

# **Victims and Survivors Service Limited**

## **Annual Report and Accounts For the year ended 31 March 2024**

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under the statutory provision for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, the Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2016,  
by The Executive Office

on

30 October 2024

**COMPANY NUMBER: NI 611922**

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Any enquiries related to this publication should be sent to us at the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, First Floor, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN, or email: [enquiries@vssni.org](mailto:enquiries@vssni.org).

This publication is also available for download from our website at [www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org).

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## **Officers and Professional Advisers**

### **Officers and Professional Advisers**

#### **Directors**

Dame Sandra Horley – Director appointed 18 October 2022

John Cahill – Director appointed 18 October 2022

Dr Catriona MacArthur - Director appointed 21 August 2023

Brian Gilfedder - Director appointed 23 August 2023

Oliver Wilkinson – Resigned 30 April 2024

Bertha McDougall – Resigned 3 December 2023

Patricia Haren – Resigned 31 March 2024

#### **Auditors**

Northern Ireland Audit Office

106 University Street

Belfast

BT7 1EU

#### **Registered Office**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Seatem House

28-32 Alfred Street

Belfast

BT2 8EN

#### **Principal Bankers**

Danske Bank

8/9 Donegall Square North

Belfast

BT1 5GJ

## Foreword

I am pleased to present the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) Annual Report and Accounts for the 2023-24 financial year.

Throughout the past year, the social and political context for victims and survivors has continued to present challenges. However, with the restoration of the NI Assembly, and with Executive Ministers in place, there is renewed confidence that strategic planning and decision making can and will address the challenges faced by victims and survivors.

Looking back on the past 12 months, I find many examples of significant achievements, and of progress in areas which have a real impact on the lives of victims and survivors.

### **Key Achievements**

#### **Regional Trauma Network**

The Regional Trauma Network (RTN) sees the fulfilment of a commitment set out in the Stormont House Agreement (2014), to implement the recommendation from the Commission for Victims and Survivors for a Comprehensive Mental Trauma Service. The RTN is now in a three-year pilot phase which protects and prioritises specialist trauma care pathways for victims and survivors.

Now moving into the second year of the pilot, systems and pathways have been tested and adjusted. Of particular note is the progress on wider aspects of the Network including on training, research, and children and young people. I remain confident that the Regional Trauma Network will deliver crucial connectivity between Sectors, for the benefit of victims and survivors.

#### **The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS)**

As this scheme moves towards the end of its third year, our staff have continued to work to support individuals who wish to apply. Increased resource has been provided to our community and voluntary partner organisations to provide direct support, and VSS has continued to provide leadership, engaging with the Victims Payments Board to continually improve the applicant experience. I note that at the end of the year, over 4,600 applications (c65% of total applications to the scheme) had been made with valuable support from our community and voluntary partner organisations.

## **Support and services for those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses**

During the year, VSS reached the end of a 12-month pilot of support and services for those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses, working with community partners WAVE Trauma Centre and Adopt NI. An evaluation has also been completed, leading to the commencement of a longer term programme of support commencing from April 2024.

I am pleased that the collaboration between VSS, community partners, The Executive Office and others (including the Consultative Forum and Truth Recovery Independent Panel) is ensuring a planned and joined up approach to the important phases of Consultation, Inquiry and Redress which lie ahead.

### **Looking ahead and planning for the Future**

Perhaps the most important milestone in 2024-25 will be the adoption of a new Victims Strategy, which will set the direction for the next phase of support for victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict. Key areas including support for the bereaved, and the legacy of the past, will benefit from an agreed strategic approach going forward.

In relation to legacy, The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023, and the resulting role for the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) remains controversial with many, and also remains under challenge in the courts. VSS will continue to support individuals to address legacy in a manner based on need and choice.

I look forward to the opportunities which will arise within a new €25m PEACE PLUS project (approved in May 2024). This brings new approaches, new partners and new potential to meet the needs of victims and survivors.

Finally, it is important that I recognise the significant commitment and dedication of our Staff and Board Members during the year – and in particular to thank Oliver Wilkinson (outgoing Chair), Bertha McDougall and Patricia Haren (outgoing Members) for their long service with VSS. I also look forward to welcoming a new Chair and Members early in 2024-25.



**Dame Sandra Horley  
Interim Chairperson**

**Date: 24 October 2024**

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

### **1.1 Overview**

#### **Chief Executive and Accounting Officer's Statement**

As Chief Executive of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, it is my role to support the Board in its work and to ensure the day-to-day operation and management of the organisation is effective and efficient.

2023-24 has presented opportunities for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to consolidate our services. Following approval for the new staffing structure in March 2024, preparations and recruitment of posts have begun at pace and will continue into Autumn 2024. Within our services, support provided to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) reached their highest levels to date in 2023-24. The year has also provided a challenging external environment, with demand for services within Victims and Survivors (Trouble/conflict) support organisations continuing to increase and have been further compounded by the continued cost-of-living crisis and the significant constraints faced within Departmental budgets.

During 2023-24, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited issued £4.2m of self-directed assistance payments and persistent pain home heating to more than 6,500 victims and survivors who are bereaved, injured or carers. This included payments to over 1,054 bereaved individuals following the opening of a new bereaved support scheme in April 2021 (the previous scheme having been closed since March 2017).

Ensuring the performance of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in terms of delivery plan targets is one of my key functions. It is important that focus is maintained in on achieving the best outcomes for victims and survivors alongside robust clinical and corporate governance arrangements.

I am pleased to report the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has fully achieved 31 out of its 42 targets for the year ended 31 March 2024 (with partial achievement in the other 11 targets). The majority of the areas in which targets were not fully achieved related to targets set for the provision of services for those impacted by Mother and Baby institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses (MBMLW) and were not fully achieved for reasons beyond our control.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited resource outturn position for 2023-24 has fallen outside of the tolerance level of 1.5% of the budget allocation. This underspend is due to operating ring-fenced budget allocations for services of HIA, MBMLW and the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS) which have been impacted

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

significantly by external factors (for MBMLW), by estimates of demand, and by labour market challenges within the community and voluntary sector throughout 2023-24.

The implementation of an outcomes-based approach to service delivery has been embedded across the organisation for a number of years now, with data on outcomes captured across an increasing range of activities. This approach is applied consistently across all established and new areas of work. Along with the service delivery model, this approach is making significant improvements to the quality of services provided and to the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.

### **Formation and Status**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited was established under the direction of The Executive Office and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was incorporated on 27 March 2012 as a private company limited by guarantee.

### **Introduction**

This section of the Performance Report outlines the strategic context and operating environment, along with the summary performance outputs and outcomes of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the 2023-24 year This includes:

- Strategic Framework
- Key strategies and objectives
- Key programmes
- Key stakeholders and engagement

## Strategic Framework: Victims and Survivors Service Limited

Following a strategic review of the vision, mission, and values of the organisation in 2022, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and Management have agreed on the following vision, mission and values to inform the strategic framework for The Victims and Survivors Service Limited.



## **Key strategies and objectives**

### **Strategic Priorities**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has the following three priorities:

1. Delivering a trauma-informed, needs-based approach to allocating resources and defining services;
2. Ensuring the highest standard of service provision for those in need; and
3. Measuring outcomes associated with the allocation of resources and services.

These priorities underpin the work of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited across all of our services.

### **Victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict Victims and Survivors Strategy 2009-19 (as extended)**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is the delivery body named in the ten-year Strategy for Victims and Survivors 2009-19 published by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, now known as The Executive Office. It is responsible for providing support and services to victims and survivors on behalf of The Executive Office (TEO).

“Victims and Survivors” has the meaning ascribed by the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Act 2008. This definition has two distinctive dimensions, as follows:

- (1) *In this Order references to “victim and survivor” are references to an individual appearing to the Commission to be any of the following:*
  - (a) *someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident;*
  - (b) *someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned in paragraph (a); or*
  - (c) *someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident.*
  
- (2) *Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), an individual may be psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of:*
  - (a) *witnessing a conflict-related incident or the consequences of such an incident;*  
*or*

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

- (b) *providing medical or other emergency assistance to an individual in connection with a conflict-related incident.*<sup>1</sup>

In the absence of Ministers and a functioning Northern Ireland Executive, a new Victims and Survivors Strategy for the post 2019 period was not developed before the end of 2019. With the return of the Assembly and Executive in early 2020, work was completed on the evaluation of the 2009-19 strategy and the design of a new strategy commenced. In the interim, the existing strategy was extended annually, and the Victims and Survivors Service Limited programmes also extended annually. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has continued to deliver services and support in line with the existing strategy.

A co-design process led by TEO and involving the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, the Commission for Victims and Survivors and a variety of other stakeholders, including victims organisations and individual victims and survivors has produced a draft strategy. This draft strategy was open to public consultation until 29 March 2024. TEO officials are now considering the responses and will present to Ministers. It is hoped that a new strategy will be approved in 2024-25. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited programmes have also been extended for 2024-25, with an option to extend for a further year in 2025-26, following which a new programme cycle will commence, aligned to the next strategy.

### **Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse Report of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (2017)**

In its report, the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse recommended:

- an apology
- a memorial
- **additional service provision/specialist care and help for those who were abused**
- a statutory commissioner for survivors of institutional childhood abuse (COSICA)
- financial compensation to be administered by a redress board
- annual grant funding for the Child Migrants Trust

In line with the recommendations The Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019 became an Act of Parliament on 5 November 2019, with the Act providing the legal framework for establishing the HIA Redress Board and Statutory Commissioner.

The HIA Redress Board was formally established on 31 March 2020, with its principal function to receive and assess applications made by survivors or in respect of survivors. As of 31 May 2024, the Board has received 4,502 applications.

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<sup>1</sup> Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/2953/contents>

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

The First and deputy First Ministers appointed Ms Fiona Ryan as the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) on 6 October 2020 for a five-year term from 14 December 2020.

The Executive Office appointed the Victims and Survivors Service Limited as the service delivery body for the provision of health and wellbeing support and services to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse on 23 October 2020, with services now established in line with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's service delivery model.

### **Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses Truth, Accountability and Acknowledgement: Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses in NI Report (2021)**

In October 2021, the Truth Recovery Design Panel published its findings in a "Truth, Accountability and Acknowledgement: Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses in NI" report. The report made 5 core recommendations and 77 sub-recommendations which included a specific recommendation in respect of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited - ***Recommendation 5A: VSS should be adequately resourced to fund comprehensive services as recommended by victims-survivors and relatives, for the duration of the truth investigation and the longer-term.***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited was appointed on 13 January 2022 to deliver health and wellbeing support and services to those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

Between October 2022 and March 2024, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited operated a pilot project with two community based partners, WAVE Trauma Centre and Adopt NI. The pilot phase was evaluated and has informed the business case for the substantive service provision from 1 April 2024. VSS completed an open call process to appoint community-based providers of Health and Wellbeing support and services (including Specialist Information Recovery and Family Tracing Services) in Q4 2023-24 and have notified the successful bidder of our intention to appoint.

VSS is continuing to work closely with TEO and the Independent Panel to ensure that support and services are appropriately scaled to support those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses in line with the anticipated events and activities associated with the Truth Recovery Programme throughout 2024-25.

## **Key Programmes**

### **Programmes supporting victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict**

#### ***Support for Individuals: The Individual Needs Programme***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited aims to provide support that is responsive to the particular needs of the individual and that respects the dignity and personal choices of each victim and survivor.

Assistance for individuals is delivered under both the Individual Needs and the Health & Wellbeing Programmes and is informed by advice given by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in relation to the needs of victims and survivors. It includes:

- Support for individuals living with physical and psychological injuries to access services and goods that contribute to improved wellbeing and quality of life;
- Support for primary carers and for the bereaved to access services and goods that contribute to improved wellbeing and quality of life;
- In certain circumstances: direct financial assistance for victims and survivors; and
- In certain circumstances: support for individuals to access education, training and other opportunities.

#### ***Funding for Organisations: The Victims Support Programme***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited provides support and funding to community partner organisations to provide services and support to victims and survivors on a regional basis. The work funded through the Victims Support Programme within these organisations meets the Victims and Survivors Service Limited vision and mission (outlined above) and is informed by advice given by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) regarding the needs of victims and survivors.

The services and support delivered by organisations funded through the Victims Support Programme include:

- Talking therapies and complementary therapies that improve the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of victims and survivors and that enhance their quality of life;
- Services that support and maintain resilience and wellbeing among victims and survivors;
- Welfare advice and support for victims and survivors and opportunities/activities focused on personal and professional development; and
- Support and activities for young people affected by the impact of trauma in families and communities.

***Interim TEO funding to support continuation of PEACE IV Programme Activity***

The PEACE IV Programme was a unique cross-border initiative, designed to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. It also contributed to the promotion of social and economic stability. Project activity funding for VSS from SEUPB ceased on 30 November 2022 with TEO funding secured from that date to continue the core programme areas of maintaining the Health and Wellbeing Network, Advocacy Support and the resilience programme. This interim funding from TEO continued throughout 2023-24.

This funding has maintained the following critical networks and programmes:

- A network of Health and Wellbeing Case Workers based in organisations across NI, Ireland and Great Britain to identify and address the needs of victims and survivors;
- A network of Advocacy Support to include practical support for victims and survivors engaging with institutions, historical process and inquiries;
- A Resilience Programme to support individual victims and survivors; and
- Delivery of Trauma Training, including community education, degree and post graduate certificates and diplomas along with citizen education seminars by WAVE Trauma Centre.

A €25m application to the new PEACE Plus Programme was submitted by VSS in August 2023 with VSS as lead partner, along with 12 partner organisations including CVS, Pobal and 10 community and voluntary sector partners. The application was approved on 21 May 2024.

The impact of the support and services for victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict, through the delivery of the programmes detailed above are shown in the 2023-24 Troubles/conflict Impact Report below.



# OUR IMPACT

# 2023/24

Support and services for victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict

## Community Led Support & Services

**What we did**

**£9.3m** for **47** community partners

**4,016** individuals supported through the **Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme** application process

**How we did it**

**3,175** individuals supported with **Talking Therapies**

**3 out of 5** reported an improvement

**3,088** individuals supported with **Complementary Therapies**

**4 out of 5** reported an improvement

**9,730** individuals supported in **welfare, personal development, and social support.**

**What difference did we make?**

## Health & Wellbeing Caseworker Network

**What we did**

**£661k** to support the needs of **915** individuals

**How we did it**

Persistent Pain  
**221**

Psychological Support  
**269**

Education & Training  
**60**

Disability Aids  
**69**

Social Isolation Programmes  
**97**

Trauma Focused Physical Activity  
**234**

**What difference did we make?**

**6 out of 10** reported an improvement

## Advocacy Support Network

**24** Advocacy Support Staff in place

within **6** community organisations

**£868k** to support a further **1,448** individuals

## VSS Financial Support

**£4.2m** supporting

**6,501** individuals

Since the SDA support for The Bereaved scheme reopened on 1 April 2021, we have provided financial support to **1,054** bereaved applicants for the first time

## Programmes supporting survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA)

The needs-based service delivery model for victims and survivors, considers Health and Wellbeing (HWB) in its broadest sense, with support and services coordinated by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in partnership with community partners, underpinned by a network of HWB caseworkers which improves pathways and the survivor journey.

Support for survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse involves needs based awards directly to survivors as well as health and wellbeing support provided by two funded organisations within the community and voluntary sector, WAVE Trauma Centre and Advice NI.

The services and support delivered include:

- **Health and Wellbeing Case Workers** to identify and address the needs of survivors of HIA.
- **Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks** delivering bespoke assistance to meet individual needs.
- **Talking therapies** and **complementary therapies** that improve the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of survivors and that enhance their quality of life.
- Services that support and maintain **resilience and wellbeing** among survivors.
- **Welfare advice and** support for survivors and opportunities and activities focused on **personal and professional development**.
- Support to **retrieve information** and **access records** to assist with **family reunification and redress processes**.
- Support to **navigate redress processes** and aid in the documenting of **'Statements of Lived Experiences'** for the purposes of redress.

The impact of these support and services for survivors of the HIA, are shown in the **2023-24 HIA Impact Report below**.



# OUR IMPACT

## 2023/24

Support and services for survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse

### Information retrieval and redress process support

**81**  
Individuals supported to **record the statement of experience**

**79**  
individuals supported to **liaise with legal representatives, redress board and court attendance**

### Community Led Support & Services

**What we did**

**£539k** for **2** community partners

**How we did it**

- 68** individuals supported with **Complementary Therapies**
- 733** individuals supported in **Welfare, Personal Development and Social Support**
- 146** supported with **Talking Therapies**
- 684** individuals supported by a **Health and Wellbeing Caseworker**

**What difference did we make?**

- 2 out of 5** reported an improvement
- 65%** reported an improvement

### Individual needs supported

**What we did**

**£269k** to support the needs of **134** individuals

**How we did it**

- Persistent Pain** 23
- Psychological Support** 39
- Education & Training** 5
- Disability Aids** 68
- Social Isolation Programmes** 12
- Trauma Focused Physical Activity** 38

**What difference did we make?**

**6 out of 10** reported an improvement

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

### Programmes supporting those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses (MBMLW)

As referenced above, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited operated a pilot project of a needs based service delivery model from October 2022 to March 2024.

Health and Wellbeing support and services for those impacted by MBMLW are coordinated by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in partnership with two community partners, WAVE Trauma Centre and Adopt NI. This support involves needs based awards directly to individuals impacted by MBMLW as well as health and wellbeing support provided by two funded organisations within the community and voluntary sector.

The services and support include:

- **Health and Wellbeing Case Workers** to identify and address the needs of impacted individuals.
- **Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks** delivering bespoke assistance to meet individual needs.
- **Talking therapies** and **complementary therapies** that improve the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of individuals and that enhance their quality of life.
- Services that support and maintain **resilience and wellbeing** among those impacted.
- **Welfare advice** and support for individuals and opportunities and activities focused on **personal and professional development**.
- Support to **retrieve and access records**.
- **Specialist family tracing** and intermediary services.
- Voluntary **DNA testing** including wrap around **therapeutic support services** e.g. DNA interpretation and pre, during and post psychological support.

The impact of these support and services for those impacted by MBMLW are shown in the **2023-24 MBMLW Impact Report below**.



Mother and Baby Institutions,  
Magdalene Laundries  
and Workhouses

# OUR IMPACT

# 2023/24

Support and services for survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses

## Information retrieval and testimony/inquiry process support

**66**  
Individuals supported to retrieve information and/or engage in family tracing process

**88**  
Individuals supported with engaging in testimony/inquiry process

**23**  
Individuals supported with DNA testing and interpretation

## Community Led Support & Services

**What we did**

**£385k** for 2 community partners

**How we did it**

- 37** individuals supported with Complementary Therapies
- 91** individuals supported in Welfare, Personal Development and Social Support
- 48** supported with Talking Therapies
- 134** individuals supported by a Health and Wellbeing Caseworker

**What difference did we make?**

- 1 out of 2** reported an improvement
- 60%** reported an improvement

## Individual needs supported

**What we did**

**£39k** to support the needs of **34** individuals

**How we did it**

- Persistent Pain**: 9
- Psychological Support**: 22
- Education & Training**: 2
- Disability Aids**: 6
- Trauma Focused Physical Activity**: 10

**What difference did we make?**

**7 out of 10** reported an improvement

## Key Stakeholders and engagement

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited aims to support victims and survivors as they engage with the diverse services, agencies and other parts of society that contribute to the full and healthy life of the individual.

To achieve this, the organisation needs and values a strong network of partners with whom it can communicate and work in the interests of both victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict, survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse and those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. These key partnership level stakeholder relationships are illustrated in **Diagram 1** below.

**Diagram 1: Partnership-level Stakeholders**



### **Key Partnership-Level Stakeholders for Victims and Survivors (Troubles/conflict)**

The Strategy for Victims and Survivors (2009-19) highlights the key strategic partners that support the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to deliver on its aims and objectives for victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict, namely: The Executive Office (TEO), the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS), and the Victims and Survivors Forum.

These bodies work together to review the delivery of services for victims and survivors (as well as other matters), including the impact on victims and survivors of the thematic areas of work referred to as Dealing with the Past, and Building for the Future. On the basis of this analysis and insight, the Commission is responsible for developing advice for TEO on policy matters affecting victims and survivors. As part of its role the Commission also promotes the interests of victims and survivors, undertakes research and reviews the effectiveness of the services provided to victims and survivors.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited also works closely with Victims and Survivors organisations, establishing working groups to input into the design of new services and informing best practice. These working groups have been critical in informing the co-design and development of the victims strategy.

### **Key Partnership-Level Stakeholders in delivery of services for survivors of HIA**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited, in its work to provide support and services to survivors of HIA, has identified key strategic partners that support it to deliver on its aims and objectives, including: The Executive Office (TEO), the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA), and the HIA Redress Board. These bodies work together to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Hart Inquiry.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited regularly engages with our community and voluntary sector partner organisations to input into the design of services and inform best practice.

### **Key Partnership-Level Stakeholders in delivery of services for those impacted by MBMLW**

With dedicated structures/ agencies for those impacted by MBMLW continuing to be established, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has identified the following key strategic partners that support it to deliver its aims and objectives, including: The Executive Office (TEO), the MBMLW Consultative Forum and the appointed MBMLW Independent Panel.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited will also work closely with the community and voluntary sector partners who are providing services to input into the design of new services and informing best practice.

### **Key Partnership working with TEO as Sponsor Department**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is accountable to TEO in terms of its procedures, activities, and financial responsibilities which are managed through a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) and through regular Accountability meetings.

### **Strategic Developments Impacting Programme Delivery and Stakeholder Engagement**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continues to operate within a challenging, complex and changing strategic context. Key elements of this context include:

#### **1. Funding pressures**

The VSS is primarily funded by The Executive Office (TEO). The funding position beyond this current financial year remains unknown but is expected to continue to be challenging.

Whilst the VSS and in turn the organisations we fund, receive relative budget protection, this is set in the context of record inflation and demands on services that are out-stripping current levels of provision, for reasons such as the cost of living crisis, Legacy developments, anniversary dates/events, awareness campaigns etc, which means that with the funding we have, waiting lists for services at community based partner organisations are continuing to grow.

#### **2. New Victims Strategy**

The ten-year strategy published by The Executive Office in November 2009 has been extended now to 31 March 2025 to allow for the Co-Design, consultation and approval of a new strategy. That Co-Design process included sessions attended by representatives of partner organisations in the community & voluntary sector. This was to help design and develop a new strategy which builds on lessons from the previous strategy (including the formal evaluation of that strategy), identify areas for further research, and consider structures, timeframes and delivery models. Consultation on the draft strategy opened on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and closed on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Once the strategy has been formally approved by Ministers, VSS will begin preparations for the opening of a new Victim Support Programme and Individual Needs Programme.

#### **3. HIA Redress Scheme Deadline**

The HIA Redress Scheme will close to new applications on 2 April 2025, with planned awareness raising of the closure date not only anticipated to heighten awareness but also the anxiety of those yet to apply, potentially leading to increased pressure and demand on services.

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited will continue to work closely with COSICA, TEO and HIA Redress Board to monitor and ensure sufficient resources within this area to meet the deadline.

### **4. Truth Recovery Programme**

With implementation of key recommendations outlined and agreed by Ministers in the Truth Recovery Strategy (2021) now underway and with dedicated support services for survivors established, focus remains on the long-awaited public inquiry and redress scheme, with a perceived lack of progress in these areas contributing to more challenging client presentations and placing greater demands on services.

Additionally, the Programme's public consultation, coupled with the Independent Panel's wider public call for testimony in the coming months is anticipated to generate heightened awareness and demand for services.

### **5. The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme**

The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS) opened for applications in August 2021. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited provides funding to five community partner organisations to support individuals to make applications to the scheme. There is significant demand for support, which has been compounded by the fact that under the existing regulations, applicants applying after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 would not have been able to have their award backdated to 2014. On 1 August 2024, following representations from the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, NI political parties, departments and the community sector, the Secretary of State extended this deadline by two years to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026.

### **6. The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023**

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 came into effect in September 2023 and significant opposition remains from individual victims and survivors, the organisations that support them, as well as all the main local Political Parties.

A legal case taken by individual victims and survivors was ruled on by the High Court in February 2024, finding that the immunity provisions were in breach of Articles 2 & 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Mr Justice Colton also found that he was satisfied that the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) could carry out human rights compliant investigations. The UK Government is appealing elements of this decision. At this same time, the Irish government is taking a case against the UK at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR), established through this Act became operational on 1 May 2024.

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

VSS plays a key role in supporting the advocacy needs of victims and survivors through the current **Advocacy Support Network** and will continue to do so through the new VSS PEACEPLUS project.

We will continue to support these organisations delivering advocacy support to enable them to meet the needs of victims and survivors, through whatever legacy mechanisms are in place, and however they wish to engage in these processes. We also recognise that the impact of this Act and that the media coverage it continues to garner, is likely to have an impact on the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors and increase the pressure on victims' organisations to provide additional support with already challenging resources.

### 7. Regional Trauma Network

The Regional Trauma Network (RTN) provides a managed care network for those within the VSS remit, whose mental health has been impacted.

The RTN is entering year 2 of a 3-year pilot phase. During this pilot phase pathways for victims and survivors, which will connect them to specialist trauma care by drawing on existing resources and expertise from both the statutory and community and voluntary sectors, will be protected and prioritised.

The RTN opened for referrals on 31 March 2023. This was subsequently marked with a well-attended event in February 2024. With awareness growing, it is expected that as referral volumes from statutory services through to VSS funded organisations increase, that pressures on already stretched resources could become even more difficult to manage. This continues to be a key focus for VSS, working with our partners in TEO and the Department of Health.

