing. The annual meeting on the JNCC was held, during which Trade Union Side raised various concerns.. Ongoing discussions continue between the Trade Union Side and management regarding a variety of issues as outlined previously.

C6.10 Voluntary Housing Associations

Merger and Membership Growth: A proposed merger between Connswater Housing and Choice Housing Association resulted in a dramatic increase in NIPSA membership. In advance of a potential TUPE transfer, NIPSA engaged with members to hold staff engagement sessions and there was a notable increase in membership from former Connswater Housing staff.

Funding Cuts Announcement: In early October, DfC Minister Gordon Lyons announced funding cuts for the building of social housing, a decision that was likely to significantly impact Housing Associations. This announcement indicated a reduction in monetary grants for constructing social housing. NIPSA expressed concern about the potential negative effects on members, particularly regarding job security and the increased stress of finding alternative funding sources to meet housing targets. Members also raised concerns about the implications of lower budgets for repairs and maintenance on existing properties. NIPSA is planning to monitor the situation closely in the subsequent months.

C6.11 Voluntary and Community Sector

Individual representation: The NIPSA Official continues to be engaged in representation of several individual and collective member personal cases.

ICTU Voluntary and Community Group: NIPSA continues to be represented at the ICTU group for the voluntary and community sector. An activists' training session was proposed and held which was generally well attended.

Branch Organisation

at 31st December 2025

Civil Service Group

Public Officers' Group

Civil Service Group at 31st December 2025

Branch	Employing Authority	Branch Location	Branch Secretary	Members and Votes	CS Group Delegates	NIPSA Delegates
1	DOF	CPD & Properties Division	David Gillian	156	2	2
2	DOF	CS Pensions & Recruitment	Martin Bradley	98	2	2
3	DOF	Finance Shared Services	Michael Cassells	93	2	2
5	DOF	Legal Service & Legal Admin	Wilma McKeegan	123	2	2
6	DOF	LPS Land Registration	Colleen Bonner	90	2	2
7	DOF	LPS Ordnance Survey	Katherine Connolly	166	2	2
8	DOF	LPS Rating	Aoife Nolan	302	3	3
9	DOF	LPS Valuation	Justine McNally	145	2	2
10	DOF	NICS HR	Paul Dale	170	2	2
11	DOF	NISRA	John Paul Darcy	261	3	3
13	DOF	Digital Shared Services	Noel Gunn	252	3	3
14	TEO	The Executive Office	Philip Devlin	235	3	3
15	DOF	Province Wide	Edith Toppon	136	2	2
22	DE	Inspectorate	Deirdre Robson	26	1	1
23	DE	Rathgael House	Lorna-Jayne Fletcher	140	2	2
24	DE	Orchard House, Derry	Marie Stewart	79	1	1
26	DOH	Policy	Stephanie Bell	285	3	3
31	DFE	Adelaide House	Elizabeth Cameron	413	4	4
32	DFE	Careers Service	Joan Fegan	106	2	2
33	DFE	Insolvency/OITFET	Ross McQuillan	87	2	2
35	DFE	Trading Standards	Kevin McNamara	49	1	1
45	DOJ	Core	Sean Brown	277	3	3
46	DOJ	Legal Services Agency	Gerard Patterson	94	2	2
47	DOJ	NICTS	Lorna Glass	451	4	4
48	DOJ	NIPS	Stephen Hayes	144	2	2
49	DOJ	YJA	Meghan Spence	112	2	2
50	NIPB	Policing Board	Vacant	14	1	1
51	PBNI	Probation Board	Wendy Thompson	252	3	3
52	PONI	Police Ombudsman	Vacant	75	1	1
53	PPSNI	Public Prosecution Service	James Murphy	258	3	3

