

NISRA CORPORATE PLAN 2012-2015



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Introduction

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). The Agency also incorporates the General Register Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland.

NISRA's Core Purpose is to provide a high quality, cost effective, statistics, research and registration service that informs policy making, the democratic process and the wider public.

The NISRA Corporate Plan sets out the Agency's high level objectives for the period 2012-15 and how these will be delivered. It is set within the context of the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme For Government 2011-15 and the DFP Corporate Plan 2012-15. The specific targets for each year within this planning period will be articulated in the Agency's separate annual business plan.

The Organisation

Management

The Agency is headed by the Chief Executive and Registrar General, Dr Norman Caven, who is supported by an Agency Board and a Senior Managers' Forum.

The Agency Board (AB) comprises twelve Senior Principal Statisticians. The group advises the Chief Executive on strategy and major issues of Agency policy. AB is responsible for ensuring the effective operation and performance of NISRA.

The Senior Managers Forum (SMF) is made up of AB and Principal Statistician/Principal Administrative Heads of Branches. This forum:

- Promotes communication and the exchange of views among senior staff in NISRA, also facilitating contact and networking;
- Gives senior managers an opportunity to discuss broad Agency issues and policy with a view to consideration, review and improvement;
- Conveys and discusses key corporate messages;
- Promotes the sharing of knowledge, experience and lessons from good practice which can be applied across the Agency; and
- Where appropriate, provides information about internal services offered in the Agency and DFP, both to enhance managers' performance and to give feedback about the needs of staff to those providing services.

People

NISRA employs statisticians from a variety of numerate disciplines and administrators with relevant business skills. The Chief Executive is responsible for the recruitment, deployment and career development of all statistical staff. The career management of administrative staff is the responsibility of NISRA and DFP.

Along with the statisticians who work in DFP, all NISRA administrative staff are located in eight DFP based Branches. These include:

- Census Office for Northern Ireland,
- Central Survey Unit ,
- Corporate Services ,
- Demography and Methodology Branch,
- General Register Office ,
- Human Resource Consultancy Services,
- Regional Reporting and EU Programmes Branch,
- Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch, and
- Land and Property Services Branch (LPS).

The remaining NISRA statisticians are located across the Northern Ireland Departments and in a number of Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies including:

- Belfast City Council;
- Business Services Organisation;
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD);
- Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure(DCAL);
- Department of Education (DE);
- Department for Employment and Learning (DEL);
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI);
- Department of the Environment (DOE);
- Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS);
- Department of Justice (DoJ);
- Department for Regional Development (DRD);
- Department for Social Development (DSD);
- Driver and Vehicle Agency
- ILEX URC Ltd
- Invest NI (INI);
- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service (NICtS);
- Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB);
- Northern Ireland Cancer Registry(NICR); and
- Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdfM);
- Planning Service Northern Ireland
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI);
- Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI);
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI);
- Public Prosecution Service (PPS);
- QUB Centre of Excellence for Public Health; and
- Youth Justice Agency.

Vision, Aims, Function and Principles of Purpose

Vision

NISRA's vision is to be recognised as an organisation:

- that instills public confidence in the integrity and independence of statistics produced by the Agency;
- that promotes evidence based policy making;
- that provides an understanding of social and economic conditions in Northern Ireland and how they change over time; and
- that is a preferred place to work for its people.

Aims

The corporate aims of NISRA are as follows:

- to provide a statistical and research service to support decision making by Northern Ireland Ministers and Departments and to inform elected representatives and the wider community through the dissemination of reliable official statistics; and
- to administer the marriage laws and to provide a system for the civil registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland.

Functions

The principal functions of the Agency are:

- to provide and co-ordinate professional statistics and research services, and to be the principal advisory body on statistics and social research for Northern Ireland Departments, Agencies and Non-Departmental Bodies;
- to carry out the Census of Population and provide high quality demographic information to enable the number and the condition of the population to be monitored and changes over time to be identified;
- to collect, analyse and make available official statistics which describe Northern Ireland's society, economy and public services;
- to ensure that statistical and research standards are adhered to and that the best appropriate methodological practice is employed in official statistics, social research and policy evaluation;
- to provide Northern Ireland statistics required for the United Kingdom, European Union and international statistical series; and
- to administer the marriage laws and provide an efficient and effective system for the registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland.