### 8. VSS – PULSE (PEACEPLUS Programme)

VSS is the **Lead Partner** for **Theme 4 (Investment Area 3 – ‘Victims and Survivors’)** of the new PEACEPLUS Programme.

Investment Area 3 (Victims and Survivors) of Theme 4 (Healthy and Inclusive Communities) aims to further build on the **health and wellbeing support and services** delivered to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict as part of our previous **PEACE IV project**.

The **PULSE** Project (**P**artnership for **U**nderstanding, **L**earning, **S**upport and **E**ducation) provides an opportunity for VSS (as Lead Partner) and our **12** Project Partners, to further develop and enhance the following key areas of work:

- Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Network
- Advocacy Support Programme (Truth, Justice, and Acknowledgement)

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

- Resilience Programme
- Workforce Training and Development
- Research

VSS was successful with a bid to SEUPB as Lead Partner which was approved on 21 May 2024. Project implementation plans, including work on the pre-contract requirements to allow a Letter of Offer from SEUPB to be provided are in progress.

### Summary Performance against Delivery Plan Strategic Outcomes

The principal activities of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in this year have been outlined above. This activity was premised on **5** Strategic Outcomes (as shown on page 28), comprising **42** Key Actions (with associated outputs and outcomes), agreed with The Executive Office.



**FULLY ACHIEVED**



**PARTIALLY ACHIEVED**



**NOT ACHIEVED**

**The areas of partial or non-achievement of these eleven delivery plan targets are as follows:**

Seven of the eleven targets which were partially achieved relate to targets set for the provision of services for those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

Laundries and Workhouses. These spanned strategic objectives 1 to 3, with the percentage achievement against target ranging from 20% to 84%.

2023-24 continued to be a pilot year for the MBMLW service within VSS and our community partner organisations as the wider Truth Recovery Programme continued to be stood up. It is expected that the wider Truth Recovery Programme in 2024-25 will include a call for action to provide evidence to the Independent Panel along with an advertising campaign which will in turn likely result in an increased demand for VSS funded health and wellbeing support and services.

**The additional four areas which were partially achieved are:**

### **Strategic outcome 2 (SO2) – Improved access to opportunities for learning and development**

1. Ensure access and availability of **Education and Training** including numeracy and literacy support via the Individual Needs Programme to **75 victims and survivors (Troubles/conflict (T/c))**.
  - Support was provided to **61 individuals** which increased opportunities for employment progression and/or career development.
  - Uptake continued to be impacted by changes made in 2022-23 to the scope of the framework, which changed the types of courses/activity that could be funded.

### **Strategic outcome 5 (SO5) – An efficient and effective organisation.**

2. Ensure that all **PEACE IV closure** requirements are met. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited submitted its final claim on 23 November 2023 and have actively worked to respond to all requests from SEUPB in respect of the verification of the final claims. The post project evaluation was submitted on 30 January 2024, but final project closure requires SEUPB verification of all claims and reports and SEUPB have not completed this as of 31 March 2024.
3. Completion of staffing restructure as agreed through Business Consultancy Services. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited made significant progress against this target in the 2023-24 year. A funding options paper was completed and approved by TEO, with the PEACEPLUS apportionment subject to bid approval (received 21 May 2024), and business case approval from TEO on 12 March 2024. Job role evaluations are in place and recruitment is underway since receiving TEO approvals. It is expected that recruitment processes within this restructure will complete in Autumn/Winter 2024.

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

4. By year end **operate within allocated budget**, avoiding overspend and managing underspend within a tolerance of 1.5%. The financial results are shown on page 120, with the total underspend being 2.66%.

TEO provided the Victims and Survivors Service Limited with a final budget allocation for 2023-24 on 4 March 2024 totalling **£21.175m**. It included **£3,970k of ring-fenced (RF) budget** in the areas of **HIA, TPDPS and MBMLW**. A ring-fenced budget can only be utilised for that specific areas of spend.

The combined underspend within the non-ringfenced areas is £161k – 0.95%.

The underspends in the areas of TPDPS, MBMLW and HIA were notified to TEO in Q4 of 2023-24 as VSS became aware of these. No mechanisms by which to allow surrender of this budget were available. MBMLW in particular is an area within which expenditure is very much demand-led, and the level of demand has proved challenging to accurately forecast during the initial pilot phase of this service.

Further details of these summary performance indicators are outlined in the extracts of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Delivery Plan, provided in [Appendix 2](#).

## 1.2 Performance Analysis

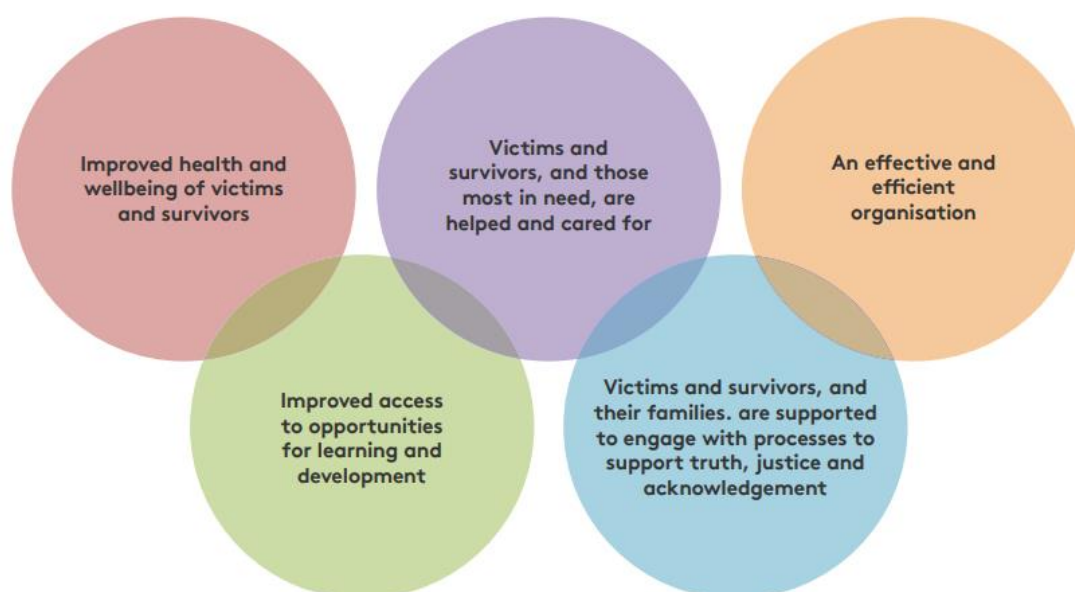
As summarised above, during 2023-24 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was responsible for delivering funding and resources to support victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict, survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse, and support for those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

This section provides a detailed analysis of each of these service areas and assesses this information in the context of the organisation's agreed Strategic Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (see [Appendix 2](#)).

### Focus on Strategic Outcomes

The vision of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is to 'improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors'. The organisation has worked collaboratively with our strategic partners, to develop five strategic outcomes to help us achieve this for all the victims and survivors that we support. These are outlined in [Diagram 2 below](#):

**Diagram 2: Victims and Survivors Service Limited Strategic Outcomes**



Whilst a Programme for Government has not been finalised by an Executive, Ministers previously agreed to a consultation on a draft Outcomes Framework in 2021, shown below:

Diagram 3: Draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework 2021



The Victims and Survivors Service Limited delivery plan is designed to align and link with the outcomes contained within the draft PfG 2021, specifically;

-  We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect
-  We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives
-  Everyone can reach their potential
-  We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives

All support and services delivered by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in 2023-24 have been modelled to reflect these key strategic outcomes. Reporting on progress against these objectives is a priority for the organisation.

A detailed monitoring and evaluation framework that applies to this activity is included within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Corporate Plan and is attached at **Appendix 3**. This framework shapes and informs the below discussion of performance and outcomes measurement.

## **VICTIMS SUPPORT PROGRAMME (2017-24)**

### ***Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict***

#### **Background**

With an indicative budget of over £6 million per annum, the Victims Support Programme 2017-2020 opened for applications in November 2016. At that time 55 organisations were successful in securing funding. In 2020 a two-year extension was put in place to enable time for the evaluation of the previous programme to be completed as well as the consultation and drafting of a new strategy for victims and survivors post 2022.

The consultation for the new Victims & Survivors Strategy opened from 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024. To facilitate the continuation of services during the consultation and drafting of the new strategy, a further extension of the programme was awarded until 2025. It is now expected the new Victims Strategy will be implemented in 2025 with the new Victims & Survivors Funding Programme following shortly after.

Community and Voluntary Sector organisations in receipt of funding under the Victims Support Programme are committed to supporting victims and survivors in line with the vision, mission and values of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

The Victims Support Programme supports the delivery of services which align with the key themes and needs identified in the [Comprehensive Needs Assessment](#) published by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in 2012, reviewed again in 2021 ([Better Together Report](#)) by the Commission which identified the areas of need identified in 2012 continued to be of relevance almost a decade later.

For a full list of organisations currently in receipt of funding, please refer to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website ([www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org)).

#### **Services and activities delivered under the Victims Support Programme**

The services and activities delivered under the Victims Support Programme in 2023-24 can be grouped into the following broad categories:

- Talking Therapies
- Complementary Therapies
- Befriending Services
- Personal and Professional Development
- Transgenerational Services
- Truth, Justice, and Acknowledgement Activities
- Welfare Support
- Other Social Support Activities

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Outcomes-based monitoring is fully operational in all organisations funded to deliver Complementary Therapies and Talking Therapies under the Victims Support Programme. To monitor and evaluate these services, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited operates the standardised measurement tools described below.

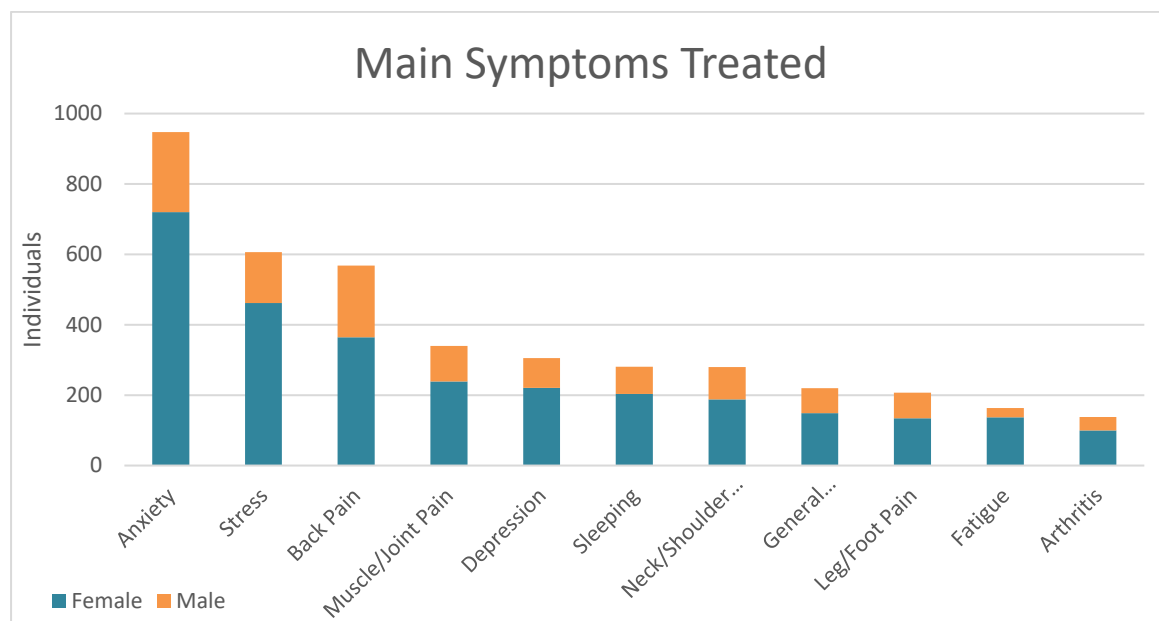
### ***Complementary Therapies: MYMOP (Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile)***

MYMOP is a client-generated outcome questionnaire which is problem-specific but includes measures of general wellbeing and is applicable to all clients, whether their presenting symptoms are physical, emotional or social.

The monitoring data gathered using MYMOP provides the following key insights into this area of funded service delivery:

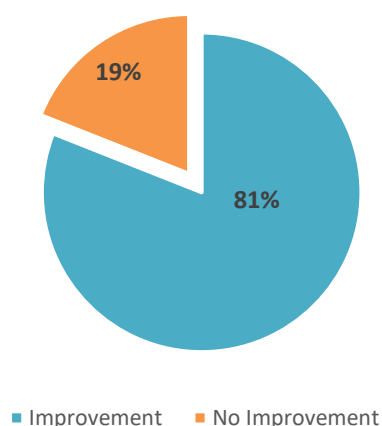
- In 2023-24 **21** community partner organisations recommenced the delivery of complementary therapies. In this period **3,088** individuals availed of complementary therapies.
- **2,957** of these individuals completed their course and **131** ended therapies early (4.24% compared to 5.67% in 2022-23).
- The ratio of female:male accessing support is **7:3**.
- The most common symptoms reported by individuals accessing funded Complementary Therapies continue to be anxiety, stress, back and joint pain and depression. This information, along with the detail of additional symptoms frequently reported, is shown in **Diagram 4** below.

**Diagram 4: Summary Monitoring Information – MYMOP: Complementary Therapies (Client Numbers, Client Gender Breakdown and Symptoms Treated)**



Overall, the outcomes data for individuals accessing Complementary Therapies in 2023-24 has remained the same as reported last year. In 2023-24, 4 out of 5 individuals reported an overall improvement in symptoms. This information is shown in **Diagram 5** below.

**Diagram 5: Summary Outcomes Information – MYMOP: Complementary Therapies**



The information analysed above demonstrates that Complementary Therapies continue to deliver overwhelmingly positive outcomes, making a significant contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors. Feedback as to why a minority of individuals do not benefit from Complementary Therapies often points to external factors.

### ***Talking Therapies - CORE Net***

CORE Net is an external-facing system based around the CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) standard which records outcome measures that track the progress and recovery of individuals accessing Talking Therapies. It is a client self-report questionnaire administered at each therapy session to measure outcomes across the following four domains:

- Wellbeing
- Risk
- Problems
- Functioning

The monitoring data gathered using CORE Net provides the following **key insights** into this area of funded service delivery:

- In 2023-24, **19** funded organisations offered Talking Therapies to victims and survivors.
- **3,175** individuals attended talking therapy sessions during the year
- **1,751** courses of therapy completed during the period.
  - **1,395** (80%) of these were completed as planned.
  - **356** (20%) ended early (unplanned).

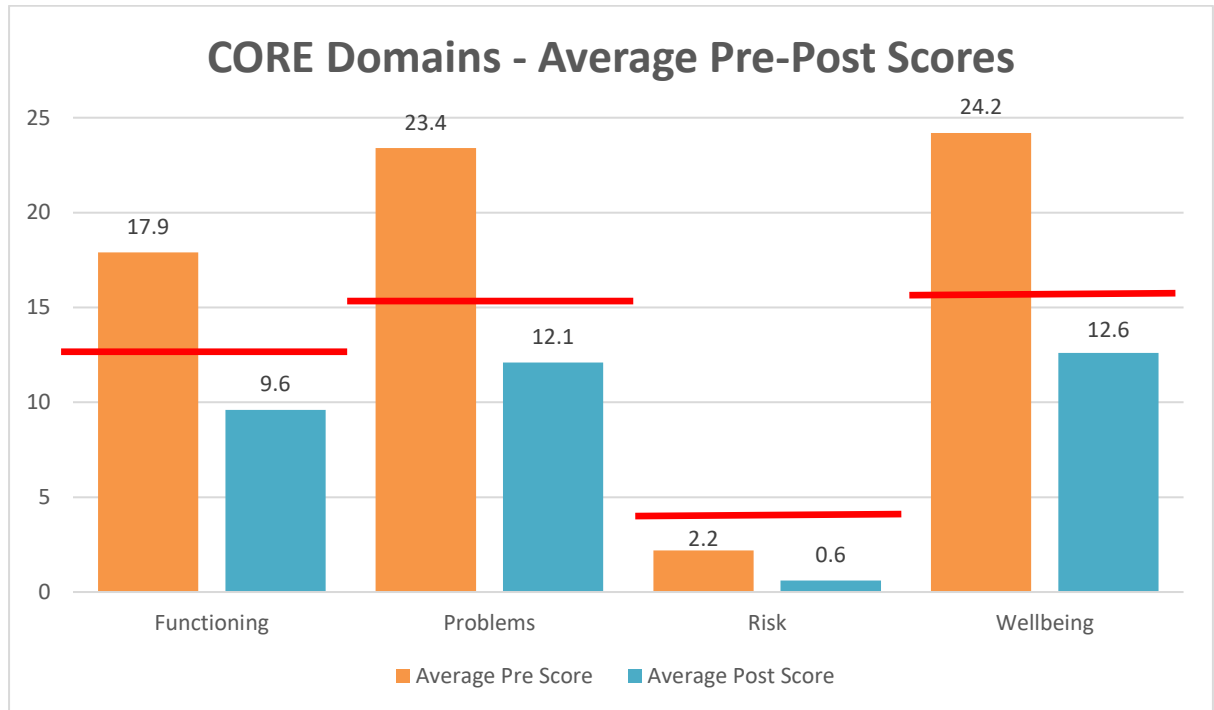
### **What impact does Talking Therapy have?**

Overall, **60%** of individuals accessing this service reported a positive improvement which is demonstrated across all four domains in **Diagram 6** below.

The **pre-scores** in 3 of the 4 domains are above the clinical cut-off score (which represents the boundary between “non-clinical” and the “clinical range” on an outcome measure), with the post therapy scores in these domains all then showing a reduction to levels below this cut-off score. This movement demonstrates the significant impact of the therapeutic intervention.

It should be noted that the risk domain does not breach the clinical cut-off score which demonstrates that it is appropriate for these individuals to receive this therapy at community level.

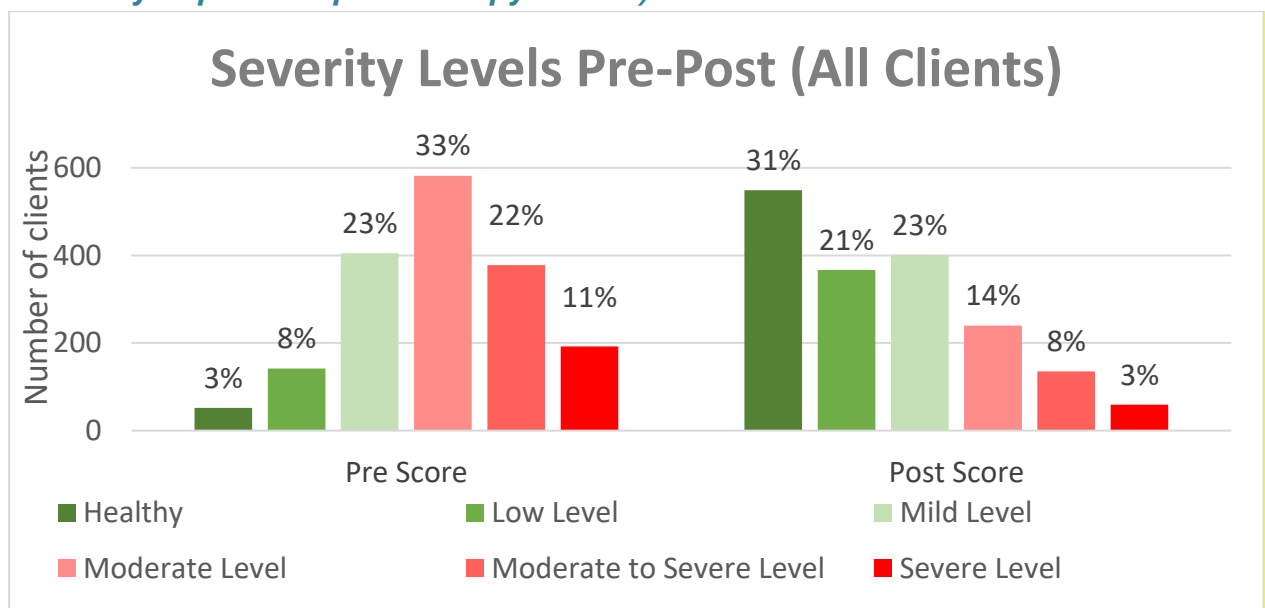
Diagram 6: Improvements By Domain – CORE Net: Talking Therapies



— The Clinical Cut-off Score refers to a score that is presumed to represent the boundary between "non-clinical" and the "clinical range" on an outcome measure.

Although there is a wide range of pre and post-scores at the individual level, **66%** of client pre-therapy scores are in the **Moderate** to **Severe** ranges. The average overall pre-score is at the upper extreme of the **Moderate** range, as presented in [Diagram 7](#) below.

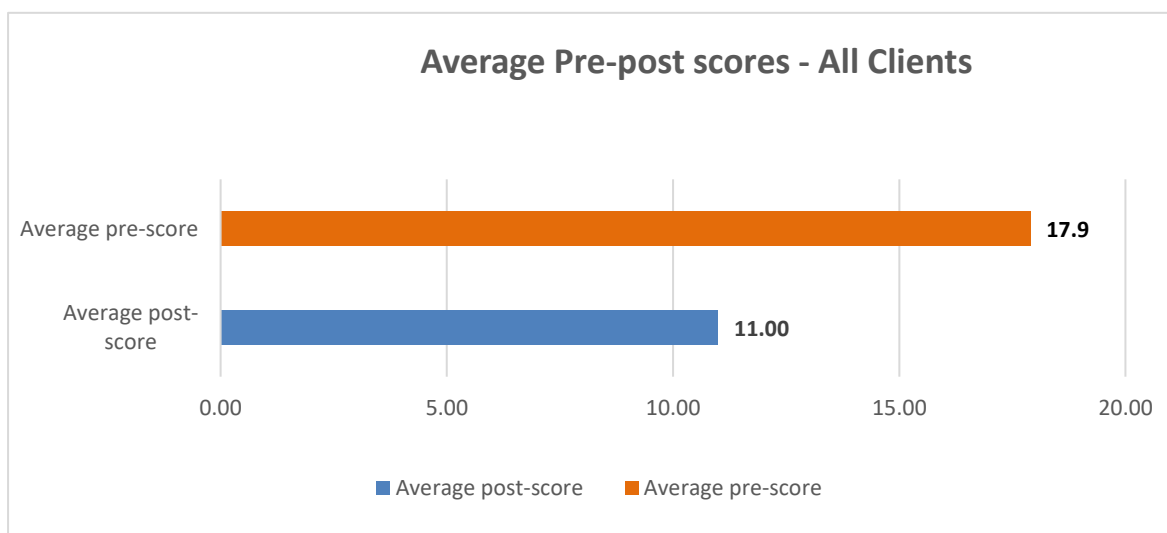
Diagram 7: Outcomes Information – CORE Net: Talking Therapies (showing severity of pre- and post-therapy scores)



## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

By contrast, post-therapy only **25%** of client scores are in the **Moderate** to **Severe** ranges, the average score is at the lower end of the **mild** range and on average there has been a **reliable** change. This information is shown in **Diagram 8** below.

**Diagram 8: Summary Outcomes Information – CORE Net: Talking Therapies (showing difference between average pre- and post-therapy scores)**



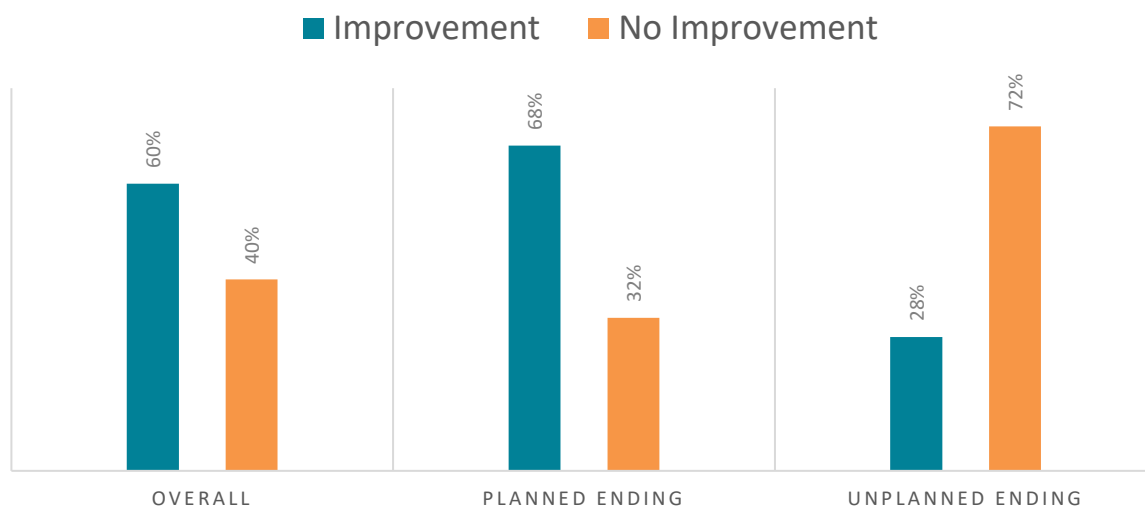
0-4 healthy non-clinical, 5-9 mild non-clinical, 10-14 mild, 15-19 moderate, 20-24 moderate-to-severe, 25-40 severe

The information analysed above demonstrates that in 3 out of 5 cases, **Talking Therapies deliver positive outcomes**. This confirms that the service makes a positive contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.

### **The impact of a planned vs unplanned end to therapy on the outcome.**

Data shows that individuals who complete therapy with their therapist, as planned, have a much greater likelihood of a positive outcome (68%). However, it is noteworthy that (28%) percentage of individuals who have an unplanned ending of therapy also experience a positive outcome. This information is shown in **Diagram 9** below.