Branch	Employing Authority	Branch Location	Branch Secretary	Members and Votes	CS Group Delegates	NIPSA Delegates
70	DFI	James House	Declan Sloan	269	3	3
71	DFI	Driver Vehicle Agency	Vacant	484	4	4
73	DFI	Rivers Agency	Vacant	85	2	2
74	DFI	TNI Ballymena	James Scullion	70	1	1
75	DFI	TNI Belfast	Conor Boyd	121	2	2
76	DFI	TNI Coleraine	Vacant	41	1	1
77	DFI	TNI Craigavon	Val Russell	83	2	2
78	DFI	TNI Downpatrick	Corrie Newell	55	1	1
79	DFI	TNI HQ	Danny Norton	79	1	1
80	DFI	TNI Omagh	Sean McDermott	151	2	2
91	DAERA	Central Belfast	Stephen McCorry	199	2	2
92	DAERA	Clare House	Jan Davidson	266	3	3
93	DAERA	Forest Service	Brendan Mulholland	39	1	1
94	DAERA	Inspectorate	Gerard Higgins	497	4	4
96	DAERA	Province Wide	Colleen Brown	641	6	6
97	DAERA	Veterinary Service	Abigail Armstrong	117	2	2
110	DFC	Andersonstown, Falls Road, North Belfast, Shaftesbury Sq	Monica Bradley	231	3	3
111	DFC	Antrim, N'abbey, Shankill	Gerard McLaughlin	136	2	2
112	DFC	Appeals Service	David Magill	67	1	1
113	DFC	Armagh, Banbridge, Lurgan & Portadown	Simon Richards	144	2	2
114	DFC	Ballymena, Carrickfergus & Larne	William Brooks	198	2	2
115	DFC	Ballymoney, Coleraine & Limavady	Patrick Brown	141	2	2
116	DFC	Ballynahinch, Downpatrick, Kilkeel & Newcastle	Vacant	61	1	1
117	DFC	Belfast Benefit Centre	Mark Gibson	1211	12	12
118	DFC	Castle Court Disability Benefits	Martie McKee	477	4	4
119	DFC	Child Maintenance Service	Brendan O'Reilly	692	6	6
120	DFC	Communications	Jim Smith	41	1	1

Branch	Employing Authority	Branch Location	Branch Secretary	Members and Votes	CS Group Delegates	NIPSA Delegates
121	DFC	Community Cohesion	Andy Boal	120	2	2
123	DFC	NI Pension Centre	Denise Conway	191	2	2
124	DFC	ICT Services	Eamon Doherty	177	2	2
125	DFC	Cookstown, Dungannon & Magherafelt	Stacey Cheevers	132	2	2
126	DFC	Enniskillen & Omagh	James Carey, Patricia Toal	109	2	2
127	DFC	ESA	Lucia Collins	209	3	3
129	DFC	Foyle	Ann Coyle	244	3	3
130	DFC	Bangor, Holywood Road & Newtownards	Gemma Cowan	104	2	2
131	DFC	Improving Benefits Uptake Unit	Ryan Meekin	41	1	1
133	DFC	Legislation	Gary Donaldson	38	1	1
134	DFC	Benefit Security Division	Alexandra McKee	138	2	2
135	DFC	Lisahally & Ballykelly	Martin Neeson	267	3	3
136	DFC	Knockbreda & Lisburn	Vacant	106	2	2
137	DFC	Lisnagelvin & Strabane	Martin Rouse	86	2	2
138	DFC	Guidance, Learning & Development	Tim Eaton	33	1	1
139	DFC	Newry	Diane Waddell	154	2	2
141	DFC	Public Record Office	Angela Campbell	61	1	1
142	DFC	Regeneration	Carol Curran	75	1	1
143	DFC	Strategic Policy & Resources Branch	Brendan Callan	127	2	2
145	DFC	Universal Credit	Anthony McLeish	274	3	3
146	DFC	Engaged Communities	Ruth Bonnar	180	2	2
170	ACNI, NIS, PLTUM	Arts Council, NI Screen, Armagh Planetarium	Gavin O'Connor	46	1	1
171	AFBI	AFBI & Departmental CS Scientific Officers	Paul Soto-Kelly	575	5	5