Principles of Purpose

Underpinning our vision are our principles of purpose. These describe the ethos of our organisation, what is important to us and how we conduct our business as an Agency and as individuals. They are:

Relevance

Our statistics and research will inform significant decisions in government, business and the wider community and, in so doing, contribute to the quality of life in Northern Ireland;

Integrity

Our statistics and research will gain public trust through being produced using objective and transparent methods;

Quality

Our statistics and research will be fit for purpose and of high quality;

Accessibility

Access to our records, statistics and research findings will be fair and open;

Protecting confidentiality

We will protect the confidentiality of information we hold;

Security

We will hold our records securely, protected from loss or damage;

Balancing the needs of users against the burden on providers

Costs of compliance will be kept to an acceptable level and data collected only when the benefits of a statistical survey exceed the cost to providers;

Enhancement through integration, accumulation and innovation

Our statistics will emphasise coherence and common standards to maximise the value of available statistical and administrative sources;

Efficiency in costs, fairness in prices

We will strive to be efficient and to provide value for money in both costs and prices; and

Service

We will deliver a modern and affordable service which meets the needs of today's society.

Strategic and Planning Context

As an Executive Agency within the DFP the context in which we work is shaped by a number of internal and external drivers. The NISRA 2012-15 plan is set against a background of major change both within society, the NICS and in the governance of statistical activity.

Economic, Social and Environmental Context

The economic and social context, and in particular the global economic downturn and financial constraints, has an important bearing on the work of the Agency. NISRA will continue to provide the information which allows Government and others to understand how society is changing and to make decisions based on a reliable evidence base. For more details on the economic, social and environmental context go to:

http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/revised_budget_website_version.pdf

Programme for Government

The Programme for Government (PFG) 2011-2015 which sets the strategic context for both the Budget and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland provides the overall framework within which Government will operate until 2015.

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf>

NISRA has an important contribution to make in supporting the work of the Assembly and the Executive in both meeting and anticipating the current and future statistical and research requirements.

Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP) Corporate Plan

The Department's Corporate Plan 2012-2015 deals with both DFP's commitments within the Programme for Government and the provision of a range of functions and services to the citizen, NICS Departments, their Agencies and to the wider public sector. This plan in turn provides the backdrop for NISRA's overall strategic direction over the same period. The DFP Corporate Plan can be accessed through the link below.

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/dfp-corp-plan-12-15-and-oper-plan-12-13.pdf>

Details of NISRA's net resource and capital allocation for 2012-15 are summarised in Annex B of the DFP Corporate Plan.

The overall aim of DFP is "to help the Executive secure the most appropriate and effective use of resources and services for the benefit of the community". In pursuing this aim, the key objective of the Department is to deliver quality, cost effective and efficient public services and administration in the Department's areas of executive responsibility.

Efficiency Measures

For the current 4 year CSR (Comprehensive Spending Review) period the Department asked business areas to make plans for cuts so that the Department could live within the current efficiency targets. NISRA submitted plans for making cuts that were then prioritised and agreed with DFP and the baseline was cut. These efficiencies have been implemented and NISRA is on track to achieve these for all years

Statistical Services

Whilst NISRA shares the strategic context with the broader department, it also operates in the wider UK government statistical community which is itself undergoing the most radical reforms for half a century. NISRA works closely with the Government Statistical Service (GSS) to ensure, as far as possible, the coherence and compatibility of statistical activities.

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority was established on 1st April 2008 by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. The Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government with a statutory objective to promote and safeguard, the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good and the quality and comprehensiveness of (and good practice in relation to) official statistics across the UK.

In order to preserve and enhance the integrity and levels of public confidence in official statistics, arrangements were made for the provisions of the Statistics and Registration Service Act to allow the UK Statistics Authority to operate in Northern Ireland.

NISRA is committed to complying with the principles of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics which was published by the UK Statistics Authority in January 2009. Official Statistics that comply with the Code are designated as National Statistics¹ and compliance with the Code is a statutory requirement on bodies that produce statistics that have already been designated as National Statistics.

The Code contains eight principles and, in relation to each, a statement of associated practices. It also contains three more detailed protocols – on user engagement; on the release of statistics; and on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. Taken together, the principles and protocols of the Code are intended to ensure: that the range of official statistics meets the needs of users; that the statistics are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and that the statistics are well explained.