Diagram 9: Summary Outcomes Information – CORE Net: Talking Therapies (showing variance between planned and unplanned endings)



The reasons as to why 20% of Talking Therapy clients do not complete their therapy as planned have been investigated, with the most common reasons listed as:

- Too many DNAs ('Did Not Attend' session). Organisations may apply a policy to discontinue therapy based on repeated failure to attend;
- Client did not wish to continue;
- Client crisis; and
- Due to loss of contact with client.

## Additional Health and Wellbeing Activities and Services: Outcomes

Outcomes monitoring measures for additional health and wellbeing activities and services delivered by funded community partners are collected through organisational case studies and quotes from direct beneficiaries. Two examples of service user feedback are shown below:

### ***Personal Professional Development (PPD)***

This individual is a long-standing member of the organisation but due to being a carer for her now deceased husband was unable to partake over the past 2 years whilst she focused on caring for her husband. Following the death of her husband at the start of 2023 she was feeling particularly lonely, depressed, isolated and unwilling to go out. Following some encouragement and coaxing from her daughter she has just recently begun to engage in the community again to deal with and manage her grief. Attendance at one of our recent PPD classes marked her first engagement with others for some time.

The lady attended an arts and crafts model making class in November 2023, where she and the other participants were given 3D animal kits which had to be assembled to create a beautiful model of a horse, elephant etc depending on individual choice. It was a lengthy process to assemble but with guidance and support the lady managed to complete the full task successfully and got to take her final creation home.

The lady explained the experience did her the world of good and she felt so pleased with herself that she was able to take all the pieces of the kit and bring them to life.

*'The model horse I created is proudly displayed in my living room and every time I look at it, I feel a real sense of achievement that I was able to make it after feeling so low for so long after I lost my husband. It has shown me I can do things again and even though it might seem small to some people it has given me a real sense of hope for the future.'*

### ***Befriending Support***

A 68-year-old male who lost his son during the troubles suddenly lost his wife in 2023. The gentleman was undergoing treatment at the time and had been reliant on his wife to bring him to appointments. The gentleman was referred by his GP to a VSS funded organisation which provides befriending services whereby a volunteer would drive the gentleman to and from appointments.

After a period of time the befriender suggested attending the weekly coffee morning and collected the gentleman and brought him along to the weekly coffee morning where he met other individuals one of which was also a widower and they struck up a friendship. The gentleman told us that the feelings of loneliness he experienced after his wife died was unbearable, he didn't know how to continue with his day-to-day life.

***'Meeting my befriender was a lifeline, a focus to our weekly meet ups and knowing I wasn't completely on my own helped during the darker days. Meeting others who are also grieving makes me feel I am not the only one and we may not talk about it but just being there is a comfort'.***

## INDIVIDUAL NEEDS PROGRAMME (2023-24) Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict

### Background

The VSS service delivery model is a **needs-based** and **outcomes-focused model of integrated services and support**, working in **partnership with funded organisations** across the region.

Like the Victims Support Programme, the services and support provided under the Individual Needs Programme are modelled to reflect the five Strategic Outcomes in **Diagram 2** (see page 28) and monitored in line with the monitoring and evaluation framework at **Appendix 3**.

### Grant Funding Schemes

#### ***‘Existing Clients’: Self-Directed Assistance Payments***

Under the VSS model, limited grant funding (referred to as Self-Directed Assistance) was available to all individuals registered with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited as at 5pm on Friday 31 March 2017 and found to be eligible per the rules governing the Support Schemes and/or the Financial Assistance Scheme delivered in 2016-17.

These awards were made in the following schemes:

- **Support for Bereaved** which is support for individuals bereaved by a parent, partner or child due to a Troubles/conflict related incident;
- **Support for the Injured Scheme** ongoing physical or psychological injury from Troubles/conflict related incident where the individual was in receipt of middle or high-rate DLA;
- **Support for Carers** which is support for the carers of an individual who was injured due to a Troubles/conflict related injury and provided caring for more than 35 hours per week); and
- **Financial Assistance Scheme** a means tested scheme.

#### ***The Bereaved Self-Directed Assistance Payments Scheme which re-opened on 1st April 2021.***

The scheme applies to individuals **bereaved of a parent, spouse/partner, and/or a child**. These victims and survivors continued to receive an annual payment within the 2023-24 Financial Year (and any subsequent years subject to the scheme remaining operational), with the scheme remaining open to new entrants.

## Needs Based Schemes

### *Existing and New Clients: Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks*

Further to the Self-Directed Assistance Payments, under the VSS service delivery model both previously registered and new individuals coming forward all have access to needs-led assistance through a range of measures, enabled specifically by the network of Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers and Regional Case Managers. This includes:

- Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks under both the Individual Needs Programme and the Resilience Programme, delivering bespoke assistance to meet individual needs.
- The full range of services and support delivered by community-based organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme; and
- One-to-one Health and Wellbeing Caseworker support and Advocacy Support to engage with legacy institutions and processes.

The eligibility criteria for accessing this additional support is evidenced confirmation that the individual meets the definition of a victim/survivor per the Victims and Survivors (NI) Order (2006).

The Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks provided are:

- Disability Aids
- Education and Training (including one to one literacy and numeracy)
- Persistent Pain
- Psychological Support
- Social Isolation
- Trauma Focused Physical Activity
- Volunteering

**Table 1** on page 45 summarises the value of awards issued under each framework for the Individual Needs Programme and the Resilience Programme. The value of award is variable, depending on the needs and relevant support identified.

The outcomes measurement tool used within the additional needs-based frameworks is the **Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS)**. It is a gentle, client-centred self-report scale of functional impairment attributable to an identified problem. It measures the impact of mental health difficulties on five areas of functioning: work, home management, social leisure, private leisure and personal or family relationships. It is typically completed twice: before and after an intervention, to measure the impact of the intervention on the client's self-reported impairment. The reported outcomes shown on Page 42 in **Diagram 10** are based on responses recorded from clients in receipt of the framework support. These positive outcomes demonstrate the impact of these interventions for individual victims and

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

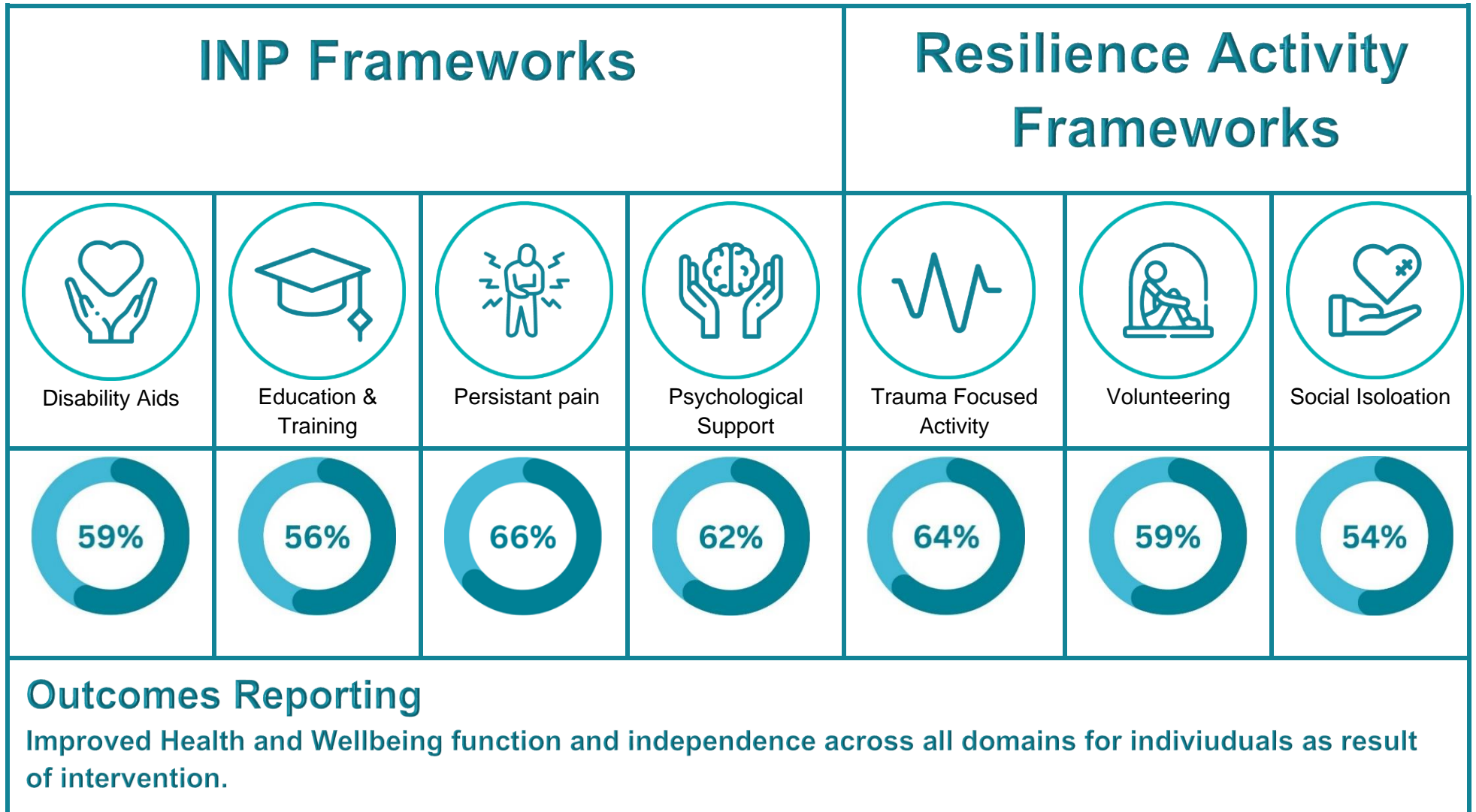
survivors but do fall short of the anticipated outcome of 65-70% improvement set out within the VSS delivery plan, based on previous positive outcomes achieved within the frameworks.

WSAS has been the outcome measurement tool used since the needs-based model was introduced in 2017. With the benefit of seven years' experience in use and the volume of data collected, we have identified the following limitations of WSAS for measuring outcomes for these interventions:

- It is a snapshot at a particular point in time;
- Individuals may be in receipt of multiple overlapping frameworks; and
- External factors can affect the scoring.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited through its staffing restructure will be adding dedicated staff who will lead on implementation of identified improvements within our processes for recording and reporting of outcome metrics (including WSAS scores). This will include more in-depth reporting by areas of functioning as well as seeking to improve correlation between the intervention and the outcome. We will also consider alternative outcomes measurement tools in this area.

Diagram 10: Outcome data showing the improved Health and Wellbeing function and independent across all domains as a result of framework interventions.



### **Case Examples**

Included below are two condensed case examples that illustrate the types of outcomes achieved for clients through Additional Needs Based Framework support.

#### **Volunteering Framework**

Client engaged with a Health and Wellbeing Caseworker to undertake a consultation and explore his support options following a decline in his psychological health.

The client reported experiencing several trauma related symptoms including flashbacks, nightmares, low mood and limited motivation over a prolonged period of time. The client was physically injured as a result of Troubles/conflict incident a number of years ago, rendering him with permanent injuries and unable to work. The client was initially hesitant to engage in a discussion around his needs however over a number of weeks and several conversations he became more comfortable and able to open up.

He shared his internal struggles and feelings of inadequacy around his inability to work and his difficulty in finding a sense of purpose in his life. On further exploration of his interests, he revealed a passion for animals which enabled further discussion around potential volunteering opportunities which the client had a keen interest in.

The caseworker engaged a number of local shelters and managed to secure a volunteer opportunity for the client at his local kennels, walking dogs currently accommodated and helping with light cleaning duties. The caseworker also submitted a request under the Volunteering Framework for outdoor clothing, including overalls and waterproof boots to assist him in his role.

During follow up the client reported a marked improvement in his overall emotional wellbeing.

***“Volunteering at the shelter has given me a real lift. I have a purpose now and a reason to get up and keep going every day. I’ve found it so rewarding”.***

### ***Education & Training Framework***

Client engaged with a Health and Wellbeing Caseworker to undertake a consultation and explore his support options having been bereaved of a parent as child as a result of Troubles/conflict related incident.

The client shared the difficulties of suffering a bereavement of this magnitude at such a critical stage of his development and the impact this had on many aspects of life. He left education and the opportunity to go to university and instead got a job to support his mother and siblings financially, who were struggling financially and assumed the responsibility of breadwinner at a very young age.

He shared his difficulties in enhancing his career prospects and achieving his full potential, with this inner conflict contributing to his low confidence and self-esteem. Over a number of sessions, the caseworker empowered and supported him to explore potential educational options, weighing the risks and benefits of each before submitting a request for funding for a degree course.

The course would take three years to complete and offered the flexibility he required to continue working whilst studying. His request was supported, and he has since completed the course and awarded with a distinction.

***“This opportunity has given me a sense of worth and pride and has shown me what I can achieve despite the circumstances I have found myself in as a result of the Troubles. This opportunity has allowed me to build from these circumstances and restore some degree of confidence in myself.***

***I cannot thank you enough for believing in me and giving me this opportunity it has created such a positive impact, and I will always be grateful”.***

**Table 1: Awards and Payments made under the Individual Needs Programme, and Resilience Programme in 2023-24.**

Award Description	Value of Individual Awards	Number of Awards Issued	Payments Made
<b>Self-Directed Assistance Payments</b>			
Self-Directed Assistance –Bereaved	£500	3,780	£1,848,000
Self-Directed Assistance –Carer	£500	475	£233,500
Self-Directed Assistance –FA Only	£500	405	£201,500
Self-Directed Assistance –Injured (HRC)	£500	754	£376,000
Self-Directed Assistance –Injured (MRC)	£500	979	£488,000
Self-Directed Assistance – Additional Needs Based Payments – (Severely Injured)	£500	754	£376,000
Self-Directed Assistance – Additional Needs Based Payments – (Bereaved)	£500	714	£356,500
Additional Needs Based Payments – Home Heating Support	£500	668	£334,000
<b>Sub Total – Self-Directed Assistance Payments</b>		<b>8,529</b>	<b>£4,213,500</b>
<b>Individual Needs Programme Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks</b>			
Disability Aids	variable	87	£196,326
Education and Training	variable	67	£61,703
Persistent Pain - Complementary Therapies	variable	73	£24,727
Persistent Pain - Physiotherapy 23-24	variable	185	£68,802
Psychological Support 23-24	variable	283	£120,415
<b>Sub Total - Individual Needs Programme Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks</b>		<b>695</b>	<b>£471,973</b>

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

<b>Resilience Programme</b>			
Resilience (Trauma-Focused Physical Activity)	variable	236	£80,140
Resilience (Volunteering)	variable	56	£17,548
Resilience (Social Isolation)	variable	112	£79,234
<b>Sub Total Resilience Programme</b>		<b>404</b>	<b>£176,922</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>9,628</b>	<b>£4,862,395</b>

There were a number of awards with unspent balances during 2023-24, which explains the variance between the awards issued and the actual payments made. Unspent balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 were accrued in the year end accounts. In addition, expenditure of £13,955 was incurred in 2023-24 for awards related to closed schemes and frameworks from prior years. These two items bring the total expense under the Individual Needs Programme and the Resilience Programme in 2023-24 to £4,889,822.

### **PEACE IV Programme (2016-2023 - Closed)**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited PEACE IV project completed in November 2022, and closed in March 2023. The PEACE IV project provided Health and Wellbeing and Advocacy services delivered by Voluntary and Community sector organisations and the Victims and Survivors Service. The project improved the quality and access to services in the sector for victims and survivors and their families across NI, Ireland, Great Britain and beyond through an inclusive and co-ordinated model of service.

### **Interim funding from The Executive Office (Peace Interim Funding)**

As noted above, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's PEACE IV project closed in March 2023, with funding for activity ending on 30 November 2022. The Executive Office (TEO) has made available funds for the continuation of some previously PEACE IV funded services since 1 December 2022 and have done so until the 21 May 2024, the date on which the VSS PEACE PULSE Project was approved by SEUPB. The interim funding has allowed for the retention of existing staff who hold a wealth of knowledge and experience built throughout the course of the PEACE IV programme.

The PEACE Interim funding provides continuation of the established a network of **experienced and trauma informed Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers and Advocacy Support Workers** within the community that support the individual needs of victims and survivors.

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

It also maintained the **established referral pathways** for Individuals into the **Regional Trauma Network** ensuring that victims and survivors have clear referral pathways into statutory provision.

**PEACE Interim funding** provided by The Executive Office in 2023-24 has supported:

- The **delivery of Advocacy Support** by our community-based grantees, employing 4 Advocacy Managers and 20 Advocacy Support Workers, whose focus is to assist victims and survivors to engage with legacy institutions and processes. These staff supported **1,448** individuals with advocacy needs in the year to 31 March 2024.
- The continuation of the established **Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Network** of 26 Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers employed within funded organisations who have supported **2,923** individual victims and survivors in 2023-24.
- The continuation of the **Resilience Programme** through which **356** individual victims and survivors have been supported with Trauma-Focussed Physical Activity, Social Isolation and Volunteering activities.
- The continued provision of **Trauma Training** through WAVE Trauma Centre, which has included **251** individuals attending psycho-educational workshops and provided support to **20** individuals to study within a BSc (Hons) in Trauma Studies.

## PEACEPLUS

The PEACEPLUS Programme is a unique cross-border structural funding programme aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful, stable, and prosperous society in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. PEACEPLUS has been designed to build upon the achievements of the previous PEACE IV programme.

The PEACEPLUS Programme is supported by the European Union, the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and the Irish Government. It is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). PEACEPLUS comprises six themes, which are outlined below:



## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has been named as the **Lead Partner** for **Theme 4 (Investment Area 3 – ‘Victims and Survivors’)** of the new PEACEPLUS Programme.

Investment Area 3 (Victims and Survivors) of Theme 4 (Healthy and Inclusive Communities) aims to further build on the health and wellbeing support and services delivered to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict as part of our previous PEACE IV project.

The **objective** of this Theme and Investment Area is to contribute to the creation of a more cohesive society through an increase in the provision of **Health and Wellbeing** and **Advocacy Support** for victims and survivors.

It will **result** in improved access to services by victims and survivors and enhanced understanding of the effects of the past Troubles/conflict, in a manner which contributes to peace and reconciliation.

VSS applied to SEUPB under Theme 4.3 in August 2023, as Lead Partner along with 10 Community and Voluntary organisations, the Commission for Victims and Survivors and a cross border Partner, Pobal to deliver the following:

- **A Health and Wellbeing, Resilience, and Advocacy Support Programme**

To continue, develop and enhance, a Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Network/Advocacy Support Network and Resilience Programme which will build on the experience of the VSS PEACE IV Project.

- **Workforce Training and Development**

To continue to develop and enhance a comprehensive Training and Development Programme, consisting of both accredited training and continuing professional development programmes.

- **The design, delivery, and implementation of a research strategy/action plan**

The delivery of two co-designed research projects which adopt a multi-site, cross-jurisdictional, mixed method approach to promote the voice and highlight the issues of victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict.

The application was successful and VSS received notification of approval on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024. A formal Letter of Offer was issued and accepted in September 2024 following completion of all pre-contract conditions.

This will result in an investment of €25m over a 4-year period into the enhancement of services for victims and survivors in NI, Ireland and Great Britain.

## Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS)

The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS) opened for applications in August 2021. Whilst VSS is not responsible for the delivery of the scheme, funding has been received from TEO to provide resources to 5 community partner organisations who will assist victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict to make applications to this scheme. **Diagram 11** below shows the support provided by the five community partners as well as the high levels of demand which still exist. Data shows that where applicants benefited from support from VSS Community Partners, their applications are generally of a higher quality than those who have not. Demand from individual victims and survivors for support from community partners with applications increased significantly during the year with the approaching deadline of 31 August 2024 (now extended to 31 August 2026) for applications to be received to qualify for backdating. In response, funding for an additional 18 posts to support applications has been provided in 2023-24, bringing the total community staff posts to 59.

**Diagram 11: Sector Support to individual applicants since scheme opened.**



VSS, along with these 5 organisations work closely with TEO and the Victims Payment Board (VPB) to try to ensure that the scheme is trauma informed, victim centred and to share the learning from victims and survivors experiences, to help address some of the challenges that have arisen from the implementation of the scheme, such as the length time taken to process applications, communication, and how to ensure that victims are not retraumatised as a result of the assessment process.

Applicants to the scheme are signposted to VSS for further health and wellbeing support and services if required. VSS funded organisations are reporting that this has resulted in an increase in demand across all services, particularly support for Talking Therapies and is impacting negatively on waiting lists.

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has three staff posts to support applicants to the scheme with obtaining records held by Victims and Survivors Service Limited. They also provide applicant information directly to the Victims Payment Board (VPB) and to Capita, to support applications. **Diagram 12** below shows the requests supported by VSS staff since the scheme opened.

### Diagram 12: VSS support with information requests.



During 2023-24 the team support dealt with **508 Subject Access Requests**. Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff also co-ordinate and provide support for the wider network of welfare staff across the community partner organisations.

Included below is a case example that illustrates the types of outcomes achieved for clients through the TPDPS application support.

#### ***Trouble Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (application support)***

Individual became aware of TPDPS after receiving a leaflet posted to his home. He contacted a VSS funded organisation listed on the leaflet and an appointment was arranged to meet with a TPDPS advisor.

The advisor took time to work with the client to gain an understanding as to how he was impacted by the troubles and the impact it has on the client presently. The advisor requested supporting documentation from external agencies to support the client's application. The client commented that he would not have known where to start in obtaining documents and didn't know if many of his records were still in existence.

*'It was such a relief to not have to chase the different agencies and have to explain what I needed and why I would have been too embarrassed and I don't have the confidence to speak to professionals.'*

The advisor reported: 'It's been an emotional process for the client, we're so privileged that we get to work to reduce as much stress as we can for the clients by handling the bureaucratic elements of the application process. We always ensure the client has a final read of the application before it is submitted, it's also an opportunity for us to check in and see if the client needs any follow up support and we usually recommend a check-in with a health and wellbeing caseworker.'

## Health and wellbeing service provision to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (2023-24)

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited was appointed by The Executive Office to coordinate and deliver health and wellbeing support and services to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) on 23 October 2020.

The service launched on 1 December 2020, following the appointment of WAVE Trauma Centre and Advice NI as community partners to enable survivors of HIA to access local support and services. Community services commenced in May 2021.

### SUPPORT DELIVERED THROUGH FUNDED COMMUNITY PARTNERS (2023-24) Survivors of HIA

In **partnership** with WAVE Trauma Centre and Advice NI, services have been delivered to survivors of HIA to meet both complex and non-complex needs. Details of these support provided to individual survivors are set out below:

- **2,973 Social Support interventions** including outreach support services, social support activities, welfare advice and advocacy support.
- Dedicated HWB Caseworkers engaged with **684 individuals** to identify their unique needs for support. Based on their assessments **250 additional needs-based packages** of support were provided to **135 individuals** across a range of areas including Persistent Pain, Disability Aids, Education & Training, Psychological Therapies, Trauma Focused Physical Activity and Social Isolation.
- **232 sessions** for **81 individuals** to **record their statement of experience**. (2022-23: 114 sessions for 37 individuals) were provided through WAVE Trauma Centre.
- **79 individuals** have been supported by WAVE Trauma Centre caseworkers with a range of interventions including liaising with solicitors, recovering information, liaising with the Redress board, attending solicitors with clients and accompanying clients to court.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Outcomes based monitoring has been implemented in respect of these services for those impacted by MBMLW. The standardised tools in use, in line with our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework at **Appendix 3** are:

- **MYMOP** (Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile) for individuals receiving Complementary Therapies;

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

- **CORE Net** (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Net) for survivors accessing Talking Therapies; and
- **WSAS** scores (Work and Social Adjustment Scale) for needs-based framework supports such as Disability Aids, Education and Training.

These are used alongside qualitative outcomes monitoring collected through organisational case studies and quotes from direct beneficiaries. Feedback from service users is also reviewed to capture any emerging needs and to ensure the services and support available to them continues to be appropriate in meeting their needs.

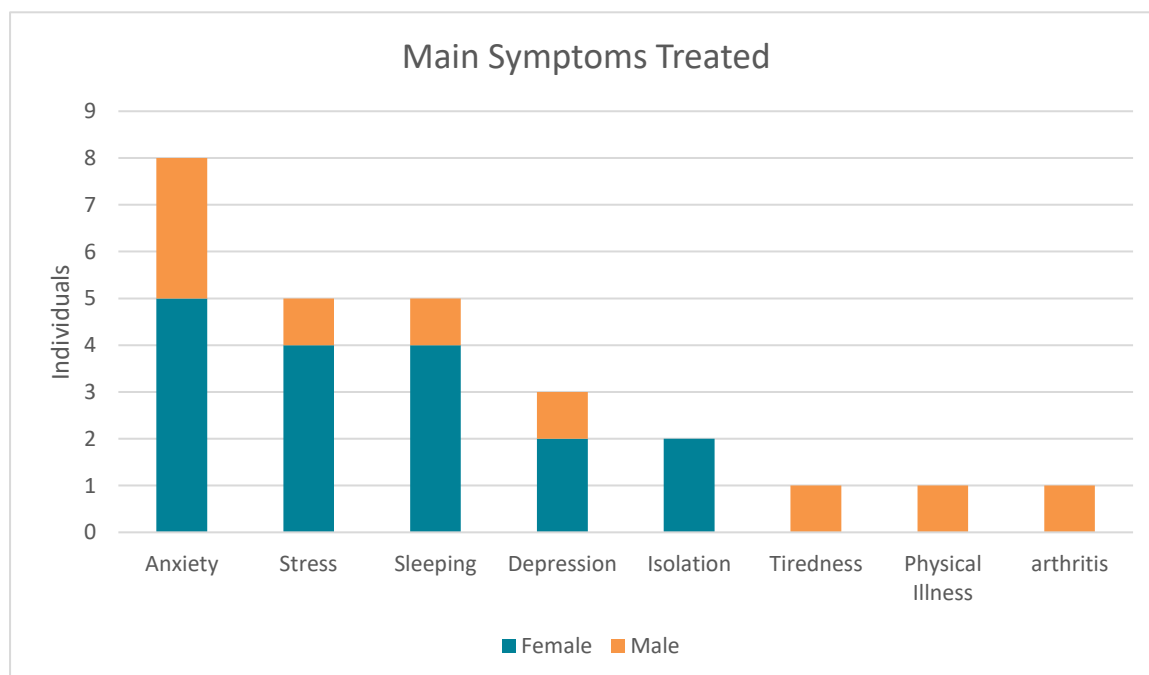
### **Complementary Therapies: MYMOP (Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile)**

The monitoring data gathered using MYMOP provides the following key insights into this area of funded service delivery:

- **68** individuals were supported through **288 sessions** of Complementary Therapies. **40** Individuals completed these sessions in 2023-24.
- The ratio of females: males accessing support is 7:3

The range of symptoms reported by individuals accessing funded Complementary Therapies are shown below in **Diagram 13**.