Branch	Employing Authority	Branch Location	Branch Secretary	Members and Votes	CS Group Delegates	NIPSA Delegates
172	AMK, EUREST, G4S, MCG, NOONAN, SERCO, SODEXO, ORCHARD- VILLE SOCIETY	Cleaning & Catering Contractors	Vacant	184	2	2
173	CC, COPNI, CVSNI, EC, GCCN, NICCY, VSS	Charity Commission, Commissioner for Older People, Commission for Victims & Survivors, Equality Commission, General Consumer Council, Commission for Children & Young People, Victims & Survivors Service	Gerard Stewart, Claire McCloskey, Rachel Woods, Shirley Kernan	116	2	2
174	CITB	Construction Industry Training Board	Amanda Murray	17	1	1
175	EONI, NIAUR, NIHRC, NIPSO	Electoral Office, Utility Regulator, Human Rights Commission, Public Service Ombudsman	Paula Cunningham, Ivanka Antova, Conor McConnell	146	2	2
176	HSE	Health & Safety Executive	John Murphy	64	1	1
177	INI	Invest NI	Sharon Atkinson	195	2	2
179	ITI, LA, SEUPB, TIL, USA, WI	Cross Border Bodies	Andrew King, Marion Thompson, Yvonne McKenna	63	1	1
180	LRA	Labour Relations Agency	Desmond Woods	61	1	1
181	NIAS	NI Assembly	Suzanne Walsh	215	3	3
182	NIWL	NI Water	Tracey Mitchell	422	4	4
183	NMNI	Ulster Folk & Transport Museum	Claire Brown	131	2	2
184	NMNI	Ulster Museum	Oisin Hill	89	2	2
185	NSL	NSL	Vacant	72	1	1
186	PSNI	Belfast City	Joyce McCready	735	7	7
187	PSNI	Districts B,C, D, E	Noelle Cahoon	166	2	2
188	PSNI	Districts F, G, H	Josephine McDaid	201	3	3
189	PSNI	Districts J,K, L	David Irwin	205	3	3
190	PSNI	ICS	Norman Murray	135	2	2

Branch	Employing Authority	Branch Location	Branch Secretary	Members and Votes	CS Group Delegates	NIPSA Delegates
191	PSNI	Scientific Support	Tanya Coulter	108	2	2
200	SPNI	Sport NI	Christine Rea	58	1	1
201	TAO	The Audit Office	Colette Connolly	82	2	2
202	TNI	Tourism NI	Alice Murray	58	1	1
203	UDF	United Dairy Farmers	Vacant	19	1	1

Public Officers' Group

at 31st December 2025

Branch	Employing Authority	Branch Location	Branch Secretary	Members and Votes	PO Group Delegates	NIPSA Delegates
501	NIHE	Housing Centre, Castlereagh Office, Lisburn, Dairy Farm, Shankill Office, DLO Glengall Street & Stockman's Way	Sheelagh Agnew	764	7	7
503	NIHE	Lanyon Place	Christina Girvan	202	3	3
508	NIHE	Craigavon, Armagh, Portadown, Banbridge, Lurgan & DLO Portadown	Vacant	153	2	2
509	NIHE	Derry/Londonderry, Strabane & DLO Pennyburn	Elizabeth Lynch	232	3	3
510	NIHE	Ballymena, Larne, Carrickfergus, Antrim, Newtownabbey, DLO Pennybridge, Rathenraw & Rosslea	Louise Carey	174	2	2
511	NIHE	Downpatrick & Newry	Conor Curran	66	1	1
512	NIHE	Enniskillen, Omagh, Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt	Gary Hemphill, William Loane, Barry Fox	116	2	2
513	NIHE	Newtownards & Bangor	Christopher O'Neill	112	2	2
515	NIHE	Coleraine, Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Limavady, DLO Coleraine, Ballymoney	Kelly Harbinson	56	1	1
516	Education Authority	Belfast Region	Jane Scott	1110	11	11
517	Education Authority	South Eastern Region	Frances O'Neill	1834	18	18
519	Education Authority	North Eastern Region	Eamonn Lavery	1176	11	11
521	Education Authority	Southern Region	Helena McSherry	3118	31	31
522	Education Authority	Western Region (Derry Area)	Vacant	280	3	3
523	Education Authority	Western Region (Omagh Area)	Vacant	626	6	6