The UK Statistics Authority will continue to monitor the production and publication of Official Statistics in Northern Ireland and carry out assessments of Official and National Statistics against the Code of Practice.

¹ National Statistics is an accreditation which means that such statistics are compliant with the Code of Practice. National Statistics stands for relevance, quality, integrity and freedom from political interference.

Within the context described above, NISRA provides a wide range of economic, social and environmental statistics and a social research service to all government departments and a number of Agencies, to assist in the determining of their policies and the delivery of their strategic objectives and actions. NISRA also provides statistics and advice to a wide range of other users including academia and the general public. To these ends the Agency is committed to delivering value for money and harnessing technology to deliver accessible and responsive services.

Due to the diverse nature of the Agency's work, NISRA has a wide user base. The success of the Agency depends on retaining a strong user focus and throughout the period of the Corporate Plan the Agency will seek to identify and meet the changing needs of users through the use of technology and SLAs/Concordats.

This is a time of rapid change across all areas of NISRA business. In keeping with developments across the wider GSS, data analysis and dissemination and the provision of advice and support to government and other users will be especially important as we move in to the 2012-2015 planning period. This means finding further efficiencies, particularly in data collection, making better use of the data that already exists, particularly from administrative sources, and increasing collaboration with others to exploit synergies and avoid duplication of work.

In addition to its statistics and research work NISRA, through the General Register Office (GRO), also manages the civil registration process in Northern Ireland. This area of business has been undergoing modernisation in recent years. GRO has recently embarked on a new project aimed at providing an online genealogical service for historic civil registrations. GRO is also striving to enhance the Public Search Room (PSR) facilities in its Oxford House headquarters.

NISRA's Strategic Themes

NISRA has used the balanced scorecard approach to provide a business focus for both the short- and the long-term and which can help to put meaningful performance measurements in place. The Agency has four strategic themes with associated outcomes as described below. The implementation of these themes will assist NISRA to achieve its vision.

<p>Business Results</p> <p>Provide a high quality statistics, social research and civil registration service to Northern Ireland Government and the public</p>	<p>Users</p> <p>Increase our customer base and increase our level of customer satisfaction</p>
<p>Internal Processes</p> <p>Manage the production and dissemination of official statistics and social research on Northern Ireland in keeping with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice and other relevant guidance</p>	<p>Organisation and People</p> <p>Ensure that appropriately skilled people are employed in the statistical production process and that NISRA is a preferred organisation in which to work.</p>

Strategic theme: **Business Results**

Provide a high quality statistics, social research and civil registration service to Northern Ireland Government and the public.

NISRA will aim to develop its services informed by our users' perspectives. We will gather information on the use of our services, how our services compare with others, and assess the demand for both current and new products/services. We will provide good value for money.

Strategic theme: **Users**

Increase our customer base and our level of customer satisfaction.

NISRA will improve accessibility to its services and products by enhancing and expanding electronic means of delivery to customers. We will strive to continually improve the level of services provided so that customer needs are met. The Agency will talk to its customers so that it can respond to their changing needs, reviewing and updating Service Level Agreements as required.

Strategic theme: *Internal Processes*

Manage the production and dissemination of official statistics and social research in Northern Ireland in keeping with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics and other relevant guidance.

NISRA aims to provide a statistics and research service to support decision making by Ministers and Departments, and to inform elected representatives and the wider community of social and economic conditions in Northern Ireland through dissemination of reliable official statistics and research.

In producing its statistics and research outputs, NISRA will adhere to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and associated guidance and legislation. Compliance will be monitored. This will provide the quality framework to ensure that all NISRA statistics and research information are of a high standard and in which a high degree of confidence can be placed.

Strategic theme: *Organisation and People*

Ensure that appropriately skilled people are employed in the statistical production process and that NISRA is a preferred organisation in which to work.

NISRA will ensure that its people are sufficiently skilled and motivated to

- *carry out the jobs that are expected of them; and*
- *fulfil the NISRA vision.*

We will ensure that we have the right people in the right place at the right time, achieved through timely recruitment, good people planning, active career management, and the facilitation of moves for the benefit of the business and the individual. Our aim is to have a skilled and motivated workforce created through a culture of nurtured career development, as a consequence of well managed personal development and planned staff placement.