**Diagram 13: MYMOP: Complementary Therapies – HIA Survivors – Client numbers, Gender and Symptoms Treated**

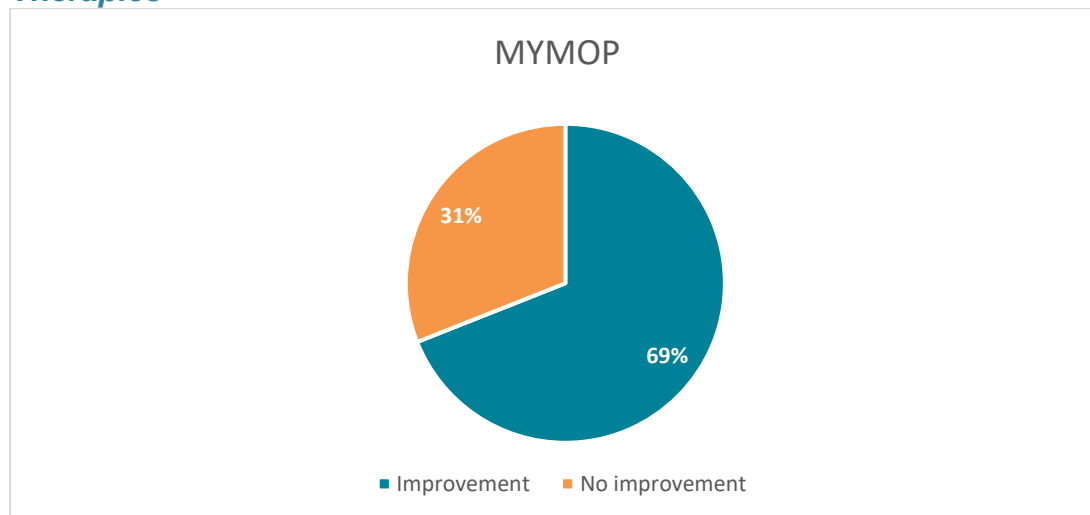


Whilst only a small number of individuals have completed their Complementary Therapy sessions, the outcomes data shown below in **Diagram 14** demonstrates that this

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

intervention has delivered a positive outcome with 69% of individual survivors who completed the therapy reporting improvement.

**Diagram 14: Summary Outcomes Information – MYMOP Complementary Therapies**



Outcomes datasets for completed complementary therapies for HIA survivors is growing and will be investigated for reasons as to why this intervention does not result in an improvement for some individual survivors.

### ***Talking Therapies – CORE net (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Net – see page 33 for further information on CORE net)***

The monitoring data gathered using CORE net provides the following **key insights** into this area of funded service delivery for **survivors of HIA**:

- **1,127** sessions of counselling support were delivered to **146** individuals during this period;
- **48%** of clients had a planned ending and **52%** unplanned.
- **72%** reported an improvement with a planned ending compared to **22%** with an unplanned ending.
- **46%** of those individuals who completed their therapy reported an **improvement** (See **diagram 15** below). Reasons for this low rate of improvement are considered to be:
  - the time lapse in experiencing the traumatic events,
  - delays in establishing dedicated services

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

- the fear of opening ‘Pandora’s box’ and re-experiencing events that survivors have worked hard to distract themselves from in order to maintain their ability to function in their daily lives.

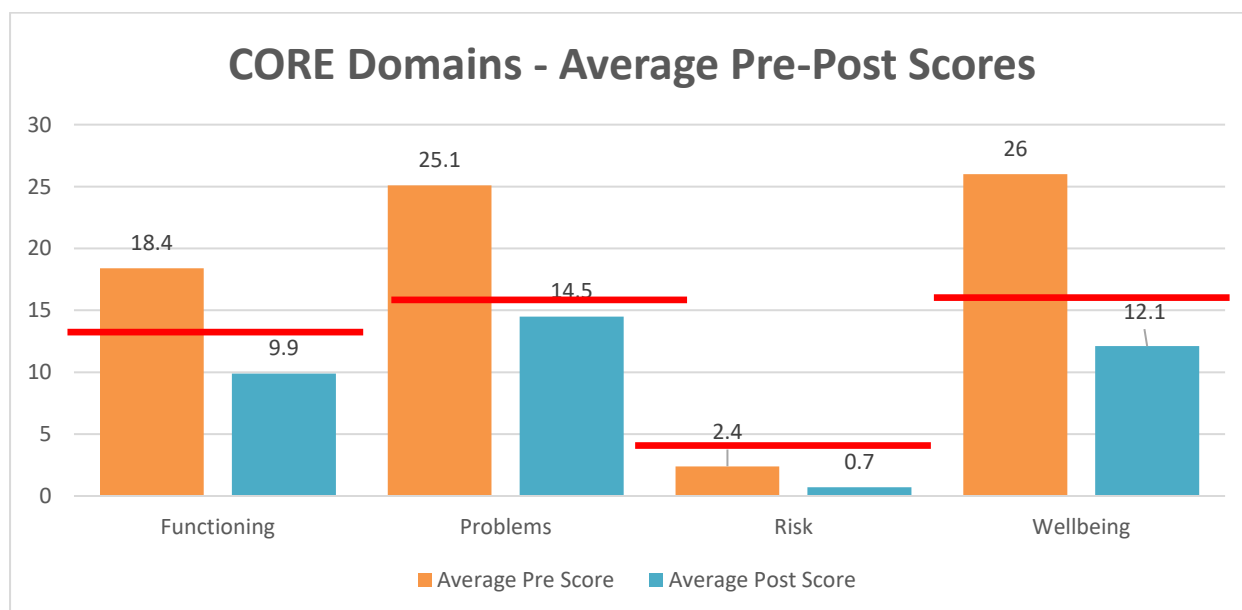
### What impact does Talking Therapy have?


Overall, **46%** of individuals accessing this service reported a positive improvement which is demonstrated across all four domains in **Diagram 15** below.

The **pre-scores** in 3 of the 4 domains are above the clinical cut-off score (which represents the boundary between “non-clinical” and the “clinical range” on an outcome measure), with the post therapy scores in these domains all then showing a reduction to levels below this cut-off score. This movement demonstrates the significant impact of the therapeutic intervention.

It should be noted that the risk domain does not breach the clinical cut-off score which demonstrates that it is appropriate for these individuals to receive this therapy at community level.

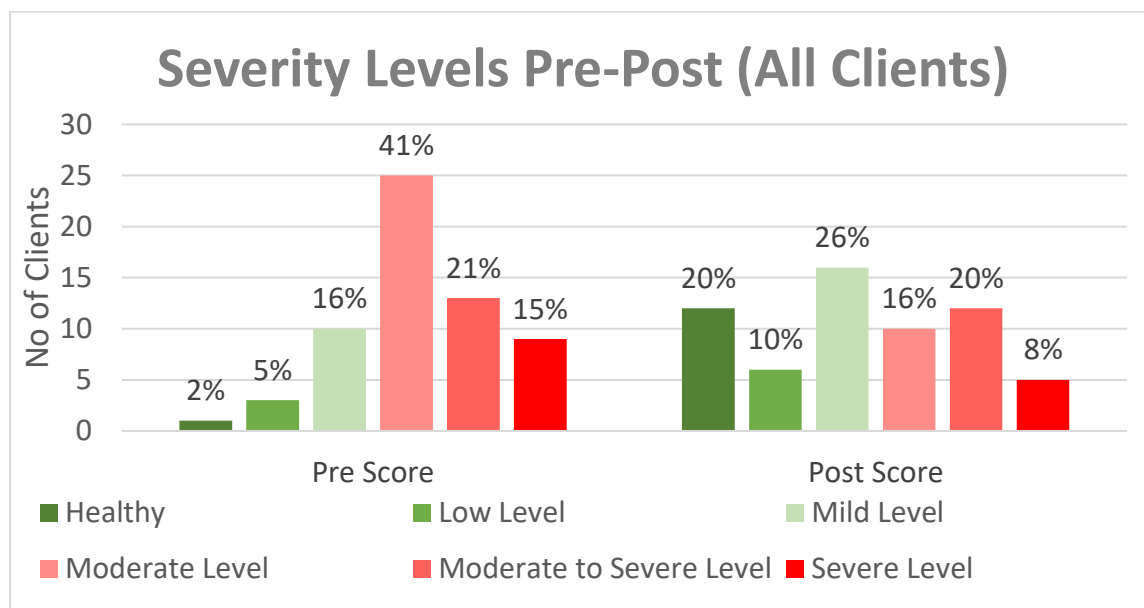
**Diagram 15: Improvements by Domain – Core Net: Talking Therapies**



 The Clinical Cut-off Score refers to a score that is presumed to represent the boundary between “non-clinical” and the “clinical range” on an outcome measure.

**Diagram 16** below shows the pre and post therapy scores for individuals who have completed talking therapy in 2023-24.

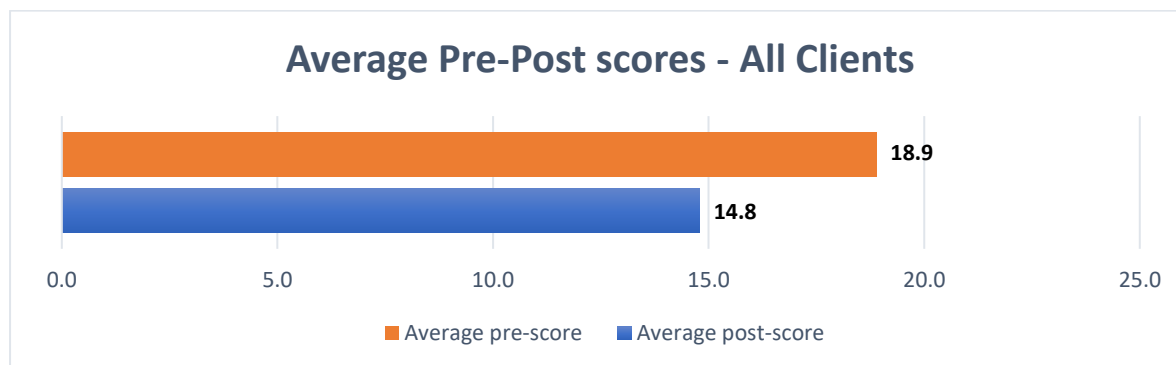
Diagram 16: CORE Net: Talking Therapies, Severity levels Pre and Post Therapy Scores



Pre-therapy **77%** of client scores are in the **Moderate to Severe** ranges falling to **44%** post-therapy. **56%** of clients are in the healthy to mild level ranges post therapy.

**Diagram 17** below demonstrates the average post score reduction from 18.9 (moderate) to 14.8 (mild/moderate).

Diagram 17: CORE Net: Talking Therapies, Average Scores Pre and Post Therapy Scores



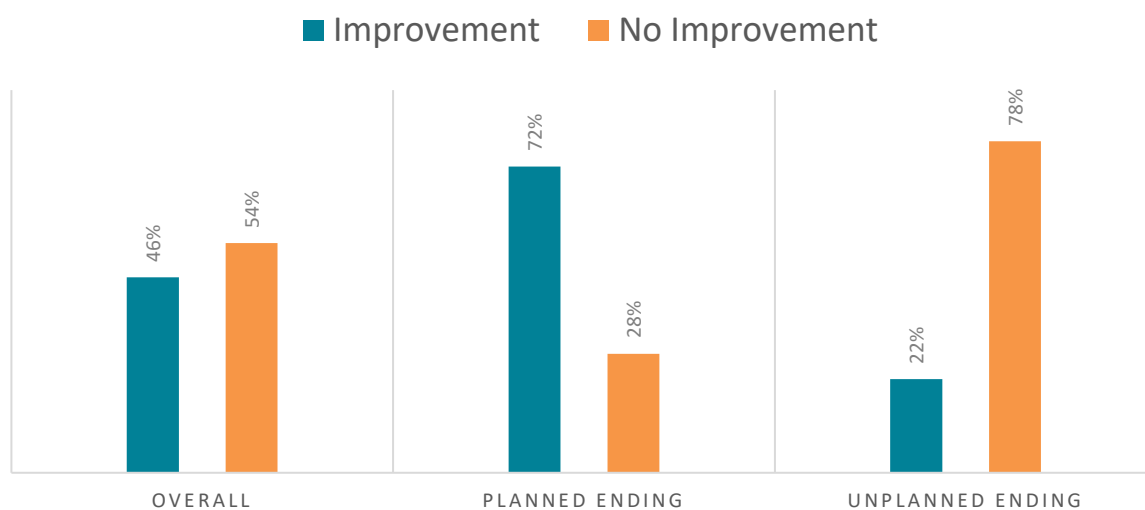
0-4 healthy non-clinical, 5-9 mild non-clinical, 10-14 mild, 15-19 moderate, 20-24 moderate-to-severe, 25-40 severe

The information analysed above demonstrates that Talking Therapies are having a **positive impact** of the health and wellbeing of survivors of HIA.

### The impact of a planned vs unplanned end to therapy on the outcome

Data shows that individual survivors who complete therapy with their therapist, as planned, have a much greater likelihood of a positive outcome (72%). However, it is noteworthy that (22%) percentage of individuals who have an unplanned ending of therapy also experience a positive outcome. This information is shown in **Diagram 18** below.

**Diagram 18: Summary Outcomes Information – CORE Net: Talking Therapies (showing variance between planned and unplanned endings)**



The reasons as to why **52 %** of individual survivors do not complete their therapy as planned have been investigated, with the most common reasons listed as:

- Client did not wish to continue;
- Due to loss of contact; and
- Client crisis.

## Additional Health and Wellbeing Activities and Services: Outcomes

Outcomes monitoring measures for additional health and wellbeing activities and services delivered by funded community partners are collected through organisational case studies and quotes from direct beneficiaries. Examples of service user feedback is shown below:

### ***Personal Professional Development (client feedback)***

My caseworker encouraged me to attend a group craft class, I was so nervous going in as I didn't know anyone and I don't talk about my experiences with others. By the end of the first class I felt amazing it was so normal and I was amazed by all the people in the class. I connected with another lady who had been through a similar experience to mine its lovely to chat with someone who understands the missed milestones of birthdays and family events that I'll never have.

### ***Welfare advice and support (case study)***

The client was referred by a fellow survivor who has used the service for many years. He is a married man with no dependants and will reach State Pension age next year. He has recently been diagnosed with PTSD and is finding it difficult working full time. He has been given the option of voluntary redundancy but is anxious by the prospect of not having a regular income. He has never claimed benefits and due to his Redress award thought he would be not able to.

Client engaged with an Advice NI welfare advisor who assured him that his redress award was disregarded for the purposes of means tested benefits. A benefit check determined he could claim PIP while he was still working (it is not means tested but based on his health condition). I supported him to make an application, which was successful. In turn, his wife was eligible to claim Carers Allowance which further increased their household income.

Clients PIP award and his wife's Carers Allowance have given the client the ability to make the decision to take Voluntary Redundancy. Once he took this step, I then further advised him and assisted him on claiming other benefits.

Client was extremely grateful and noted how this had "really helped him as he didn't know how he was going to continue working". He has said he is less anxious, and his quality of life has improved.

## Support for Individual Needs (2023-24) Survivors of HIA

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited deliver **needs-based support and services** to survivors of HIA. The service is an **outcomes focused model of integrated services and support**, working in **partnership** with our funded organisations.

Services are modelled to reflect the five strategic outcomes at **Diagram 2** (see page 28) and monitored in line with the framework at **Appendix 3**.

### Eligibility Criteria for complex support to individual survivors of HIA

The eligibility criteria for accessing support is for anyone who has suffered abuse as a child whilst resident in an institution (e.g. a children's home, borstal or training school) in Northern Ireland at any time between 1922 and 1995 (inclusive).

The **Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks** provided for survivors of HIA are:

- Disability Aids
- Education and Training (including one to one literacy and numeracy)
- Persistent Pain
- Psychological Support
- Social Isolation
- Trauma Focused Physical Activity
- Volunteering

In the period 2023-2024, **733 survivors** have engaged and accessed a range of support and services including disability aids, psychological therapies, and persistent pain in addition to advocacy and casework support to engage with other agencies.

**Table 2** below summarises the value of awards issues under each needs-based framework. The value of award is variable, depending on the needs and relevant support identified.

**Table 2: Award and Payments made under the HIA Individual Needs Frameworks 2023-24**

Award Description	Number of Awards Issued	Payments Made
Disability Aids	115	£170,215
Social Isolation	14	£7,351
Persistent Pain – Physiotherapy	7	£1,575
Persistent Pain - Comp/ Alternative Therapies	22	£4,007
Trauma Focused Physical Activity	40	£12,434
Psychological Support	45	£19,276
Education & Training	5	£3,615
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>£218,473</b>

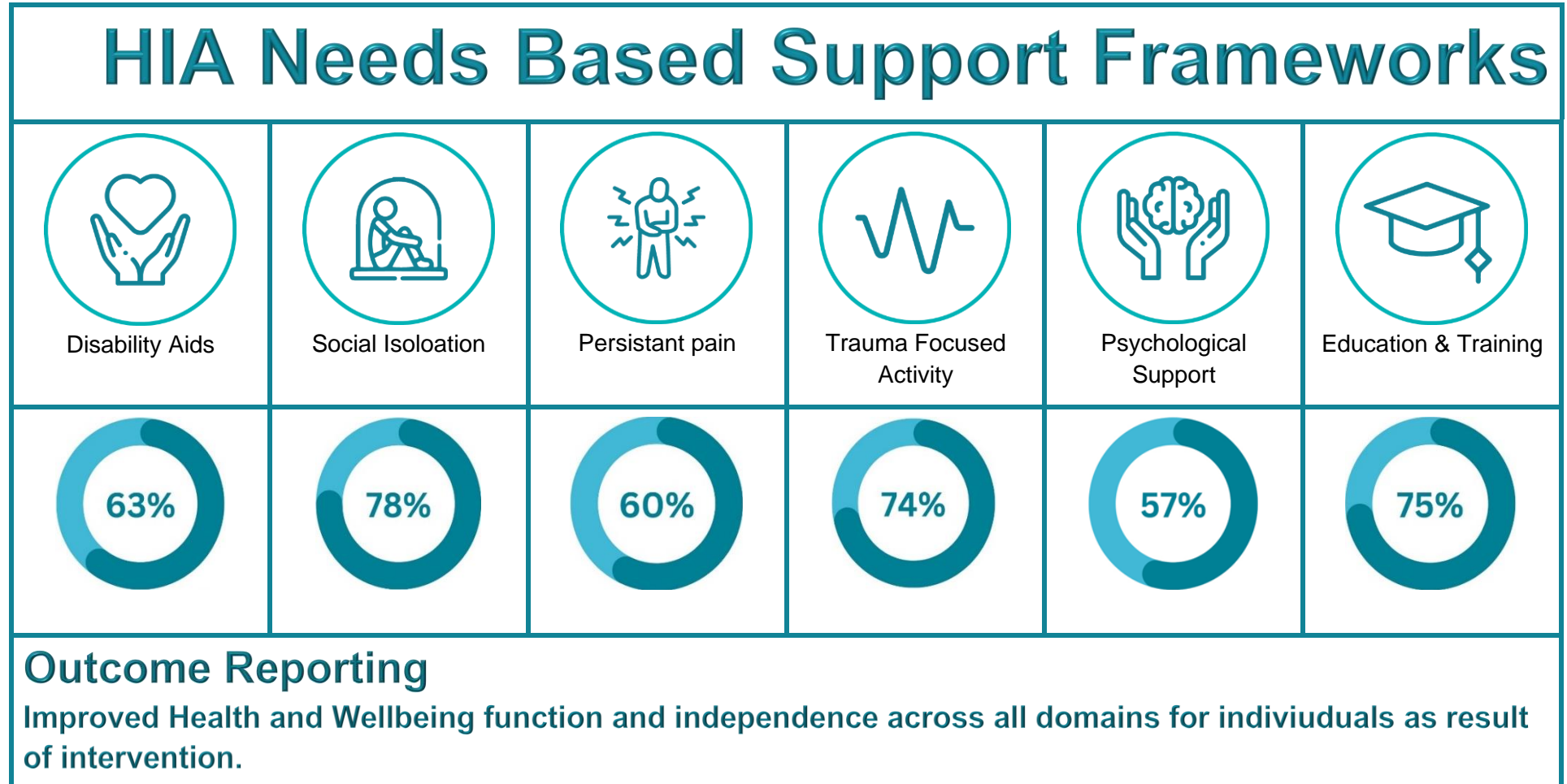
There were a number of awards with unspent balances during 2023-24, which explains the variance between the awards issued and the actual payments made. Unspent balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 were accrued in the year end accounts. In addition, expenditure of £649 was incurred in 2023-24 for awards related to closed schemes and frameworks from prior years. These two items bring the total expense incurred under the HIA Individual Needs Programme in 2023-24 to £248,890.

The outcomes measurement tool used within the additional needs-based frameworks is the **Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS)**. The reported outcomes shown below in **Diagram 19** are based on responses recorded from clients in receipt of the framework support. The average improvement within the health and wellbeing function and independence for survivors of HIA as a result of these framework interventions is 67%, demonstrating their positive impact for survivors of HIA.

Further detail on WSAS, its use by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited across all areas of support and the further investigations and reporting planned for it are set out at page 40 above.

It should be noted that the outcomes data presented is based on a relatively small data set and in instances where high levels of improvement or high levels of dis-improvement are shown, these will likely in reduce in future years with an increased data set.

Diagram 19: Outcomes data showing the improved Health and Wellbeing function and independence across all domains as a result of framework interventions for survivors of HIA.



**Case Example**

Included below is a condensed case example that illustrates the types of outcomes achieved for clients through the Additional Needs- Based Frameworks service delivery to survivors of HIA.

***Social Isolation Framework***

Client engaged with a Health and Wellbeing Caseworker where she undertook a consultation to identify her needs and potential support options. At this time the client shared her ongoing mobility issues which were having an impact on her ability to connect and engage with others outside her home, rendering her significantly socially isolated.

Until this point, the client had been heavily involved within her local church community where she volunteered and participated in a range of events, having built a strong network of social connections and friendships however a deterioration in her physical health following a fall meant she was unable to navigate stepping over the lip of her front door to enter and exit the property independently.

This heavily restricted the client's ability to participate in any activity outside the confines of her home, placing a significant toll on her social and psychological wellbeing.

In an effort to reduce the barriers associated with her limited mobility, arrangements were made for the installation of a portable ramp that offered level access for the client to enter and exit the property. This was further complemented with support from Community Occupational Therapy Services who fitted grab rails to ensure her safety while doing so unaided.

The client has since re-engaged with local church activities and her network of social connections.

***"I can't thank you enough for helping me to live my life again"***

## Health and wellbeing service provision to those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, and Workhouses (2023-24)

In January 2022 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was appointed by The Executive Office to coordinate and deliver interim health and wellbeing support and services to survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, and Workhouses (MBMLW).

In September 2022 a twelve-month pilot scheme which included a full suite of services was launched with WAVE Trauma Centre and Adopt NI as community partners to enable those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, and Workhouses to access supports and services. Community services commenced in October 2021 following their recruitment and procurement processes.

In January 2024, VSS opened a grant funding call with a specific focus on the delivery of health and wellbeing support and services including information recovery and family tracing for victims and survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, and Workhouses (MBMLW) in Northern Ireland. The scoring process was completed, and the successful application was notified. Preparations for services scale up in line with the overall work and progress of the Truth Recovery Programme are continuing in 2024-25.

### SUPPORT DELIVERED THROUGH FUNDED COMMUNITY PARTNERS (2023-24)

#### Those impacted by MBMLW

- **199 individuals** have engaged and accessed a range of supports and services including additional needs-based framework supports in addition to support with information recovery, family tracing and casework support to engage with other agencies.
- Dedicated Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers engaged with **134 individuals**, facilitating **1,030 sessions** to identify their unique needs with packages of support provided across a range of areas including Persistent Pain, Disability Aids, Education & Training, Psychological Therapies, Trauma Focused Physical Activity and Social Isolation.
- Community Partners delivered social support interventions to **160 individuals** including social support activities, welfare advice and advocacy support.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Outcomes based monitoring has been implemented in respect of these services for those impacted by MBMLW. The standardised tools in use, in line with our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework at **Appendix 3** are:

- **MYMOP** (Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile) for individuals receiving Complementary Therapies;
- **CORE Net** (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Net) for survivors accessing Talking Therapies; and
- **WSAS** scores (Work and Social Adjustment Scale) for needs-based framework supports such as Disability Aids, Education and Training.

These are used alongside qualitative outcomes monitoring collected through organisational case studies and quotes from direct beneficiaries. Feedback from service users is also reviewed to capture any emerging needs and to ensure the services and support available to them continues to be appropriate in meeting their needs.