Branch	Employing Authority	Branch Location	Branch Secretary	Members and Votes	PO Group Delegates	NIPSA Delegates
524	Queen's University/ Stranmillis College	Belfast	Graeme Watson, Julia Farkas, Sarah Hurson	304	3	3
526	City Council	Belfast	Mary McKenna	484	4	4
527	Borough Council	Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	David Mayers	456	4	4
528	Borough Council	Mid and East Antrim	Nigel Devine	278	3	3
529	Borough Council	Antrim and Newtownabbey	Stephanie Boyd	208	3	3
530	Borough Council	Ards and North Down	Dawn Phillips, Lorraine Ringland	233	3	3
531	District Council	Newry, Mourne and Down	Patricia Manley	292	3	3
532	District Council	Derry City and Strabane	Karen Henderson	466	4	4
533	District Council	Fermanagh and Omagh	Andrew Boyd	197	2	2
534	City Council	Lisburn and Castlereagh	Mark Taylor	196	2	2
535	Borough Council	Causeway Coast and Glens	Sharon McQuillan	210	3	3
536	GLL	Greenwich Leisure Ltd	Sharon Jordan	62	1	1
540	District Council	Mid - Ulster	Phelim Marrion	253	3	3
545	NILGOS/LGSC	Belfast	Julian Coffey	43	1	1
546	NICCEA	Belfast	Melanie Mulligan	175	2	2
547	NI Fire and Rescue Service	Province Wide	Ciara McCloskey	141	2	2
548	Vountary Housing Associations	Province Wide	Vacant	116	2	2
549	Radius Housing Association	Province Wide	Vacant	243	3	3
551	FE Colleges	Belfast Metropolitan College	Martin Murphy	172	2	2

Branch	Employing Authority	Branch Location	Branch Secretary	Members and Votes	PO Group Delegates	NIPSA Delegates
552	FE Colleges	South Eastern Regional College	Alison Ferguson	181	2	2
553	FE Colleges	Northern Regional College	Vacant	121	2	2
554	FE Colleges	Southern Regional College	Ciaran Flood	155	2	2
555	FE Colleges	South West College	Matthew Markey	167	2	2
556	FE Colleges	North West Regional College	Sean O'Neill	110	2	2
560	Libraries NI	Province Wide	John McKeegan	333	3	3
701	Business Services Organisation	Province Wide	Cathi Tregaskis, Patricia Quinn	769	7	7
703	Business Services Organisation	IT	Brian Crawford	137	2	2
704	NI Ambulance Service	Province Wide	George Preston, Daphnyan Gordon	222	3	3
725	Voluntary Sector	Province Wide	Adam Murray	257	3	3
726	Extern	Province Wide	Sean Conlon	93	2	2
727	Disability Action	Province Wide	Donavan Brown	51	1	1
728	Credit Unions	Province Wide	Vacant	3	1	1
730	HSC Trust	Belfast	Damien Maguire, Tanya Killen	2163	21	21
731	HSC Trust	Northern	Sabine Antal, Fionnuala Anderson	2007	20	20
732	HSC Trust	South Eastern	Debbie Barlow	1081	10	10
733	HSC Trust	Southern	Gerardette McVeigh, Joanne Martin	1973	19	19
734	HSC Trust	Western	Tony McLaughlin, John Havord	1837	18	18
735	Charities	Province Wide	Vacant	67	1	1