The following section of the Corporate Plan identifies milestones to allow the delivery of the outcomes linked to the strategic themes. The associated business plans which are produced annually set out the detailed targets in support of the strategic objectives. High level targets in the Business Plans are monitored and reported on a quarterly basis through the DFP planning process. Remaining targets are monitored on a bi-annual basis.

NISRA's Strategic Themes and Milestones 2012-2015

Strategic Theme Business Results	2012-13 Milestones	2013-14 Milestones	2014-15 Milestones
<p><i>Provide a high quality statistics, social research and civil registration service to Northern Ireland Government and the public.</i></p> <p><u>Statistical Support for Social Security Benefit change</u></p> <p><u>Census</u></p>	<p>Construction of an income (benefits and earnings) dataset. Modelling of Universal Credit launch phase, Personal Independence Payment implementation, Employment Support Allowance time-limiting and reassessment of Disability Living Allowance recipients. Advise on benefit uptake methodologies.</p> <p>Support the implementation of Housing Reforms.</p> <p>Publish the 2011 Census Key Statistics and Quick Statistics in 2012/13</p>	<p>Development and implementation of evaluation framework for the delivery of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Complete the publication of the four phases of planned Census outputs in 2013/14</p>	<p>Publish a consultation document on the future delivery of Census-type population statistics (Joint milestone with Beyond 2011)</p>

<p><u>Census (cont).</u></p> <p><u>Beyond 2011- Future population and social statistics</u></p> <p><u>GRO Modernisation</u></p> <p>GENI (genealogy services)</p> <p>Review of Public Administration</p>	<p>Publish the final report from the Independent Information Assurance Review before the publication of the 2011 Census outputs</p> <p>Gain greater access to administrative data for statistics purposes – lay regulations on access to National Insurance, School Census and Higher Education</p> <p>Complete the procurement exercise for the appointment of a supplier for the GENI website by 31st March 2013.</p> <p>Determine resource needs for registration services in new council areas</p>	<p>Publish a revised set of population statistics for Northern Ireland in light of the results of the 2011 Census</p> <p>Development, testing and implementation of GeNI website.</p> <p>Agree with Local Government actual locations/offices, staffing levels and other resource requirements</p>	<p>Publish a consultation document on the future delivery of Census-type population statistics (Joint milestone with Census)</p> <p>Initiate procurement of new Registration Processing System for Civil Registration.</p> <p>Implement changes in line with RPA timetable</p>
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<p><u>NISRA Marketing Strategy</u></p> <p><u>The development of the Integrated Business Survey IT System (IBSS)</u></p>	<p>the detailed results of the 2011 Census on this website</p> <p>Completion of actions within Marketing Strategy Action Plan</p> <p>Migrate the key annual financial, export and employment surveys and short term output indicators onto the IBSS and achieve system functionality by March 2013</p>	<p>Development of 'Open Data' processes for the release of NISRA datasets, suitably anonymised.</p> <p>Completion of actions within Marketing Strategy Action Plan</p> <p>Migrate the remaining surveys onto the IBSS including the Annual Earnings, R&D, Trade in Services Survey</p>	
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Strategic Theme – Organisation and People	2012-13 Milestones	2013-14 Milestones	2014-15 Milestones
<p><i>Ensure that appropriately skilled people are employed in the statistical production process and that NISRA is a preferred organisation in which to work.</i></p> <p><u>Employee Engagement</u></p>	<p>Improve NISRA's Employee Engagement Score</p>	<p>Improve NISRA's Employee Engagement Score</p>	<p>Improve NISRA's Employee Engagement Score</p>

Measurement and Evaluation

It is important that the Agency knows the extent to which strategic objectives are being met throughout the planning period so that action can be taken if necessary. To this end the following high level success criteria can be identified:

- Business Results – Achievement of Ministerial Targets and effective management of budgets.
- Users –Continued engagement with users and maintenance of customer satisfaction levels.
- Internal Processes – Compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and maintenance of a sound system of corporate governance.
- Organisation and People – Maintenance of a high level of staff satisfaction, improved employee engagement and achievement of NISRA directorate sickness absence target.