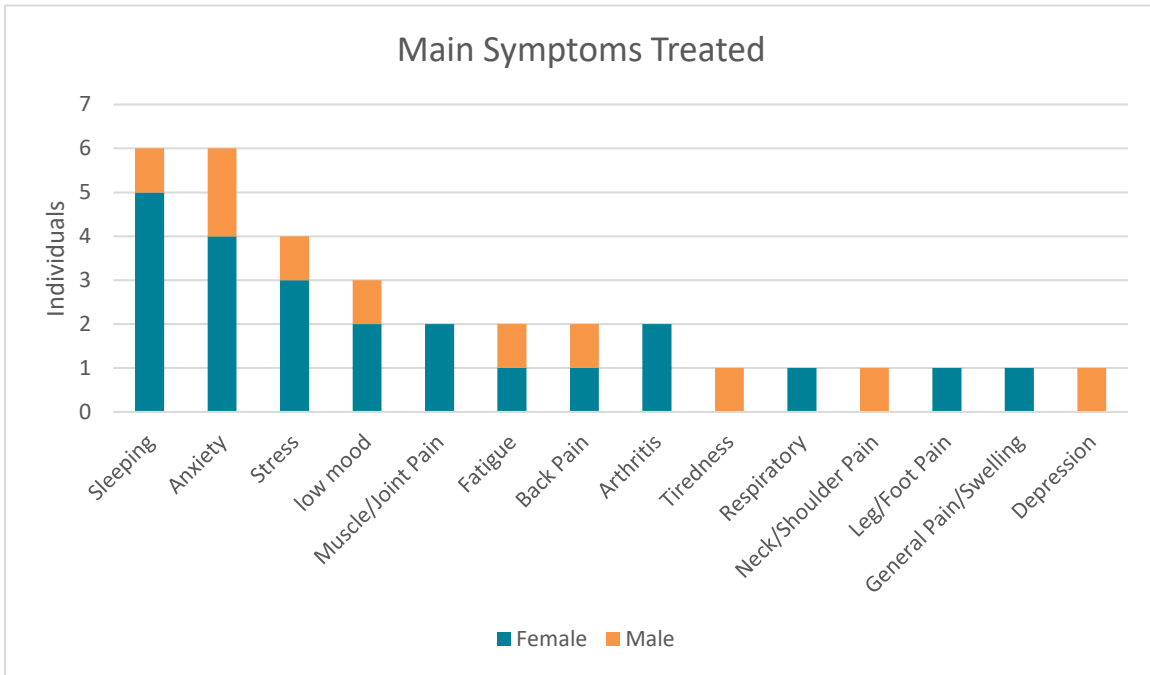
### ***Complementary Therapies: MYMOP (Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile)***

The monitoring data gathered using MYMOP provides the following key insights into this area of funded service delivery:

- **37** individuals were supported through **265 sessions** of Complementary Therapies. **25** Individuals completed these sessions in 2023-24.
- The ratio of females:males accessing support is 7:3

The range of symptoms reported by individuals accessing funded Complementary Therapies are shown below in **Diagram 20**.

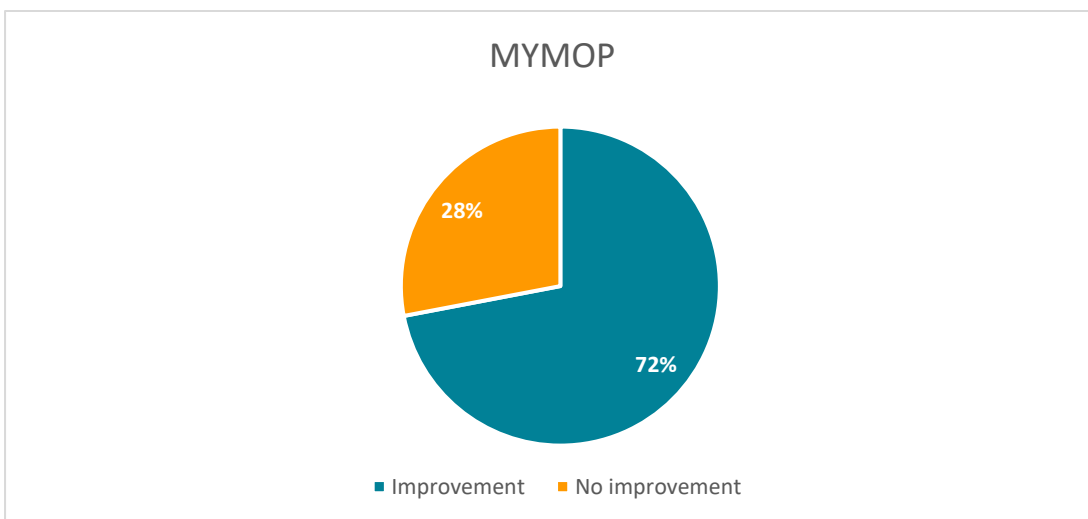
**Diagram 20: MYMOP: Complementary Therapies – MBMLW Survivors – Client numbers, Gender and Symptoms Treated**



Whilst only a small number of individuals have completed their Complementary Therapy sessions, the outcomes data shown below in **Diagram 21** demonstrates that this intervention has delivered a positive outcome, which is making a significant contribution to the improvement of individuals health and wellbeing.

As the data set grows, the reasons as to why Complementary Therapies do not benefit some individuals will be investigated.

**Diagram 21: Summary Outcomes Information – MYMOP Complementary Therapies**



### ***Talking Therapies – CORE net (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Net)***

The monitoring data gathered using CORE net provides the following **key insights** into this area of funded service delivery for **survivors of MBMLW**:

- **396** sessions of counselling support were delivered to **48** individuals during this period;
- **80%** of clients had a planned ending and **20%** unplanned. **56%** reported an improvement with a planned ending compared to **25%** with an unplanned ending.
- **50%** of those individuals who completed their therapy reported an **improvement** (See **Diagram 22** below). These outcomes are drawn from a small sample size. Reasons for this low improvement are considered to be:
  - the time lapse in experiencing the traumatic events;
  - delays in establishing dedicated services; and
  - the fear of opening ‘Pandora’s box’ and re-experiencing events that survivors have worked hard to distract themselves from in order to maintain their ability to function in their daily lives.

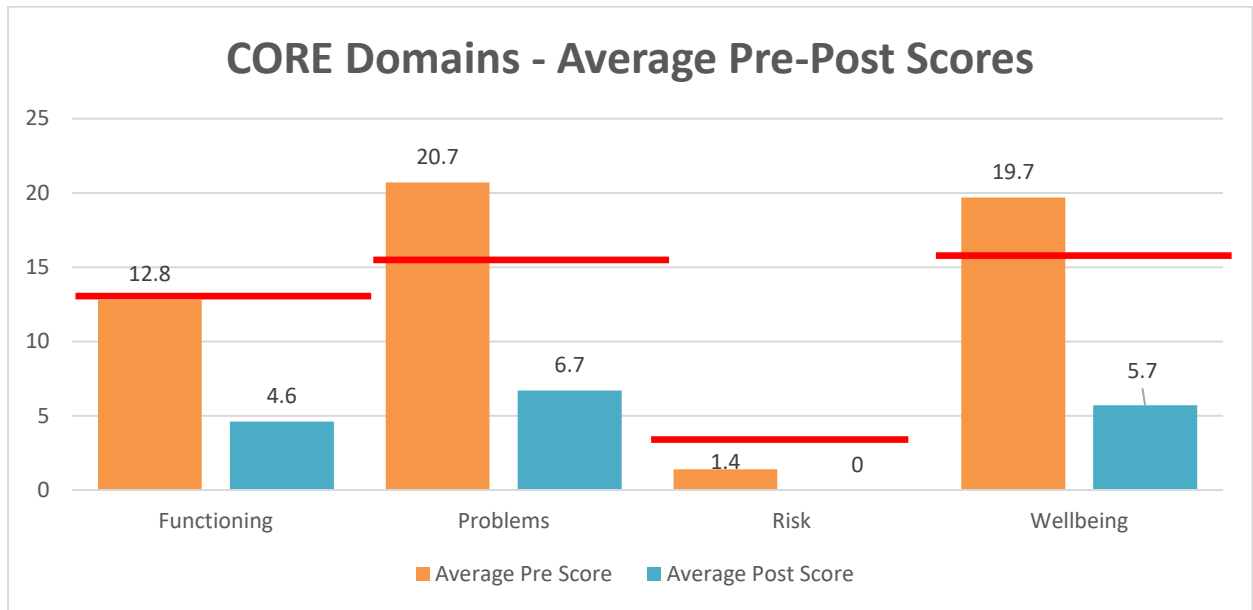
### **What impact does Talking Therapy have?**

Overall, **50%** of individuals accessing this service reported a positive improvement. The improvement for all individuals accessing therapies across all four domains is shown in **Diagram 22** below.

The **pre-scores** in 3 of the 4 domains are above the clinical cut-off score (which represents the boundary between “non-clinical” and the “clinical range” on an outcome measure), with the post therapy scores in these domains all then showing a reduction to levels below this cut-off score. This movement demonstrates the significant impact of the therapeutic intervention.

It should be noted that the risk domain does not breach the clinical cut-off score which demonstrates that it is appropriate for these individuals to receive this therapy at community level.

Diagram 22: Improvements by Domain – Core Net: Talking Therapies



The Clinical Cut-off Score refers to a score that is presumed to represent the boundary between “normal” and the “clinical range” on an outcome measure.

Diagram 23 below shows the pre and post therapy scores for individuals who have completed talking therapy in 2023-24. Pre-therapy **35%** of client scores are in the **Moderate to Severe** ranges falling to **25%** post-therapy. **70%** of clients are in the healthy to mild level ranges post therapy.

Diagram 23: CORE Net: Talking Therapies, Severity levels Pre and Post Therapy Scores

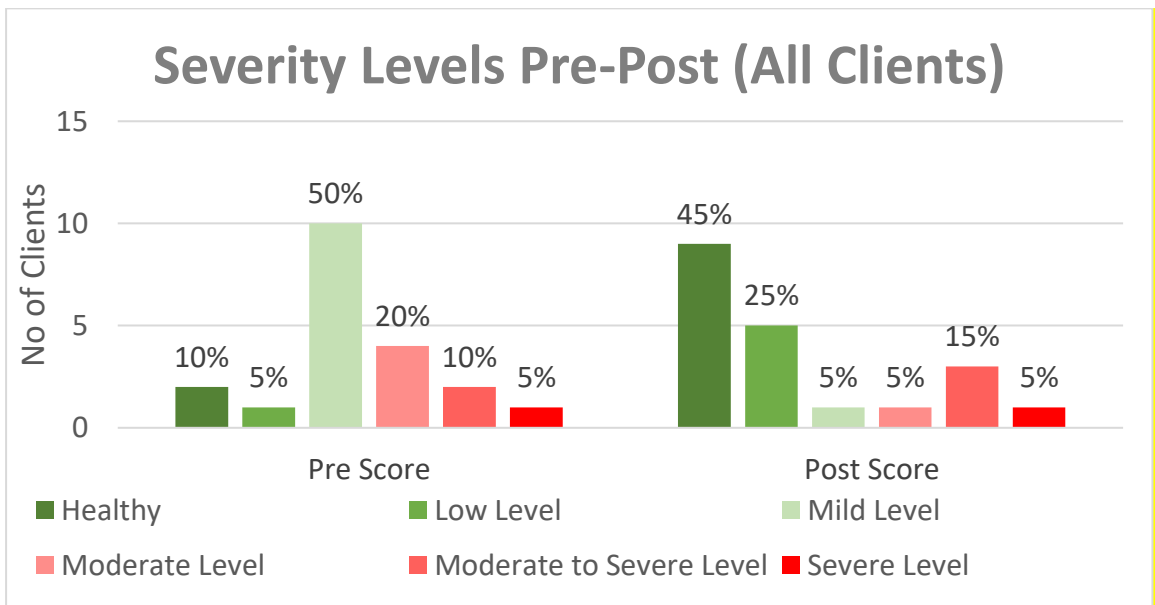
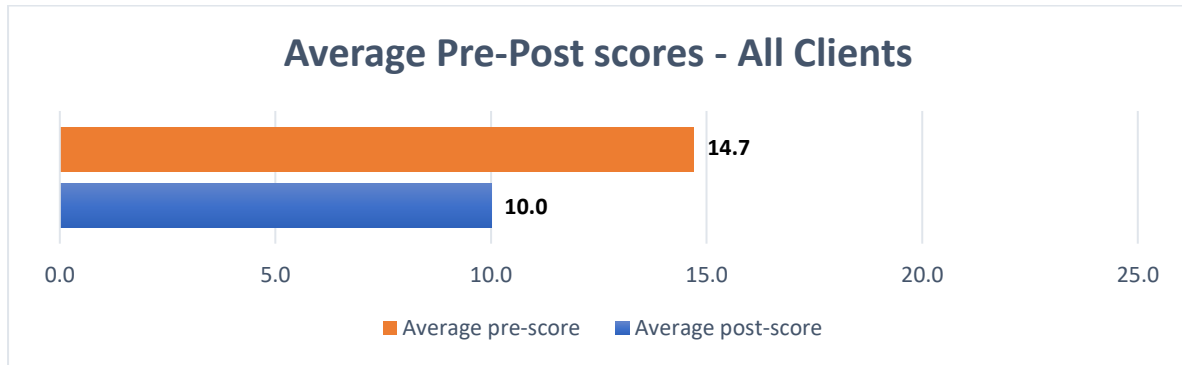


Diagram 24: CORE Net: Talking Therapies, Average Scores Pre and Post Therapy Scores



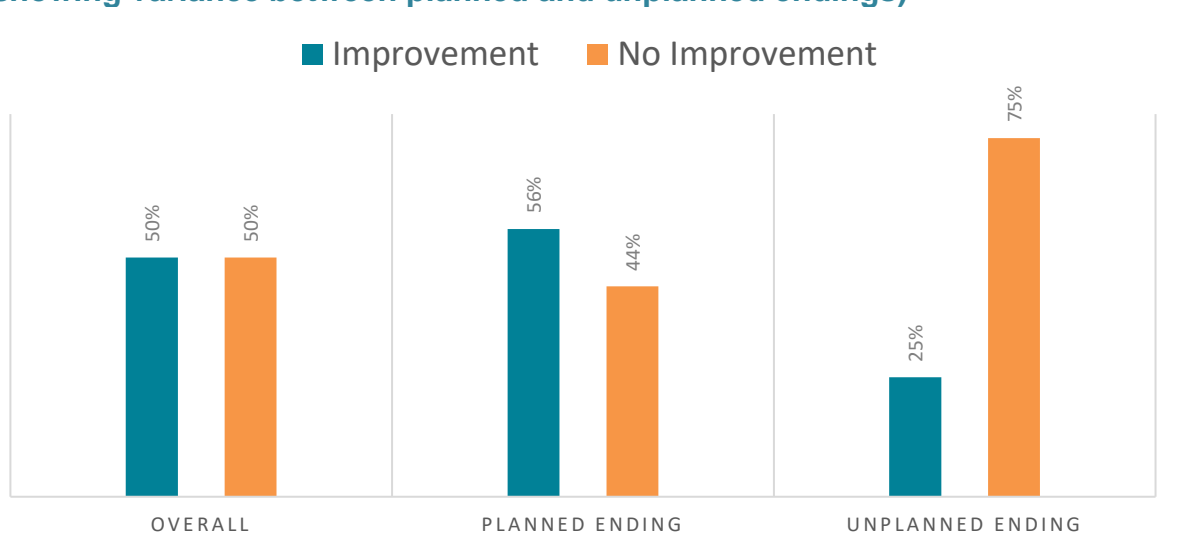
0-4 healthy non-clinical, 5-9 mild non-clinical, 10-14 mild, 15-19 moderate, 20-24 moderate-to-severe, 25-40 severe

The information analysed above demonstrates that Talking Therapies are having a **positive impact** of the health and wellbeing of those impacted by MBMLW.

**The impact of a planned Vs unplanned end to therapy on the outcome.**

Data shows that individuals who complete therapy with their therapist, as planned, have a much greater likelihood of a positive outcome (**56%**). However, it is noteworthy that (**25%**) percentage of individuals who have an unplanned ending of therapy also experience a positive outcome. This information is shown in **Diagram 25** below.

Diagram 25: Summary Outcomes Information – CORE Net: Talking Therapies (showing variance between planned and unplanned endings)



The reasons as to why **20%** of Talking Therapy clients do not complete their therapy as planned have been investigated, with the most common reasons listed as:

- Client did not wish to continue;
- Due to loss of contact; and
- Client crisis.

## Additional Health and Wellbeing Activities and Services: Outcomes

Outcomes monitoring measures for additional health and wellbeing activities and services delivered by funded community partners are collected through organisational case studies and quotes from direct beneficiaries. Examples of service user feedback is shown below:

### ***Art Therapy***

Client presented for art therapy with feelings of low mood and suicidal ideation. He shared that his marriage, family relationships and working life were suffering due to a family conflict that had been ongoing for some time. Client is an unpaid full time carer for his wife who was sent to a Mother and Baby home over 40 years ago where she gave birth to a child who was adopted and she has never met her child as the records were destroyed. He stated his wife goes through bouts of depression and he feels the pressure to support her and their family which leaves him feeling overwhelmed.

Client was unaware that support was available to him until he accompanied his wife to a meeting with her caseworker. The caseworker asked to meet with him separately and the client opened up about the pressures and struggles he was experiencing as a result of the trauma his wife experienced but always felt as he didn't experience it so he had to get on with it and be strong for her.

Client has found art therapy to be a lifeline for him and he said it helped him develop insight into how he relates to others and to better understand trauma and how he can support his wife and look after himself at the same time. The client reported family relationships have improved as he has become more understanding of the different perspectives family members have particularly during challenging situations and this has help him to repair fractured relationships.

***'The art therapy has transformed my life from feeling suicidal to feeling happy, in control of my emotions and better able to cope with stress. I have been on an incredible journey.'***

## Support for Individual Needs (2023-24) Individuals impacted by MBMLW

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited delivers **needs-based support and services** to those impacted by MBMLW. The service is an **outcomes focused model of integrated services and support**, working in **partnership** with our funded organisations within the pilot period of 2023-24.

Services are modelled to reflect the five strategic outcomes at [Diagram 2](#) (see page 28) and monitored in line with the framework at [Appendix 3](#).

### Eligibility criteria for complex support to those impacted by MBMLW

VSS require individuals to provide supporting documentation to evidence that they resided within an institution, including the year they entered and left. We acknowledge that individuals may have difficulties accessing this information and seek to support individuals with this.

The **Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks** available to support individuals impacted by MBMLW are:

- Disability Aids
- Education and Training (including one to one literacy and numeracy)
- Persistent Pain
- Psychological Support
- Social Isolation
- Trauma Focused Physical Activity
- Volunteering

As of 31 March 2024, **34 individuals** have engaged and accessed a range of support and services including disability aids, psychological therapies, and persistent pain in addition to advocacy and casework support to engage with other agencies.

[Table 3](#) below summaries the value of awards issues under each needs-based framework. The value of award is variable, depending on the needs and relevant support identified.

**Table 3: Award and Payments made under the MBMLW Individual Needs Frameworks 2023-24**

Award Description	Number of Awards Issued	Payments Made
Disability Aids	7	£8,439
Education & Training	4	£2,440
Persistent Pain - Comp/Alternative Therapies	6	£174
Persistent Pain - Physiotherapy	5	£2,225
Psychological Support - Comp/Alternative Therapies	4	£1,550
Psychological Support - Talking Therapies	29	£17,690
Social Isolation	0	£0
Trauma Focused Physical Activity	11	£3,477
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>£35,995</b>

There were a number of awards with unspent balances during 2023-24, which explains the variance between the awards issued and the actual payments made. This brings the total expense incurred under the MBMLW Individual Needs Programme in 2023-24 to £37,688.

The outcomes measurement tool used within the additional needs-based frameworks is the **Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS)**. At this time the dataset available in respect of individuals impacted by MBMLW who have received framework support and for whom the WSAS data is available is too small to draw outcomes from.

### **Case Example**

Included below is a condensed case example that illustrates the types of outcomes achieved for clients through the Additional Needs Based Framework service delivery to those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, and Workhouses.

#### **Disability Aids**

Client was referred to a Health & Wellbeing Caseworker at WAVE to explore services available to her, having resided and given birth in a mother and baby home.

The client reported a range of issues associated with her physical frailty which impacted her ability to mobilise and control her pain levels effectively. In addition, she suffered from COPD and recurring chest infections, leading to shortness of breath and an inability to manage long distances.

Following exploration, the need for a comprehensive occupational therapy assessment was identified to determine her needs for prescribed aids or equipment to assist her pain management efforts and maintain a level of independence at home.

Following assessment, the client was supported with a riser recliner chair to assist in sitting and standing to reduce pain and a profiling bed to elevate her upper body whilst sleeping to mitigate the mucus build up in her chest which was leading to infection.

***“The chair is so comfortable and has really helped my legs. Since I got the bed I have found breathing a lot easier too.”***

## **OTHER KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

### **Financial Performance**

#### **Summary Financial Performance**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is sponsored by The Executive Office. For the financial year ended 31 March 2024, The Victims and Survivors Service Limited received a grant in aid budget allocation of £21.18m which provided Resource budget for Troubles/conflict of £16.847m, TPDPS £2.086m, HIA £1.08m and MBMLW £804k (Total Resource budget £20.817m) along with Depreciation of £114k and capital of £244k. Actual grant in aid cash received was £20.397m. The budgets for HIA, MBMLW and TPDPS were ring fenced for use in those specific areas only.

As at year end 31 March 2024, there was an underspend of £553k representing 2.66% of the budget allocated. This exceeds the tolerance underspend target of 1.5%. The underspend in non-ringfenced areas was £161k, (0.95%). The variance from target was driven by significant underspends in the areas of MBMLW and TPDPS. The MBMLW funding programme has continued to be impacted significantly by the timing of commencement and associated estimates of demand, while ongoing labour market challenges impacted the ability of community and voluntary sector organisations to fully utilise TPDPS funding during the year.

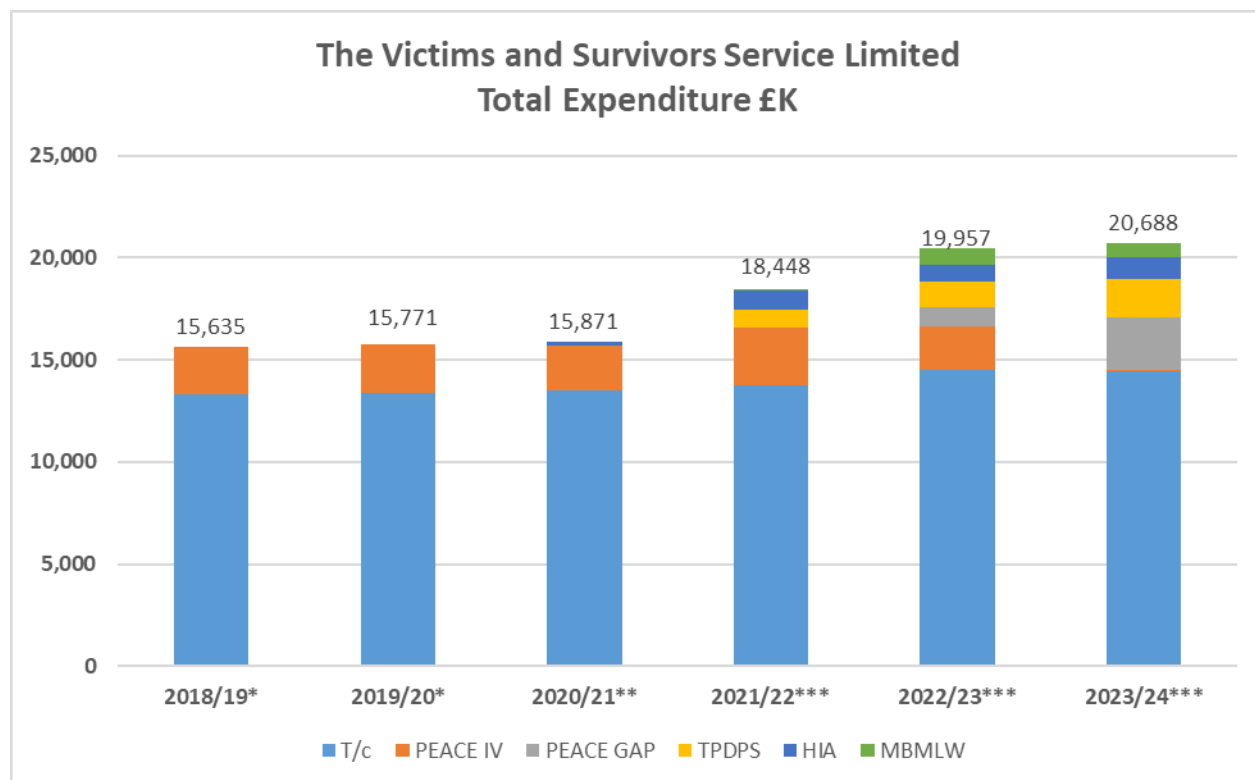
The Statement of Financial Position on page 121 shows the company had net assets of £1,671,982 at 31 March 2024 including cash at bank of £712,769.

#### **Long Term Expenditure Trends**

During the year, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has provided the Department with a financial analysis of budget versus expenditure and cash on a monthly basis, to identify any significant variances and management action required.

The underspends in TPDPS and MBMLW were notified to the Department in the fourth quarter of 2023-24, at which time the Department advised that there were no mechanisms available to facilitate surrender of these budget amounts. General Financial Management arrangements in addition to those outlined as part of the Departmental oversight are further detailed below.

Diagram 26: Long Term Expenditure Trend



Total expenditure includes resource and capital DEL.

\*2018-19 and 2019-20 out-turn figures include PEACE IV funded expenditure.

\*\*2020-21 out-turn figures include PEACE IV funded expenditure and expenditure related to support for survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA).

\*\*\*2021-22 to 2023-24 outturn figures include PEACE IV funded expenditure and expenditure related to support for survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) and expenditure related to support services for those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

### Payments to Suppliers

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the British Standard for Achieving Good Payment Performance in Commercial Transactions (BS 7890) and with the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 as amended. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited follows the 2008 instruction to support businesses through every effort to make payments to suppliers within ten working days.

Overall for 2023-24, 96% of invoices were paid within 10 working days and 100% within 30 working days. On average 5 working days were taken to pay invoices during 2023-24. In comparison, during 2022-23 87% of invoices were paid within 10 working days and 100% within 30 working days with an average payment time of 5 working days.

## **Financial Position and Resources**

### ***Core Funding***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is primarily funded by its sponsor Department, The Executive Office. This is financed by resources voted for annually by the Northern Ireland Assembly and is, therefore, not exposed to significant liquidity risks. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited does not access funds from commercial sources and so is not exposed to significant interest rate risks.

The Executive Office has indicated that it intends to continue to fund the organisation for the foreseeable future and has provided a budget for the financial year 2024-25. The organisation has the staff resources required to achieve its current strategic outcomes and the staffing structure has been aligned to facilitate the effective management of resources in the achievement of these outcomes.

### ***TPDPS Funding***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited receives funding from The Executive Office to provide resources to 5 community partner organisations who assist victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict to make applications to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme. This funding is ring-fenced and reported to the Executive Office separately to core funding. Total funding in 2023-24 was £2.086m.

The organisation has employed additional dedicated staff resources to ensure the achievement of its key strategic outcomes in this area.

### ***PEACE Interim Funding***

Following the closure of the PEACE IV project, to provide for continuity of services which underpin the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's service delivery model, namely the Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Network and Advocacy Programme, 'interim funding' was put in place by The Executive Office during 2022-23 and continued throughout 2023-24.

Interim funding resource was provided to 12 community partner organisations in order to ensure continuity of service provision while the PEACEPLUS funding application was under consideration. Total funding in 2023-24 was £2.74m.

PEACE Interim Funding provision remained in place until the approval of the PEACEPLUS programme on 21 May 2024.

## **Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

### ***HIA Funding***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is funded by The Executive Office to provide health and wellbeing services to survivors of HIA. Funding for this service is ring-fenced and reported to the Executive Office separately to core funding. Total funding in 2023-24 was £1.08m.

The organisation has employed additional dedicated staff resources to ensure the achievement of its key strategic outcomes in this area.

### ***Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses Funding***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is funded by The Executive Office to provide Health and Wellbeing services to those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. Funding for this service is ring-fenced and reported to the Executive Office separately to core funding. Total funding in 2023-24 was £804k.

The organisation has employed additional dedicated staff resources to ensure the achievement of its key strategic outcomes in this area.

## **Service Delivery Performance**

### ***Complaints Handling***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has a complaints procedure in place to ensure that individual victims and survivors, funded organisations and all other stakeholders can express any dissatisfaction that may arise and to make improvements and changes to services based on such feedback. The Complaints Policy and Procedure is available in a user-friendly leaflet format (available on request) as well as in a downloadable format on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website.

A summary of the complaints handled in 2023-24 is shown below in [Table 4](#).

Table 4: Summary of Complaints 2023-24

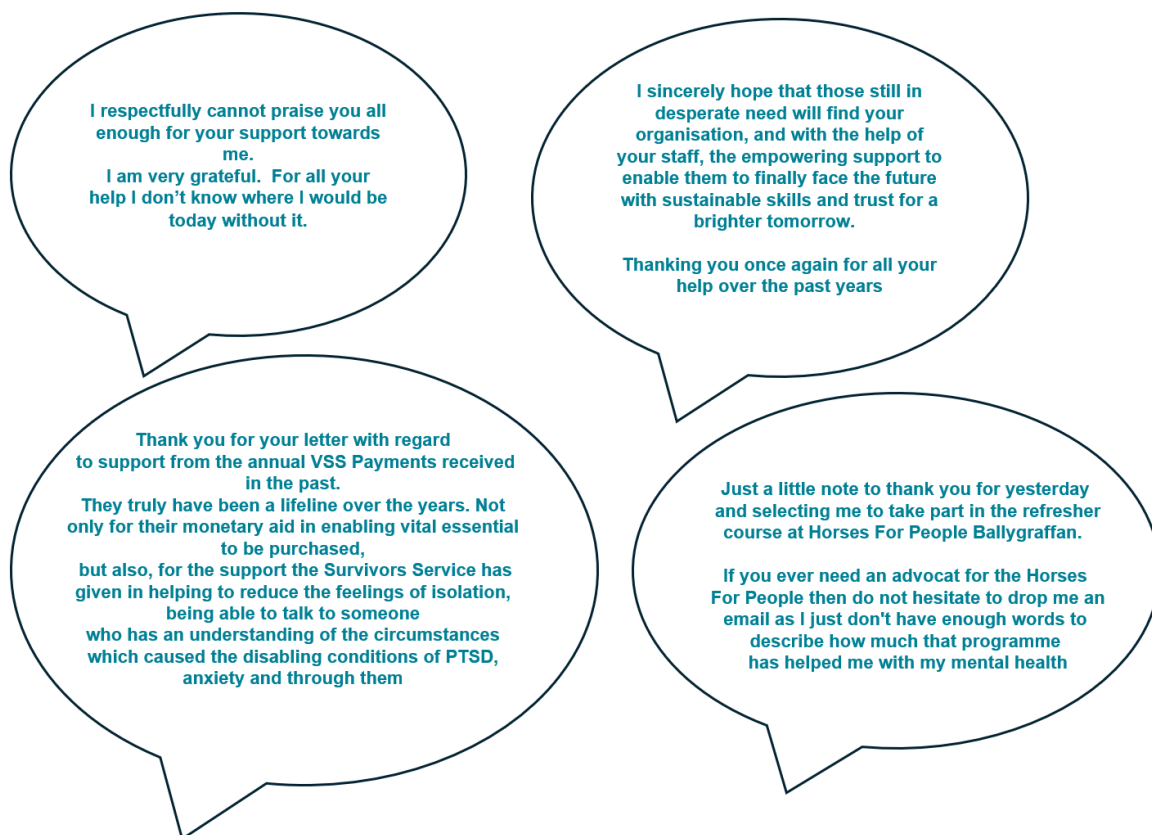
Category	Number	Complaint Themes
Complaints Received 2023-24	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>Social Media activities of Victims and Survivors Service Limited funded organisations</i></li> <li>• <i>Records Management</i></li> <li>• <i>Other</i></li> </ul>
Complaints Upheld/ Partially Upheld	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Policy</i></li> </ul>
Complaints not Upheld	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Social Media activities of Victims and Survivors Service Limited funded organisations</i></li> <li>• <i>Records Management</i></li> <li>• <i>Other</i></li> </ul>
Complaints Open 2023-24	0	
<b>Total Complaints handled in year</b>	<b>12</b>	

***Positive feedback and messages of thanks received during 2023-24***

In 2023-24 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to record positive feedback and messages of thanks received from individuals. These included emails, cards and telephone calls made specifically to express thanks for the support offered under the Individual Needs Programme and the Individual Needs Programme/PEACE IV Additional Needs Based Support Frameworks. Recording this positive feedback provides a qualitative insight into the impact of the support provided for individuals who are injured, bereaved or who care for others living with injuries. During 2023-24 the Victims and

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

Survivors Service Limited received 99 letters, emails and cards thanking the organisation and staff for their support. Examples of the client comments are as follows:



### ***Anti-Bribery and Corruption***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Anti-fraud policy sets out how it complies with the Bribery Act 2010 and DAO (DOF) 09/11 Bribery Act which clarifies how the Bribery Act 2010 applies to public servants in Northern Ireland. The standards of conduct required of all the Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff are set out in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff code of conduct. This code requires all staff to conduct themselves with honesty and impartiality at all times. It is not acceptable for any staff member to receive any benefit that may be perceived as having the potential to compromise personal judgement on work related issues.

There were no allegations of bribery or corruption raised during 2023-24 (2021-22 – none).

### ***Sustainability Report***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to The Executive Office's Sustainable Development Strategy. Policies and practices have been introduced within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited to encourage efficiency in the use of resources. Sustainable behaviours are promoted throughout.

## Performance Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Seatem House office is located within Belfast City Centre close to public transport links, allowing staff and victims and survivors to travel to and from the office in a sustainable manner.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has also, in order to reduce its carbon footprint, pursued a policy of the facilitation, where possible, of staff flexibility in start and finish times allowing staff to travel to and from work at non-peak traffic times. A hybrid working policy continued in 2023-24 which has further supported the achievement of the Sustainable Development Strategy.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is aware of its responsibility to progress its work associated with sustainable development targets within the Implementation Plan emanating from the first Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy.

### **Social**

While the Victims and Survivors Service Limited does not have a dedicated policy, the principles of corporate and social responsibility are embedded within its key activities, demonstrating a commitment to social equality and human rights. An employee wellbeing programme is in place which incorporates aspects of corporate and social responsibility.

### **Going Concern**

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis as it is assumed that the parent Department, The Executive Office, will continue to fund the organisation's activities. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited three-year Corporate Plan 2024-27 (including 2024-25 Delivery Plan) has been presented to The Executive Office for consideration and approval.



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**Dame Sandra Horley**  
**Interim Chairperson**



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**Andrew Walker**  
**Chief Executive and**  
**Accounting Officer**

**Date: 24 October 2024**

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

### Overview

The Accountability Report for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited comprises three key elements:

- Corporate Governance Report
  - *Directors Report*
  - *Statement of Accounting Officer's and Directors Responsibilities*
  - *Governance Statement*
- Remuneration and Staff Report
- Assembly Accountability Report

These are outlined below.

### 2.1 Corporate Governance Report

This section of the report outlines the compositions and organisation of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's governance structures and how they support the achievement of the organisation's objectives.

#### 2.1.1 Directors Report

##### Introduction and Background

The Directors during 2023-24 were as follows:

Oliver Wilkinson	Chair appointed 1 April 2015*, resigned 30 April 2024
Bertha McDougall	Director appointed 2 December 2013, resigned 3 December 2023
Patricia Haren	Director appointed 1 April 2015, resigned 31 March 2024
Dame Sandra Horley	Director appointed 18 October 2022
John Cahill	Director appointed 18 October 2022
Dr Catriona MacArthur	Director appointed 21 August 2023
Brian Gilfedder	Director appointed 23 August 2023

*\*(Previously Director appointed 2 December 2013, Interim Chair appointed 30 June 2014)*

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has drafted its Corporate Plan 2024-2027, which has been submitted to The Executive Office for consideration by The Executive Office Departmental Board.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Corporate Plan 2024-27 outlines the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's approach to Outcomes Based Accountability and grows upon the progress which has been made as part of the Co-Design Programme and the outcomes-led approach outlined in the Performance Analysis section above. This approach is consistent with the 2021 draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework as shown at page 29.

In developing these priorities, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has also listened closely to our stakeholders, who have emphasised the need for a victim and survivor led service that is responsive to need, easy to understand and access, and that enables the development of networks of support.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Delivery Plan 2024-27 details the measurable actions and outputs that will be taken / monitored over the next financial year to work towards these outcomes. Progress against this Plan is monitored on an ongoing basis and reported on regularly to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board.

### **Share Capital**

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital.

### **Data Protection and Freedom of Information**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is required to report on personal data related incidents and accordingly has a control system to meet these responsibilities under the recent General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the subsequent Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The GDPR came into force on 25 May 2018 and consequently the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has established internal and external working processes to comply with and implement the introduction of this legislation. An Information Asset Register has been maintained detailing all data sources held and all policies and procedures were reviewed in light of the new regulation.

All staff and Board members have completed basic GDPR awareness training and undertake annual refresher training. The Data Protection Officer receives regular training keeping them abreast of developments regarding data legislation.

There were no instances of personal data loss requiring a report to the Information Commissioner's Office during the year under review.

During the year staff were advised by the Data Protection Officer on controls and improvements to reduce the likelihood of data breaches, including the sharing of lessons learnt for any non-reportable breach arising.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The control system established to ensure the appropriate handling of personal data and information used for operational and reporting purposes is the Publication Scheme, which is available on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website at [www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org).

In 2023-24 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited received nine Freedom of Information requests (2022-23: eight). Responses were provided to eight of these requests in 2023-24, with one request rescinded by the requestor before a response was prepared and issued. In addition, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited handled a substantial number of Subject Access Requests relating to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.

### **Related Parties**

Details of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited related parties are set out in Note 19 to the financial statements.

### **Register of Interests**

The Chair, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board, the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and all staff are required to register all interests, direct or indirect, which members of the public might reasonably think could influence their judgment.

The register of interests is available for public inspection by contacting the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN.

### **Charitable Donations**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited made no charitable or political donations during this period.

### **Important events occurring after the year-end**

There have been a number of important events occurring after year end which are listed below with further details of these events having been covered under the Strategic Developments section on page 22.

- Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 – commencement of the work of the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) on 1 May 2024.
- Approval by SEUPB Steering Committee of €25m PEACE PLUS project for Victims and Survivors – 21 May 2024.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

- Truth Recovery Programme – TEO Launch of public consultation on Statutory Public Inquiry and Financial Redress Scheme (27 June 2024)

### **2.1.2 Statement of Accounting Officer's and Directors' Responsibilities**

Under the Companies Act 2006 the Directors are required to prepare, for each financial year, a statement of accounts detailing the resources acquired, held, or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited during the year. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and of its Net Comprehensive Expenditure, Statement of Financial Position, changes in taxpayer's equity and cash flows for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- Observe the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer and Directors are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Accounting Officer has a general responsibility for taking steps as are reasonably available to safeguard the assets of the company and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Accounting Officer and Directors are required to confirm that, as far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the entity's auditors are unaware, that the Accounting Officer and Directors have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the entity's auditors are aware of that information.

The Accounting Officer and Directors are required to confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable. The Accounting Officer is also required to confirm that they take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Executive Office has appointed the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer include the responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Victims and Survivors Service Limited assets and are set out in full in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

### **2.1.3 Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024**

#### **Introduction**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is a company limited by guarantee, owned by The Executive Office and functioning as an Arm's Length Body. It is financed through The Executive Office's Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL). The Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited reports directly to The Executive Office.

This statement is given in respect of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's accounts for 2023-24. The Governance Statement comprises two broad elements. First, the Statement describes the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's governance framework, identifying responsibilities and explaining the functions of its constituent elements. Second, the Statement reports my assessment as Accounting Officer of the effectiveness of the framework during the reporting period. The report identifies any significant governance issues and concludes with a review of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited conformance with the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013.

#### **The Purpose of the Governance Statement**

The purpose of the Governance Statement is to report publicly on the extent to which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited complies with the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013. The process of preparing the Governance Statement itself adds value to the effectiveness of the corporate governance and internal control framework.

#### **Overview of the Governance Framework**

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values, by which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is directed and controlled.

The system of internal control is a significant part of this framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve the organisation's aims and objectives and can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The corporate governance framework within which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited operated for the year ended 31 March 2024 comprises:

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

- The Accounting Officer;
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board;
- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Audit and Risk Committee; and
- The Internal Audit function.

These structures, together with an overview of their responsibilities and performance in year, are set out in the relevant sections below.

The corporate governance framework also includes a number of additional elements that contribute to the effective governance of the organisation. These comprise:

- The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum;
- The Executive Office Oversight Arrangements;
- The Corporate Plan 2023-26 and Delivery Plan 2023-24;
- The Performance Appraisal Framework;
- The Risk Management Framework;
- Financial Policies and Procedures;
- Raising Concerns Policy; and
- Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

Clinical governance arrangements are also in place, with oversight by a Health and Wellbeing Committee.

These elements, together with an assessment of their effectiveness in the period, are described in the relevant sections below.

### **Review of Effectiveness**

#### ***The Accounting Officer***

I was appointed Accounting Officer on 26 June 2023, having held the position on an interim basis since 22 August 2022.

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. I also have responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances allocated to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and for safeguarding public funds and assets, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013 and Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

In my role as Accounting Officer, I function with the support of the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited (the Board). This includes highlighting to the Board specific

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

business risks and, where appropriate, the measures that could be employed to manage these risks.

### ***The Board***

The Board is chaired by a non-executive Director. It supports the delivery of effective Corporate Governance in keeping with the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013.

The Board takes an objective long-term view of the business of the organisation, leading its strategic planning process and assisting the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in setting and meeting its corporate aims and objectives.

Under the general guidance and direction of the Ministers of The Executive Office, key aspects of the Board's role include:

- Setting the strategic direction for the organisation, including its vision, values, and strategic objectives;
- Overseeing the implementation of its corporate and business plans, monitoring performance against objectives, and supervising its budget;
- Leading and overseeing the process of change and encouraging innovation, to enhance the organisation's capability to deliver;
- Overseeing the strategic management of staff, finance, information, and physical resources, including setting training and health and safety priorities;
- Establishing and overseeing the implementation of the corporate and clinical governance arrangements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, including risk management; and
- Overseeing and monitoring progress against all of its equality of opportunity and good relations obligations.

The Board Membership is set out within its Terms of Reference to comprise of a Chair plus 7 members. The Executive Office is responsible for the appointment of members. Two appointments to the Board were made from an existing public appointment process, Catriona MacArthur and Brian Gilfedder in the 2023-24 year.

The maximum term of office is normally 4 years, and each member/chair may serve a maximum of 2 terms. In the 2023-24 year, the VSS Chair, Oliver Wilkinson and two board members Bertha McDougall and Patricia Haren completed their second terms. The Executive Office has completed a public appointment process for a new Chair and three new Board members, with appointments expected during 2024-25.

The Board membership is detailed in [Table 5](#) below.

**Table 5: Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board Membership**

Name	Position
Oliver Wilkinson	Director appointed 2 December 2013, Appointed Interim Chair 30 June 2014, Appointed Chair 1 April 2015, resigned 30 April 2024
Bertha McDougall	Director appointed 2 December 2013, resigned 3 December 2023
Patricia Haren	Director appointed 1 April 2015, resigned 31 March 2024
Sandra Horley	Director appointed 18 October 2022
John Cahill	Director appointed 18 October 2022
Catriona MacArthur	Director appointed 21 August 2023
Brian Gilfedder	Director appointed 23 August 2023

The Board was able to maintain quorum throughout 2023-24.

The Board met 11 times in 2023-24. **Table 6** below details the attendance of Board members at meetings held during the year.

**Table 6: Board Meeting Attendance**

Date	Oliver Wilkinson	Bertha McDougall	Patricia Haren	Sandra Horley	John Cahill	Dr Catriona MacArthur	Brian Gilfedder
<b>20 Apr 23</b>	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a
<b>25 May 23</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a
<b>22 June 23</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a
<b>24 Aug 23</b>	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	n/a	n/a
<b>31 Aug 23</b>	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓
<b>21 Sept 23</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>27 Oct 23</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>23 Nov 23</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>7 Dec 23</b>	✓	n/a	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
<b>25 Jan 23</b>	x	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>21 Mar 23</b>	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

On a quarterly basis, the Board considers a range of issues, including the following standing items:

- Minutes of Previous Meeting;
- Chairman's Update;
- Chief Executive and Accounting Officer Update;
- Reports from Sub Committees (Audit and Risk and Health and Wellbeing);
- Progress against Budget;
- Progress against Corporate and Delivery Plans and risks to achieving stated outcomes;

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

- Compliance and Data Protection Updates; and
- Client Risk Update.

In addition to the quarterly meetings, the remaining Board meetings follow a strategic format, devoting time to the consideration of key strategic issues. Such issues considered in 2023-24 included:

- Presentations from VSS funded organisations
- Meeting with ICRIR Chief Commissioner, Sir Declan Morgan
- Meeting with the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, Ian Jeffers
- Stakeholder and communications planning
- PEACEPLUS

The Board operates as a collegiate forum under the leadership of the Chair. It ensures that the appropriate strategic planning processes are in place and that there is effective operational management of their implementation. Day-to-day operational matters are my responsibility and that of senior staff.

Each Non-Executive Board Member participates in the high-level corporate decision-making process as a member of the Board, contributes to the operation of corporate governance arrangements within the organisation and supports me in my role of Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

As Chief Executive, I am responsible for organising the agenda for monthly Board meetings and ensuring the Chair and Board members are provided with timely information to support full discussion at each meeting.

I report to the Board by exception, drawing attention and focus to any areas of concern, including significant strategic risks and areas of delivery against planned outcomes which are at risk.

I provide reports which include areas such as the status of delivery plan outcomes; expenditure against budget; requests made under the Freedom of Information Act; press reporting of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited; Assembly Questions relevant to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited; and absence management.

The Board maintains a Register of Interests. This lists, for each Director, all commercial and other relevant interests. A similar register is maintained by senior management and staff within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. Significant changes are reported as they occur. Each Board and Committee meeting begins with those present declaring any conflicts of interest that may arise from agenda items. In the event of a conflict of interest arising, the Director or committee member concerned is required to withdraw from any discussion of the relevant matter and to abstain from any associated vote.

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Board reviewed its own effectiveness by carrying out a self-assessment on 20 June 2024. The overall conclusion was that the Board performed well in 2023-24. The Board members set a development plan for the 2024-25 year and agreed a number of actions to be taken forward to achieve the development themes. Board appraisals were undertaken with each Board Member and the Chair in Q4 of 2023-24 to review performance against these objectives.

### ***The Health and Wellbeing Committee***

The Health and Wellbeing Committee are appointed by the Board. The Committee nominates one member to the position of Chair.

The Health and Wellbeing Committee's terms of reference sets out its role, including:

- Consideration of strategies in relation to the implementation and evaluation of a Clinical Governance Framework;
- Consideration of strategies in relation to the implementation and evaluation of Health and Wellbeing Services delivered by and on behalf of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited;
- Consideration of strategies concerning the Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff health and wellbeing, employee engagement and development; and
- Providing assurances relating to the management of clinical risk and clinical governance requirements for the organisation.

**Table 7** below details the Health and Wellbeing Committee members.

**Table 7: Health and Wellbeing Committee Membership**

Name	Position
<b>Patricia Haren</b>	Committee Member from April 2017, resigned 31 March 2024
<b>Sandra Horley</b>	Committee Member from October 2022, appointed Chair April 2024
<b>Catriona MacArthur</b>	Committee Member from November 2023

In addition to its members, the following officers normally attend the Committee:

- The Head of Health and Wellbeing; and
- Health and Wellbeing Case Managers;

The Health and Wellbeing Committee met four times in 2023-24.

## **The Audit and Risk Committee**

The Audit and Risk Committee and its Chair are appointed by the Board.

The Audit and Risk Committee's terms of reference sets out its purpose as being to support me, as Accounting Officer, in monitoring risk, control and governance systems, including financial reporting. Additionally, the Committee will advise the Board and the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of internal and external audit arrangements and on the implications of assurances provided in respect of risk and control. The Audit and Risk Committee does not have executive powers.

**Table 8** below details the Audit and Risk Committee members.

**Table 8: Audit and Risk Committee Membership**

Name	Position
Colm Doran	Committee Member - Chair from October 2013 (Appointed from Department of Finance), resigned 31 March 2024.
Bertha McDougall	Committee Member from 13 December 2013, resigned 3 December 2023
Briege Lafferty	Committee member from 6 August 2019 (Appointed from DAERA)
John Cahill	Committee Member from 18 October 2022. Appointed Chair 1 April 2024.
Brian Gilfedder	Committee Member from 23 August 2023

In addition to its members, the following officers normally attend the Committee:

- The Accounting Officer;
- The Head of Corporate Services;
- The Finance Manager;
- The Business Support Officer (Secretary to the Committee);
- Representative(s) from the Northern Ireland Audit Office;
- Representative(s) from the Victims Unit in The Executive Office; and
- Representative(s) from the Internal Audit service provider.

The Audit and Risk Committee met five times in 2023-24.

In line with best practice set out in the Department of Finance's Audit and Risk Assurance Handbook, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee has approved an agreed agenda of work for its meetings, which include the following standing and annual agenda items:

- The review of the strategic risk register;

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

- Scrutiny of the annual accounts;
- Consideration of internal and external audit strategy;
- Review of internal and external audit findings;
- Consideration of compliance / fraud;
- Consideration of any Directly Awarded Contracts;
- The annual self-assessment of the Audit and Risk Committee; and
- The monitoring of residual audit recommendations.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed its own effectiveness by carrying out a self-assessment in May 2024. The overall conclusion was that the Audit and Risk Committee was performing well and would develop an action plan to address the areas for improvement identified within the review.

### **Risk Management Strategy**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Risk Management Strategy has been approved by the Board. This strategy sets out the process whereby the Victims and Survivors Service Limited methodically identifies, assesses and responds to the risks attaching to its activities. It assigns responsibility and accountability for risk management; defines the processes for risk review and reporting; describes a format for the organisation's corporate risk register; and explains the organisation's approach to training in risk management.

A risk register has been in operation and updated on a quarterly basis throughout 2023-24. Key risks identified and managed during the reporting period included:

- Risk that VSS does not have complete corporate governance structures to provide oversight and guidance.
- Risk that the needs of the bereaved are not being met.
- Risk in respect of funding to support the bridging between the PEACEIV and PEACEPLUS Projects.
- Risk that community partner organisations are impacted by the significant increased demand for services whilst funding is impacted by inflation and rollover of programme funding since 2017.
- Risks associated with delays in the implementation of key recommendations of the Truth Recovery Strategy.
- Regional Trauma Network's achievement of its full potential.
- Risk around attraction and retention of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
- Risk associated with appropriate/timely response to interventions to preserve life.
- Risk in respect of appropriate resourcing of the organisation to deliver all areas of work.

## Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Board have agreed an approach to the monitoring and escalation of risks in line with the risk appetite which is reviewed on an annual basis. All risks are assessed and escalated as appropriate.

It should be further noted that no 'ministerial directions' have been issued to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and there have been no reported lapses of protective security.

The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed all instances of suspected fraud and irregularities. Further details are outlined in the Fraud and Counter-Fraud Section on page 95.

### Internal Audit

The primary role of Internal Audit is to provide the Accounting Officer and the Board with an independent and objective opinion on risk management, control and governance by measuring and evaluating their effectiveness in achieving the organisation's agreed objectives.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited appointed a new independent Internal Audit Service, Cavanagh Kelly, in May 2021, for a 3-year period, with the option to extend for a further two years.

**Table 9** below outlines the internal audit programme that was carried out relating to 2023-24.

**Table 9: Internal Audit 2023-24**

Report Date	Scope	Audit Rating	Status
Dec 23	Review of Human resources	Satisfactory	Final Report
April 24	Review of Financial Management	Satisfactory	Final Report
May 24	Review of Individual Needs Grants	Satisfactory	Final Report
July 24	Programmes – Vouching and Verification	Satisfactory	Final Report

A Satisfactory assurance level denotes that overall there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control. While there may be some residual risk identified, this should not significantly impact on the achievement of system objectives.

The internal auditor's overall assurance rating for 2023-24 is **Satisfactory**.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

During 2023-24 a total of five recommendations were made across three areas. There were no Priority One recommendations, no Priority Two recommendations and five Priority Three recommendations.

In addition, the Follow-Up Report confirmed that of the eighteen audit recommendations reviewed, ten were fully implemented, two were no longer applicable and six were partially implemented.

### **External Audit**

The Comptroller and Auditor General has statutory responsibility for the audit of Victims and Survivors Service Limited under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office is independent of Government and is tasked by the Assembly to hold the Northern Ireland Departments and their Agencies to account for their use of public money.

The Comptroller and Auditor General works closely with the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee which can require Accounting Officers and senior officials to account for their actions in relation to the management of public funds.

A representative from the Northern Ireland Audit Office attends the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

### **The Executive Office Oversight Arrangements**

Within The Executive Office, the Victims and Survivors Unit is the sponsoring division for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited. The Victims and Survivors Unit, in consultation as necessary with the Accounting Officer of The Executive Office, is the primary source of advice to Ministers on the discharge of their responsibilities in respect of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and the primary point of contact for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in dealing with the Department.

In order to discharge its duties on behalf of the Sponsor Department, the Victims and Survivors Unit administers the following oversight controls:

- Accountability and Oversight Meetings (attended by the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and Head of Corporate Services);
- Quarterly Assurance Statements;

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

- The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (updated April 2018); and
- Ongoing Performance Monitoring against the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan.

In 2019-20, further guidance on a revised approach to partnership working between Sponsor Departments and Arm's Length Bodies was issued. A draft Partnership Agreement template (to replace the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum) has been issued to all ALBs and Sponsor Departments. I welcome the opportunity to improve the mechanisms for partnership between the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and TEO in this regard. A draft partnership agreement was completed in Q4 of 2022-23, with further work to be completed on the engagement plan in 2024-25

### **Accountability Meetings**

The Accounting Officer and senior staff attended Accountability Meetings during the year with senior staff from the Department. These meetings took place on four occasions during 2023-24.

Senior Victims and Survivors Service Limited staff and the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer have operated a 'no surprises' policy in respect of ensuring that officials in the Department are aware of all material events, transactions and other issues that could be considered contentious or attract public comment, whether positive or negative. Quarter-end management reporting is shared as standard, in addition to further reporting outlined below.

### **Assurance Statements**

The Quarterly Assurance statement, prepared under the direction of and signed by the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, provides information and assurance in the following areas:

- Risk management;
- Business Planning;
- Legislative authorities;
- Budget cover, business cases and post project evaluations;
- Monitoring of expenditure;
- Procurement;
- Consultancy;
- Information assurance and Data Protection;
- Staff management;

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

- MSFM, Monitoring and Verifications, Whistleblowing and Declaration of Interest Policy compliance;
- Internal and external audit and Public Accounts Committee reports/recommendations;
- Project Management;
- Functioning of Government Act (NI) 2021; and
- Other significant issues.

The Accounting Officer submitted four Assurance Statements to The Executive Office during 2023-24.

### **The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum**

The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum is a key control document setting out the broad framework within which the Victims and Survivors Service Limited will operate. This document defines:

- The Victims and Survivors Service Limited's overall aims, objectives and targets;
- The rules and guidelines relevant to the exercise of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited functions, duties and powers;
- The conditions under which any public funds are paid to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited; and
- How the organisation is to be held to account for its performance.

The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum was reviewed and updated in April 2018 and is available on the Victims and Survivors Service Limited website.

### ***Corporate Plan 2023-26 and Delivery Plan 2023-24***

The 2023-26 Corporate Plan (and 2023-24 Delivery Plan) was prepared and submitted to TEO for consideration.

The Chief Executive has monitored the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's performance against the targets set out in its 2023-24 Delivery Plan, included at [Appendix 2](#).

The Board is satisfied as to the quality of data and information provided by the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, who gained assurance through detailed reporting provided by senior staff in 2023-24.

### Financial Management

Responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated rests with the Accounting Officer. The systems of internal financial control provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or will be detected within a timely period. Internal financial control is based on a framework of management information, financial regulations and administrative procedures, which include the segregation of duties, management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability.

The implementation of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited financial management process in 2023-24 included:

- The setting of annual Grant in Aid;
- Monitoring of actual income and expenditure against the annual budget;
- Setting and management of expenditure profiles;
- Monthly reporting of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited financial position to the Board;
- A clearly defined system of expenditure authority delegations;
- Clear processes for the authorisation of expenditure and the payment of invoices; and
- Continuous engagement around areas of financial need with The Executive Office.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has established Financial Policies and Procedures that address areas of risk as well as operational efficiency and effectiveness. These documents act as a reference point detailing all Financial Policies and Procedures that have been approved by the Board.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited operates a suite of other policies, processes and procedures that cover the full range of its activities. All staff are briefed on these policies during their induction and at regular staff meetings. Any needs identified are addressed through the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's annual training and development plan.

### Fraud and Counter-Fraud

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Policy and Procedures on fraud sets out the responsibilities of staff with regard to fraud prevention, what staff should do if they suspect fraud and the action that will be taken by management in such circumstances in line with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to work with the Group Internal Audit and Fraud Investigation Services unit within the Department of Finance and, where appropriate, with the PSNI. Four cases of suspected fraud were opened in 2023-24 and remained open at 31 March 2024. One other case, relating to a prior year, remained open at 31 March 2024.

### **Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing)**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy provides staff with a procedure for reporting concerns about unlawful conduct, fraud, dangers to the public or the environment, or other malpractice. The aim of this policy is to reassure staff that they can feel confident in exposing wrongdoing without any risk to themselves. This policy is also applicable to members of the public who contact the Victims and Survivors Service Limited with concerns about our Funded Organisations.

There were three instances of whistleblowing by anonymous sources to the Victims and Survivors Service in the year to 31 March 2024. The Victims and Survivors Service investigated these cases and took the necessary appropriate action.

### **Training**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Learning and Development policy is set in the context of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited recognising the need for well-motivated and highly skilled staff.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to learning, development and training opportunities which enable them to be suitably knowledgeable and skilled to carry out their role and to develop in ways that fit with the strategic framework.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has made a significant investment in staff training and development through commissioning training in line with employee Personal Development Plans.

### **Significant Governance Issues**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited continues to embed processes and procedures through the timely implementation of Internal and External Audit Recommendations. The overall Internal Audit assurance rating was Satisfactory.

There are no reportable governance issues which emerged throughout the year, or after the year end.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

### ***Direct Award Contracts***

There were no Direct Award Contracts awarded in 2023-24.

### ***Governance Checks for Existing Clients***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited undertakes a rolling and continuous eligibility check on a randomly selected sample resulting in coverage of no less than 5% of individuals in each rolling 12 month period.

In the 2023-24 financial year, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited conducted sensitive checks on 9.2% (sample size = 630) of client records to verify their eligibility for payments. This spot check has been fully completed with the maximum extrapolated error rate of 2.08% and a maximum potential extrapolated error value of £86,409.

### ***Conformance with Code of Conduct***

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited, like other public bodies, has a duty to conduct affairs in a responsible and transparent way and to take into account the standards in public life set out by the Nolan Committee and the Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013. Where appropriate, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has taken account of additional good practice documented in the 2013 edition of the Code.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is not a Central Government Department and cannot, therefore, comply with those parts of the code that are only applicable to such Departments. However, the corporate governance arrangements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited have been established in such a way as to conform broadly to these standards. In doing so, these arrangements reflect the Code's recommendation that for bodies such as the Victims and Survivors Service Limited "*the code should be applied with adjustments to suit their scale, responsibilities and accountability chains*".

Throughout the year to 31 March 2024, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has complied with all relevant 2013 Code provision.

### ***Conclusion***

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors and senior staff within the organisation who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

## **Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

I also consider the comments made by the Northern Ireland Audit Office in its Report to Those Charged with Governance and other reports.

I understand the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance.

The system of accountability on which I rely as Accounting Officer to form an opinion on the probity and use of public funds, as detailed in Managing Public Money NI, is now well embedded within the organisation. The structure of the organisation has been appropriate to meet the organisation's corporate and delivery plans (however significant changes to structure have been identified to meet the challenges ahead, and to improve efficiency and effectiveness). Monitoring and evaluation systems have matured, allowing the capture and analysis of timely and accurate information to support internal decision making, resulting in well evidenced, outcomes-based accountability.

Internal and external audit activity in respect of 2023-24, has reflected the sound system of internal control in place within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited, with only a small number of low priority recommendations arising. Any weaknesses identified internally by management, the Board, the Audit and Risk Committee and Internal and External Audit have been considered with immediate action undertaken on priority findings and an implementation plan in place for longer term developments.

## **2.2 Remuneration and Staff Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

### ***Remuneration Policy***

Remuneration of all staff members, including the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and senior staff, is set out in their contracts of employment and is subject to review under Northern Ireland Civil Service pay remit guidelines. Such a review requires the approval of the Department of Finance.

The appointment and remuneration of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's Board is determined by The Executive Office.

### ***Service Contracts***

Victims and Survivors Service Limited appointments are made in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, which requires appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition but also includes the circumstances when appointments may otherwise be made. Further information can be found in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

### ***Salary and Pension Entitlements***

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Directors and the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

### Remuneration (including salary) and Pension Entitlements (Audited Information)

Officials	2023-24				2022-23			
	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)	Total £'000	Salary £'000	Benefits in kind (to the nearest £100)	Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)	Total £'000
Ms Margaret Bateson, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer Leaver 19.09.2022	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	40-45 (FTE 80- 85)	-	17	60-65
Mr Andrew Walker, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer T/P from 22.08.2022 Permanent appointment 26.06.2023	75 - 80	-	34	110-115	45-50 (FTE 75- 80)	-	27	70-75
Mr Oliver Wilkinson, Board Member and Chair Resigned 30.04.24	5-10	-	-	5-10	5-10	-	-	5-10
Mrs Bertha McDougall, Board Member Resigned 03.12.23	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5
Ms Patricia Haren, Board Member Resigned 31.03.24	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5
Mr John Cahill, Board Member	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5
Dame Sandra Horley, Board Member	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5
Dr Catriona MacArthur, Board Member Appointed 21.08.23	0-5	-	-	0-5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mr Brian Gilfedder, Board Member Appointed 23.08.23	0-5	-	-	0-5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

## **Salary**

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other relevant allowances to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any severance or ex-gratia payments.

## **Benefits in Kind**

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument.

No benefits in kind were paid during the year.

## **Bonuses**

Bonuses are not payable to Victims and Survivors Service Limited Directors or employees. There were no ex-gratia payments made to current Directors or employees.

## **Fair Pay Disclosures (Audited)**

### **Pay Ratios**

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the lower quartile, median and upper quartile remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid member of staff or director in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in the financial year 2023-24 was £75,000 - £80,000 (2022-23: £75,000 - £80,000). This was 2.6 times (2022-23: 2.4 times) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £29,859 (2022-23: £32,328).

A summary of pay ratios by percentile is set out as follows:

<b>2023-24</b>	<b>25th Percentile</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>75th Percentile</b>
Total remuneration (£)	£24,507	£29,859	£36,002
Pay Ratio	3.16	2.60	2.15

<b>2022-23</b>	<b>25th Percentile</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>75th Percentile</b>
Total remuneration (£)	£23,955	£32,328	£33,459
Pay Ratio	3.24	2.40	2.32

The movements in the pay ratios compared to 2022-23 are primarily due to recruitment to fill existing vacant posts, and the associated impact on staff profile. Management

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

believe that the median pay ratio is consistent with the pay, reward and progression policies for the employees taken as a whole.

In 2023-24, 0 (2022-23, 0) employees received remuneration in excess of the highest paid employee or director. Remuneration ranged from £20k - £80k (2022-23 £20k - £80k). Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

### **Percentage Change in Remuneration**

Reporting bodies are also required to disclose the percentage change from the previous financial year in the:

- a) Salary and allowances, and
  - b) Performance pay and bonuses
- of the highest paid director and of their employees as a whole.

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

<b>Percentage change for:</b>	<b>2023-24 V 2022-23</b>	<b>2022-23 V 2021-22</b>
Average employee salary and allowances	2.46%	1.28%
Highest paid director's salary and allowances	0.00%	0.00%

### **Pension Benefits (Audited Information)**

<b>Officials</b>	<b>Accrued Pension and related lump sum at pension age as at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age</b>	<b>CETV at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>CETV at 31 March 2023*</b>	<b>Real increase in CETV</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Mr Andrew Walker, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer	20-25	0-2.5	303*	253	19

\*As per the EPN and PES from HM treasury, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Values on the disclosure will not match those submitted in last year's accounts due to the McCloud remedy and subsequent rollback of the system.

***Victims and Survivors Service Limited Pension Arrangements***

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

The alpha pension scheme was initially introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of members of the Classic, Premium, Classic Plus and Nuvos pension arrangements (collectively known as the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS(NI)]) also moved to alpha from that date. Transitional protection measures introduced alongside these reforms meant any members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age remained in their previous scheme arrangement (full protection) and those who were between 13.5 years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age (tapered protection).

McCloud Judgement

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

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

- ensuring all active members are treated equally for future service as members of the reformed alpha scheme only from 1 April 2022, and
- providing each eligible member with options to have their pension entitlements for the period when the discrimination existed between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the remedy period) retrospectively calculated under either the current (reformed) scheme rules, or the old (pre-reform) legacy rules which existed before 2015.

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

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

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

Eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) will now be entitled to a choice of alternative pension benefits in relation to that period. i.e. calculated under the pre-reformed PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' rules or alternatively calculated under the reformed alpha rules. As part of this 'retrospective' remedy most active members will now receive a choice about their remedy period benefits at the point of retirement. This is known as the Deferred Choice Underpin (DCU). For those members who already have pension benefits in payment in relation to the Remedy Period, they will receive an Immediate Choice which will be issued by 31 March 2025.

At this stage, allowance has not yet been made within CETVs for this remedy. Further information on the remedy will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which, once published, are available at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/dof-resource-accounts>.

As part of the remedy involves rolling back all remediable service into the relevant legacy PCSPS(NI) arrangement for the 7-Year Remedy Period, the value of pension benefits may change for affected members and some figures previously reported may change. The 2023-24 pension disclosures above are calculated based on HM Treasury guidance using;

- a. Rolled back opening balance
- b. Rolled back closing balance
- c. CETV calculated by CSP on the rolled back basis
- d. No restatement of prior year figures where disclosed.

### Alpha

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

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

### Information on the PCSPS(NI) – Closed Scheme

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

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

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

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

### Partnership Pension Account

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

Active members of the pension scheme will receive an Annual Benefit Statement. The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. The normal scheme pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. The Scheme Pension age is 60 for any pension accrued in the legacy Classic, Premium, and Classic Plus arrangements and 65 for any benefits accrued in Nuvos. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website <http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni>.

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2023 was 6.7% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2024.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 are as follows:

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands)		Contribution rates – All members
From	To	From 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
£0	£26,302.49	4.60%
£26,302.50	£59,849.99	5.45%
£58,850.00	£160,964.99	7.35%
£160,965.00 and above		8.05%

### Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) Regulations 1996 (as amended) and do not take account of any actual or potential benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may have been due when pension benefits are taken. The Lifetime Allowance will end in April 2024 and will be replaced by the Lump Sum Allowance and The Lump Sum And Death Benefit Allowance.

HM Treasury provides the assumptions for discount rates for calculating CETVs payable from the public service pension schemes. On 27 April 2023, HM Treasury published guidance on the basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes. In their guidance of 27 April 2023, HM Treasury advised that, with immediate effect, the discount rate adopted for calculating CETVs should be in line with the new SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation, superseding the previous SCAPE discount rate of 2.4% above CPI inflation. All else being the same, a lower SCAPE discount rate leads to higher CETVs. The HM Treasury Guidance of 27 April 2023 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basis-for-setting-the-discount-rates-for-calculating-cash-equivalent-transfer-values-payable-by-public-service-pension-schemes/basis-for-setting-the-discount-rates-for-calculating-cash-equivalent-transfer-values-payable-by-public-service-pension-schemes>.

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

### Real increase in CETV

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

### Staff Report

#### *Staff Numbers and Related costs (Audited)*

Staff costs comprise:

Staff costs	Permanently Employed Staff	Others (Agency & Seconded)	Year ended 31-Mar-24 Total	Year ended 31-Mar-23 Total
	£	£	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,410,823	320,344	1,731,167	1,833,138
Social security costs	143,157	-	143,157	121,739
Pension costs	390,375	-	390,375	345,594
Board costs	20,428	-	20,428	16,057
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,964,783</b>	<b>320,344</b>	<b>2,285,127</b>	<b>2,316,528</b>
Less: Recoveries in respect to outward secondments	42,050	-	42,050	83,109
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,922,733</b>	<b>320,344</b>	<b>2,243,077</b>	<b>2,233,419</b>
Funded through Core Funds	1,101,756	247,104	1,348,860	1,480,823
Funded through HIA Funds	195,757	21,161	216,918	138,712
Funded through MBMLW Funds	195,946	12,138	208,084	107,242
Funded through PEACE IV Funds	-	-	-	343,231
Funded through PEACE Interim Funds	429,274	39,941	469,215	163,411
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,922,733</b>	<b>320,344</b>	<b>2,243,077</b>	<b>2,233,419</b>

\* Of the total, £nil has been charged to capital.

### Pension

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

The Public Service Pensions Act (NI) 2014 provides the legal framework for regular actuarial valuations of the public service pension schemes to measure the costs of the

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

benefits being provided. These valuations inform the future contribution rates to be paid into the schemes by employers every four years following the scheme valuation. The Act also provides for the establishment of an employer cost cap mechanism to ensure that the costs of the pension schemes remain sustainable in future.

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

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

For 2023-24, employers' contributions of £385,384 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2022-23 £340,186) at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £4,641.12 (2022-23 £5,408.39) were paid to one or more of the panel of two appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2022-23, 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay. The partnership pension account offers the member the opportunity of having a 'free' pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the member does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match member contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings.

Employer contributions of £171.88, 0.5% (2022-23 £184.53, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS Pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees.

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were £nil.

Nil persons (2022-23: 0 persons) retired early on ill-health grounds.

### Average Number of Persons Employed (Audited)

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

	Permanently Employed Staff	Others (Agency and Seconded)	Year ended 31 March 2024 Total	Year ended 31 March 2023 Total
Administrators	26.43	5.77	32.20	28.39
Management	6.92	0.17	7.09	6.95
Senior Management	3.78	0	3.78	4.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.13</b>	<b>5.94</b>	<b>43.07</b>	<b>39.86</b>

### Compensation on early retirement or for Loss of Office (Audited)

No Directors or Officers were compensated for early retirement or loss of office in 2023-24.

### Directors' Expenses

Only remuneration and expenses were paid to Directors of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited in 2023-24. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board of Directors remuneration details are on page 100.

Expenses reimbursed to/incurred in respect of Non-Executive Directors were as follows:

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Year end 31 March 2024 (£)	Year end 31 March 2023 (£)
O. Wilkinson, Board Chair	263	0
B. McDougall, Board Member	83	98
P Haren, Board Member	0	0
S Horley, Board Member*	5,397	3,287
J Cahill, Board Member	924	401
C MacArthur, Board Member	52	N/A
B Gilfedder, Board Member	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,719</b>	<b>3,786</b>

\*Travelling from outside of Northern Ireland

No further remuneration or expenses were paid to Non-Executive Directors in 2023-24.

### Senior Civil Service Staff (Audited)

In 2023-24 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had one senior civil service (or equivalent) staff member (the Chief Executive Officer).

### Staff Composition – breakdown of employees by gender (Audited)

Table 10 below illustrates the breakdown of employed staff by gender and grade.

**Table 10: Breakdown of Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and staff by gender and grade as at 31 March 2024**

Board		Grade 5		Grade 7		DP		SO		EO1, EO2 and AO	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
3	3	1	0	0	3	2	5	0	12	9	8

Overall breakdown: 40 Staff - 28 female and 12 male; Board – 3 female and 3 male.

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

At 31 March 2024, the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had 40 employees in post (38.51 full time equivalent). An additional 7 agency staff were in place on 31 March 2024, filling key vacancies within the organisational structure. The average permanent staff number was 37.13 during this period as outlined in Note 2 Staff numbers and related costs on page 131.

### **Off-Payroll Engagements**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no 'off-payroll' engagement costs in 2023-24.

### **Expenditure on External Consultancy**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited spent £0 on external consultancy in 2023-24.

### **Absence Data**

**Table 11** below shows the sickness absence results for the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the year ended 31 March 2024.

**Table 11: Sickness Absence**

	Working days lost 2023-24	Average days lost per FTE member of staff
<b>Including long-term absence</b>	545.5	14.69
<b>Excluding long-term absence</b>	184.5	4.97

Based on an average FTE of 37.13 permanent employees over the full year.

By comparison in 2022-23:

- 232.0 days absence (including long term absence) in 2022-23, an average of 7.22 working days lost per member of staff during that period.
- 134.0 days of absence in 2022-23 (Excluding long term absence), an average of 4.17 working days lost per member of staff during that period.

This increase in sickness absence in is largely due to several long-term absence periods, which make a significant impact on sickness rates within a small organisation. The organisation has also seen a smaller annual increase in short-term sickness absence since the pandemic in 2020, however short-term sickness rates remain lower than pre-Covid figures.

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

There was one employee off work on long-term sickness absence ongoing as at 31 March 2024.

### **Employee Policies**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to the development of its staff and to policies that enable them to contribute to the performance and long-term effectiveness of the organisation.

In particular the Victims and Survivors Service Limited:

- Follows the Northern Ireland Civil Service policy that all eligible persons have equal opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their ability, qualification and aptitude for work;
- Gives equality of opportunity when considering applications from disabled persons, in compliance with all existing legislation in regard to disabled employees;
- Recognises the benefit of keeping employees informed of the progress of the business and of involving them in the company's performance through regular Staff Planning days and briefings; and
- Regularly provides employees, through meetings and notices, with information regarding the external factors affecting the performance of the company and other matters of concern to them.

Specific staff policies which are in place include:

- **Disabled Persons:** The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Equal Opportunities policy applies to the employment of people with a disability. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- **Equal Opportunities:** As an equal opportunity employer the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is fully committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It has an obligation under fair employment legislation to ensure that it carries out its various functions having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.
- **Employee Involvement:** The Victims and Survivors Service Limited places considerable reliance on engagement and involvement of its employees. It makes every effort to ensure that staff are kept informed of plans and developments through a formal team briefing process, staff briefings, circulars and involvement in the design and implementation of corporate and business plans.

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

- **Learning and Development:** During 2023-24 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited continued to provide significant learning and development opportunities to staff throughout the organisation. This process is structured through the completion of personal development plans within the performance appraisal system.
- **Health and Safety:** The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is committed to applying all existing health and safety at work legislation and regulations to ensure that staff and visitors enjoy the benefits of a safe environment.
- **Staff Health and Wellbeing Programme:** During 2023-24 the programme continued to be offered to enhance staff health and wellbeing. Linked to the Take 5 methodology, the programme seeks to provide opportunity for staff to engage in activities which will benefit their health and wellbeing. The programme also includes a series of actions to enhance the working environment for staff.

### ***Staff Turnover***

Staff Turnover percentage for the year was 10.8% (2022-23 15.4%).

### ***Exit Packages (Audited Information)***

There were no redundancies or ill health retirements costs in the year to 31 March 2024.

## Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

### 2.3 Assembly Accountability Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

#### Fees and Charges (Audited)

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited incurred no fees or charges during 2023-24.

#### Remote Contingent Liabilities (Audited)

There are no remote contingent liabilities.

#### Losses and Special Payments (Audited)

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited made no requests for write-off during 2023-24. A small number of other low value payment recoveries remain open in respect of cases relating to individuals with recovery in progress.

#### Gifts and Hospitality

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited did not receive any gifts or hospitality during 2023-24.



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**Dame Sandra Horley**  
Interim Chairperson



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**Andrew Walker**  
Chief Executive and  
Accounting Officer

**Date: 24 October 2024**

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

### **VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS SERVICE LIMITED**

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

### **Opinion on financial statements**

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows and Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited financial statements is applicable law and the International Financial Reporting Standards.

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

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its Net Expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

### **Opinion on regularity**

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

### **Basis for opinions**

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

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

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

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

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

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

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

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

### **Other Information**

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

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

I have nothing to report in this regard.

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

### **Opinion on other matters**

In my opinion:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Performance Report and Directors' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### **Matters on which I report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Directors' Report. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

### **Responsibilities of the directors and Accounting Officer for the financial statements**

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

- preparing the Annual Report, which includes the Remuneration Report, in accordance with the Companies Act 2006;
- the preparation of the financial statements, in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and
- assessing the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited will not continue to be provided in the future.

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013.

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

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

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Victims and Survivors Service Limited through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included governing legislation and any other relevant laws and regulations identified;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on the Victims and Survivors Service's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to the Victims and Survivors Service's susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of the Victims and Survivors Service's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;

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

- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate;
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
  - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
  - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
  - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
  - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

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

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

### **Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



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

**28 October 2024**

## Financial Statements

### Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

## Financial Statements

### 3.1 Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-24 £	Year ended 31-Mar-23 £
<b>Income</b>			
Grant from EU	4	65,046	2,147,429
		<b>65,046</b>	<b>2,147,429</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Staff Costs	2	2,243,076	2,233,419
Programme Costs	3.1	17,508,897	16,976,808
Operating Costs	3.3	571,311	649,835
Depreciation and Amortisation	3.3	114,478	28,443
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>		<b>20,437,762</b>	<b>19,888,505</b>
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>		<b>(20,372,716)</b>	<b>(17,741,076)</b>
Finance Expense		6,782	-
<b>Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024</b>		<b>(20,379,498)</b>	<b>(17,741,076)</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure</b>		<b>(20,379,498)</b>	<b>(17,741,076)</b>
<b>Amount Transferred to General Fund</b>		<b>(20,379,498)</b>	<b>(17,741,076)</b>

Notes 1 to 22 on pages 125-143 form part of these financial statements.

## Financial Statements

### 3.2 Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2024

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-24 £	Year ended 31-Mar-23 £
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, Plant and Equipment	5	178,669	24,750
Intangible Assets	6	50,581	75,259
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>229,250</b>	<b>100,009</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Trade and Other Receivables	10	4,047,764	4,350,476
Cash and Cash Equivalents	11	712,769	307,870
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>4,760,533</b>	<b>4,658,346</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>4,989,783</b>	<b>4,758,355</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	12	3,220,806	3,090,975
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>3,220,806</b>	<b>3,090,975</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>		<b>1,768,977</b>	<b>1,667,380</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Other Payables	12	84,095	-
Provision for Liabilities and Charges	13	12,900	12,900
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>96,995</b>	<b>12,900</b>
<b>Total Assets less Total Liabilities</b>		<b>1,671,982</b>	<b>1,654,480</b>
<b>Taxpayers Equity</b>			
General Fund		1,671,982	1,654,480

Notes 1 to 22 on pages 125-143 form part of these financial statements.

COMPANY NUMBER: NI 611922

## Financial Statements

In the view of the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited an exemption from the audit requirements of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 is available under section 482 of that Act, since the company is a non-profit making company and is subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland which is performed under Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited therefore claims this exemption.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board and the Accounting Officer acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and preparation of accounts.

The financial statements were reviewed by the Accounting Officer on 24 October 2024.

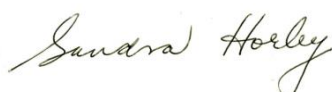


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**Andrew Walker**  
**Chief Executive and Accounting Officer**

**Date: 24 October 2024**

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 24 October 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:



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**Dame Sandra Horley**  
**Interim Chairperson**

**Date: 24 October 2024**

## Financial Statements

### 3.3 Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Year ended 31-Mar-24 £	Year ended 31-Mar-23 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
(Deficit) / Surplus for the period		(20,379,498)	(17,741,076)
<b>Adjustments for non-cash transactions</b>			
Depreciation	3.3	89,800	8,663
Amortisation	3.3	24,678	19,780
Interest on Lease Liabilities	15	6,782	-
Decrease / (Increase) in trade receivables and other current assets	10	302,712	(1,086,001)
Increase / (Decrease) in trade payables and other current liabilities	12	213,927	(887,176)
Less movements in liabilities relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	12	(165,302)	-
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(19,906,901)</b>	<b>(19,685,810)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	-	(1,680)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	-	(66,658)
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>(68,338)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department		20,397,000	19,011,488
Capital element of payments in respect of leases		(85,200)	-
<b>Net cash inflow from financing activities</b>		<b>20,311,800</b>	<b>19,011,488</b>
<b>Increase / (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period</b>		<b>404,899</b>	<b>(742,660)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	11	307,870	1,050,530
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		<b>712,769</b>	<b>307,870</b>

Notes 1 to 22 on pages 125-143 form part of these financial statements.

## Financial Statements

### 3.4 Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	<b>General Fund £</b>	<b>Taxpayers' Equity £</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>384,068</b>	<b>384,068</b>
<b>Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for 2022-23</b>		
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year	(17,741,076)	(17,741,076)
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department	19,011,488	19,011,488
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>1,654,480</b>	<b>1,654,480</b>
<b>Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for 2023-24</b>		
Total Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year	(20,379,498)	(20,379,498)
Grant in Aid from Sponsor Department	20,397,000	20,397,000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>1,671,982</b>	<b>1,671,982</b>

Notes 1 to 22 on pages 125-143 form part of these financial statements.

## **Notes to the Financial Statements**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements**

#### **1. Statement of Accounting Policies**

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2023-24 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited are described below. These have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

##### **1.1 Accounting Convention**

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention. The Directors do not consider the current costs of any of the transactions or closing balances to be materially different from the historical cost.

Modifications to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets and inventories are not considered to be material.

##### **1.2 Basis of Accounting**

Income and expenditure are measured using the accruals basis of accounting. Without limiting the information given, the accounts meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting Standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board and accounting and disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance.

##### **1.3 Income and Financing**

Income comprises grants receivable from the Special EU Programmes Body in respect of funding for the PEACE IV Programme.

FReM requires Arms-Length Bodies to regard Grant in Aid received as contributions from controlling parties giving rise to a financial interest in the residual interest of the body and hence accounted for as financing. Grant in Aid from the Sponsor Department (The Executive Office) is credited to the General Reserve in line with the FReM requirement.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 1.4 Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are capitalised if they are capable of being used for a period which exceeds one year and they:

- Individually have a cost of at least £1,000; or
- Satisfy the criteria of a grouped asset, i.e. collectively they have a cost of at least £1,000, are functionally interdependent, have broadly simultaneous purchase dates and are anticipated to have simultaneous disposal dates.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at historical cost and are not re-valued under IAS 16 due to of the immateriality of the balances involved.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as:

- Furniture and Fittings            10 years
- IT Equipment                        4 years

A full month's depreciation is charged in the month of acquisition and in the month of disposal.

### 1.5 Foreign Currency

The accounts are maintained and reported in Sterling. There are no foreign currency transactions in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

### 1.6 Intangible Assets

Intangible non-current assets are capitalised when they are capable of being used in the Victims and Survivors Service Limited activities for more than one year, they can be valued and they have a cost of at least £1,000 (either individually or as a grouped asset).

Intangible assets are amortised at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as:

- HR system software            4 years
- Website Development        4 years
- IT Software/Licences         4 years

Purchased computer software licences will be capitalised as an intangible non-current asset where expenditure of at least £1,000 is incurred (either individually or as a grouped asset). They will be amortised over the shorter of the term of the licence and their useful economic life, typically 4 years.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 1.7 Impairment

Non-current assets held for operational use will be valued at historical cost and are amortised over the estimated life of the asset on a straight-line basis. Where there is an indication that the carrying value of items of property, plant and equipment or intangibles may have been impaired through events or changes in circumstances, a review will be undertaken of the recoverable amount of that asset.

### 1.8 Taxation

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is a registered company limited by guarantee and is engaged in non-profit making activities in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding with The Executive Office and the memorandum and articles of association and accordingly its activities are not liable to Income and Corporation Taxes.

All of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's incoming resources are through grant in aid and grant funding which is outside the scope of taxation. Accordingly the Victims and Survivors Service Limited is not VAT registered and amounts in these accounts are inclusive of Value Added Tax where charged.

### 1.9 Pension Arrangements

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited participates in a pension scheme administered by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (PCSPS [NI]) is for all permanent and fixed term members of staff. The defined benefit schemes are unfunded.

In 2023-24, the company made pension contributions at 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay based on salary bands to the approved pension scheme. The cost of contributions for providing pensions for employees is charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure account as they are earned, in accordance with IAS 19 *Employee Benefits*. Seconded staff members remain members of their respective pension schemes.

### 1.10 Provisions

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited makes provisions for liabilities and charges where, at the date of the Statement of Financial Position, a legal or constructive liability exists (i.e., a present obligation from past events exists), where the transfer of economic benefits is probable and a reasonable estimate can be made. Where the time value of money is material, Victims and Survivors Service Limited discounts the provision to its present value using a standard Government discount rate.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 1.11 Grants Payable

Grants are treated as paid if they have been authorised for payment by officers at the appropriate level. Grants payable include amounts paid in the period and amounts accrued and still to be paid at the Statement of Financial Position date.

### 1.12 Employee Benefits

Under the requirements of IAS 19: *Employee Benefits*, staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obliged to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken leave at the year end. This cost has been calculated using the untaken leave per staff member and applying this to their annual salary to calculate the leave balance as at 31 March 2024.

### 1.13 Resources Expended

Support costs include all expenditure directly relating to the objectives of the company. Administration and Management costs comprise the costs involved in complying with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Costs incurred for meetings, seminars and other specific expenditure relating to the individual programmes are classified as Programme Costs.

### 1.14 Leases

The Victims and Survivors Service has applied IFRS 16 with a date of initial application of 1 April 2022. As permitted by IFRS 16, The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has elected not to recognise right of use assets and lease liabilities for the following lease types:

- Low value assets, with an assessment performed on the underlying asset when new; and,
- Leases with a lease term of 12 months or less

Where a contract is assessed as containing a lease, The Victims and Survivors Service Limited recognises a right of use asset and lease liability at the commencement date of the contract. The right of use asset is initially measured at cost, with depreciation charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease. The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease. The interest element of the lease is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure over the period of the lease at a constant rate in relation to the balance outstanding.

## **Notes to the Financial Statements**

### **1.15 Funds**

All income received by the company must be used for specific purposes which are within the overall aims of the company.

### **1.16 Segmental Reporting**

The principal aim of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited has previously involved provision of services solely to victims and survivors as defined in the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. In the 2020/21 year Victims and Survivors Service Limited launched a new service, with provision of services extended to survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse. In the 2021-22 year, similar services were extended to those impacted by Mother and Baby, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. The Victims and Survivors Service is therefore considered to now have three operating segments. In preparing these accounts Victims and Survivors Service considered the implications of IFRS 8 and concluded that the thresholds for segmental reporting had not been met. Expenditure and income for all services have been clearly distinguished throughout, and Victims and Survivors Service recognise the need to assess the applicability of IFRS 8 in future accounting periods.

### **1.17 Changes in Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards issued and effective for the 2023-24 financial year**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has considered those new Standards, interpretations and amendments to existing Standards which have been published and are effective for the 2023-24 financial year. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited considers that these standards are either not relevant or material to its operations.

### **1.18 Changes in Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has considered those new Standards, interpretations and amendments to existing Standards which have been published but are not yet effective, nor adopted early for these Accounts. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited considers that these standards are either not relevant or material to its operations.

### **1.19 Contingent Liabilities**

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the accounting statements; they are disclosed by way of a note if:

## Notes to the Financial Statements

- There is a possible obligation arising from past events, the existence of which will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one of more uncertain events not wholly within the Victims and Survivors Service Limited's control; or
- A present obligation arises from past events but is not recognised because it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation or because the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

For each class of contingent liability, the nature of the contingency, a brief description, an estimate of its financial effect, an indication of the uncertainties relating to the amount or timing of any outflow and the possibility of any reimbursement has, if applicable, been disclosed. If there is a present obligation and the transfer of economic benefit in respect of a contingent liability has become probable and a reliable estimate is available, a provision will be recognised in the financial statements.

### 1.20 Going Concern

The Financial Statements have been prepared on the assumption that Victims and Survivors Service Limited is a going concern and will continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 2. Staff Numbers and Related Costs

Staff costs comprise:

Staff costs	Permanently Employed Staff	Others (Agency & Seconded)	Year ended 31-Mar-24 Total	Year ended 31-Mar-23 Total
Wages and salaries	1,410,823	320,344	1,731,167	1,833,138
Social security costs	143,157	-	143,157	121,739
Pension costs	390,375	-	390,375	345,594
Board costs	20,427	-	20,427	16,057
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,964,782</b>	<b>320,344</b>	<b>2,285,126</b>	<b>2,316,528</b>
Less: Recoveries in respect to outward secondments	42,050	-	42,050	83,109
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,922,732</b>	<b>320,344</b>	<b>2,243,076</b>	<b>2,233,419</b>
Funded through Core Funds	1,101,755	247,104	1,348,859	1,480,823
Funded through HIA Funds	195,757	21,161	216,918	138,712
Funded through MBMLW Funds	195,946	12,138	208,084	107,242
Funded through PEACE IV Funds	-	-	-	343,231
Funded through PEACE Interim Funds	429,274	39,941	469,215	163,411
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>1,922,732</b>	<b>320,344</b>	<b>2,243,076</b>	<b>2,233,419</b>

\* Of the total, £nil has been charged to capital.

### Pension

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

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

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is responsible for carrying out scheme valuations. The Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following the scheme valuation. The 2020 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in October 2023.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027.

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

For 2023-24, employers' contributions of £385,384 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2022-23 £340,186) at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £4,641.12 (2022-23 £5,408.39) were paid to one or more of the panel of two appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2022-23, 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay. The partnership pension account offers the member the opportunity of having a 'free' pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the member does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match member contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings.

Employer contributions of £171.88 0.5% (2022-23 £184.53, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS Pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were £nil.

Nil persons (2022-23: 0 persons) retired early on ill-health grounds.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### Average Number of Persons Employed (Audited)

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

	<b>Permanently Employed Staff</b>	<b>Others (Agency and Seconded)</b>	<b>Year ended 31 March 2024 Total</b>	<b>Year ended 31 March 2023 Total</b>
<b>Administrators</b>	26.43	5.77	32.20	28.39
<b>Management</b>	6.92	0.17	7.09	6.95
<b>Senior Management</b>	3.78	0	3.78	4.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.13</b>	<b>5.94</b>	<b>43.07</b>	<b>39.86</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 3 Expenditure

#### 3.1 Programme Expenditure

		Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24 PEACE Interim	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-23
	Note	Core Funded	PIV Funded	HIA Funded	MBMLW Funded	Funded	Total	Total
Grants	3.2	14,034,114	65,046	779,471	404,920	2,126,612	17,410,163	16,822,856
Client Support Services		56,503	-	20,016	1,560	-	78,079	98,304
Workforce Training		-	-	2,250	-	-	2,250	23,555
Monitoring and Evaluation		11,915	-	-	-	-	11,915	18,211
Advertising		-	-	-	3,688	-	3,688	-
Seminars and events		2,802	-	-	-	-	2,802	13,543
Increase/(decrease) in Bad Debt Provision		-	-	-	-	-	-	339
<b>Total</b>		<b>14,105,334</b>	<b>65,046</b>	<b>801,737</b>	<b>410,168</b>	<b>2,126,612</b>	<b>17,508,897</b>	<b>16,976,808</b>

#### 3.2 Grants to Funded Organisations and Individuals

		Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-23
	Note	Core Funded	PIV Funded	HIA Funded	MBMLW Funded	PEACE Interim Funded	Total	Total
Victims Support Programme Grants to Groups		9,331,652	65,046	530,581	367,232	1,939,252	12,233,763	11,183,785
Grants to Individuals		4,702,462	-	248,890	37,688	187,360	5,176,400	5,639,071
<b>Total</b>		<b>14,034,114</b>	<b>65,046</b>	<b>779,471</b>	<b>404,920</b>	<b>2,126,612</b>	<b>17,410,163</b>	<b>16,822,856</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 3.3 Operating Costs

	Note	Year ended Mar-24 Core Funding	Year ended Mar-24 PIV Funding	Year ended Mar-24 HIA Funding	Year ended Mar-24 MBMLW Funding	Year ended Mar-24 PEACE Interim Funding	Year ended 31-Mar-24 Total	Year ended 31-Mar-23 Total
Rents & Service Charges		26,709	-	3,652	3,652	-	34,013	119,683
Rates		40,538	-	7,485	7,438	-	55,461	44,143
IT Services		133,548	-	11,535	10,832	-	155,915	182,358
Telephones		10,803	-	399	203	-	11,405	15,578
Communications		32,784	-	-	-	-	32,784	31,392
Recruitment		29,490	-	3,586	3,221	-	36,297	36,674
Heat, Light & Power		5,711	-	1,114	1,095	-	7,920	8,011
Office Expenses		27,714	-	2,355	2,710	-	32,779	22,511
NIAO Audit		42,000	-	-	-	-	42,000	40,000
NFI Fee		-	-	-	-	-	-	1,319
Premises Expenses		18,396	-	2,199	2,190	-	22,785	22,709
Professional Fees		60,035	-	112	15,096	-	75,243	85,666
Staff Training		23,961	-	2,616	2,337	-	28,914	17,588
Travel & Expenses		6,221	-	188	28	299	6,736	8,724
Events & Hospitality		7,188	-	-	-	-	7,188	-
Postage & Carriage		6,169	-	-	-	-	6,169	7,030
Bad Debt Write Off		1,000	-	-	-	-	1,000	-
Managed Services		3,983	-	432	554	-	4,969	4,056
Board Expenses		9,733	-	-	-	-	9,733	2,393
<b>Total Operating Costs</b>		<b>485,983</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>35,673</b>	<b>49,356</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>571,311</b>	<b>649,835</b>
<b>Non-Cash Items</b>								
Depreciation	5	89,800	-	-	-	-	89,800	8,663
Amortisation	6	23,703	-	975	-	-	24,678	19,780
Interest on Lease Liabilities	15	6,782	-	-	-	-	6,782	-
<b>Total Non-Cash Items</b>		<b>120,285</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>121,260</b>	<b>28,443</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>606,268</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>36,648</b>	<b>49,356</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>692,571</b>	<b>678,278</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 4. Income

	<b>Year ended 31-Mar-24</b>	<b>Year ended 31-Mar-23</b>
Grant from EU	<u>65,046</u>	<u>2,147,429</u>
	<b><u>65,046</u></b>	<b><u>2,147,429</u></b>

Income is receivable as a grant from:

- The Special EU Programmes Body – Funding for the PEACE IV Programme.

The Special EU Programme Body resource budget for the project led by the Victims and Survivors Service Limited for the period 1 November 2016 to 31 March 2023 was £14.944m.

There was no other operating income in 2023-24.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 5. Property, Plant and Equipment

				Year ended 31-Mar-24
	Fixtures & Fittings	IT Equipment	Buildings	Total
<b>Cost:</b>				
At 1 April 2023	23,903	33,401	-	57,304
Additions in year	-	-	243,719	243,719
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	<b>23,903</b>	<b>33,401</b>	<b>243,719</b>	<b>301,023</b>
Accumulated Depreciation:				
At 1 April 2023	14,220	18,334	-	32,554
Charge in year	2,248	6,312	81,240	89,800
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	<b>16,468</b>	<b>24,646</b>	<b>81,240</b>	<b>122,354</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>7,435</b>	<b>8,755</b>	<b>162,479</b>	<b>178,669</b>
<b>Asset Financing:</b>				
Owned:	7,435	8,755	-	16,190
Finance Leased	-	-	162,479	162,479
On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	-	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>7,435</b>	<b>8,755</b>	<b>162,479</b>	<b>178,669</b>

				Year ended 31-Mar-23
	Fixtures & Fittings	IT Equipment	Buildings	Total
<b>Cost:</b>				
At 1 April 2022	23,903	31,759	-	55,662
Additions in year	-	1,680	-	1,680
Disposals	-	(38)	-	(38)
At 31 March 2023	<b>23,903</b>	<b>33,401</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>57,304</b>
Accumulated Depreciation:				
At 1 April 2022	11,916	12,013	-	23,929
Charge in year	2,304	6,359	-	8,663
Disposals	-	(38)	-	(38)
At 31 March 2023	<b>14,220</b>	<b>18,334</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,554</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>9,683</b>	<b>15,067</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,750</b>
<b>Asset Financing:</b>				
Owned:	9,683	15,067	-	24,750
Finance Leased:	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	-	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>9,683</b>	<b>15,067</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,750</b>

Buildings are classed as a right-of-use asset. Further disclosure regarding the right-of-use asset and associated lease liabilities is contained in Note 15 on page 141.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 6. Intangible Assets

	Website Development	Website Development – HIA	MIS - License/ Software	HR System	Year End 31-Mar-24 Total
<b>Cost:</b>					
At 1 April 2023	16,980	3,900	436,467	6,000	463,347
Additions in year	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>16,980</b>	<b>3,900</b>	<b>436,467</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>463,347</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>					
At 1 April 2023	14,901	2,308	366,254	4,625	388,088
Charge in year	959	975	21,369	1,375	24,678
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>15,860</b>	<b>3,283</b>	<b>387,623</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>412,766</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>48,844</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,581</b>
<b>Asset Financing:</b>					
Owned:	1,120	617	48,844	-	50,581
Financed Leased:	-	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>48,844</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,581</b>
	Website Development	Website Development - HIA	MIS - License/ Software	HR System	Year end 31-Mar-23 Total
<b>Cost:</b>					
At 1 April 2022	16,980	3,900	369,809	6,000	396,689
Additions in year	-	-	66,658	-	66,658
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>16,980</b>	<b>3,900</b>	<b>436,467</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>463,347</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>					
At 1 April 2022	12,978	1,331	350,874	3,125	368,308
Charge in year	1,923	977	15,380	1,500	19,780
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>14,901</b>	<b>2,308</b>	<b>366,254</b>	<b>4,625</b>	<b>388,088</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>2,079</b>	<b>1,592</b>	<b>70,213</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>75,259</b>
<b>Asset Financing:</b>					
Owned:	2,079	1,592	70,213	1,375	75,259
Financed Leased:	-	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SOFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts:	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>2,079</b>	<b>1,592</b>	<b>70,213</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>75,259</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 7. Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by The Executive Office, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited expected purchase and usage requirements and the Non Departmental Public Body is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

### 8. Impairments

There have been no impairment charges for the year.

### 9. Inventories

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has no inventories.

### 10. Trade Receivables, Financial and Other Assets

	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-23
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Programme receivables	401,506	408,008
Prepayments & accrued income	13,984	19,879
Income Accrued in respect of EU funds	3,632,131	3,853,513
Other Debtors	143	69,076
	<u>4,047,764</u>	<u>4,350,476</u>

### 11. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-23
Balance at 1 April 2023	307,870	1,050,530
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	<u>404,899</u>	<u>(742,660)</u>
Balance at 31 March 2024	<u>712,769</u>	<u>307,870</u>

The above balance comprises £663,583 within the TEO account at Danske Bank Belfast in a non-interest bearing current account, £49,125 within the PEACE IV account, and £60 in petty cash held on-site.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 12. Trade Payables, Financial and Other Liabilities

	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-23
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Programme Payables	501,667	332,480
Trade Payables	13,682	-
Accruals and Deferred Income	352,402	166,789
Advanced Monies received from EU Funds	2,269,931	2,587,760
Current part of Lease Liabilities	81,206	-
Other Creditors	1,918	3,946
	<u>3,220,806</u>	<u>3,090,975</u>
	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-23
<b>Amounts falling due after more than one year:</b>		
Non-current part of Lease Liabilities	84,095	-
	<u>84,095</u>	<u>-</u>

### 13. Provisions for Liabilities and Charges

	The Disappeared	Year ended 31-Mar-24	Year ended 31-Mar-23
Balance at 1 April 2023	12,900	12,900	12,900
Provided for in the period	-	-	-
Utilisation in year	-	-	-
Provisions written back	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>	<u>12,900</u>	<u>12,900</u>	<u>12,900</u>

The provision for liabilities and charges relates to Victims and Survivors Service Limited estimate for:

- ***The Disappeared Funeral Costs***

At 31 March 2024, the remains of three of the 'Disappeared' were still to be located. The Victims and Survivors Service Limited have provided for a contribution in respect of funeral costs for these victims.

The provision is not discounted as the Victims and Survivors Service Limited do not, at this time, expect the provision to be held for more than three years.

### 14. Capital Commitments

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no capital commitments in the financial year (2022-23: Nil).

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 15. Leases

#### 15.1 Quantitative disclosures around right-of-use assets

	<b>Buildings</b>
<b>Right of Use Assets:</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	-
Additions	243,719
Depreciation expense	81,240
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>162,479</b>

#### 15.2 Quantitative disclosures around lease liabilities

	<b>Buildings</b>
<b>Buildings</b>	<b>£</b>
Not later than one year	85,200
Later than one year and not later than five years	85,200
Later than five years	-
	<u>170,400</u>
<i>Less Interest Element</i>	<u>5,099</u>
<b>Present Value of Obligations</b>	<b>165,301</b>
<b>Current Portion</b>	<b>81,206</b>
<b>Non- current Portion</b>	<b>84,095</b>

#### 15.3 Lease payments not recognised as a liability

The table below shows details of short-term leases (leases of 12 months or less) or leases for low value assets. Payments for such leases are expensed on a straight-line basis and are included as an expense in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

	<b>Year ended 31-Mar-24</b>	<b>Year ended 31-Mar-23</b>
Expense related to short-term leases	9,665	93,500
Total	<u>9,665</u>	<u>93,500</u>

#### 15.4 Total cash outflow for leases

	<b>Year ended 31-Mar-24</b>	<b>Year ended 31-Mar-23</b>
Total cash outflow for leases	<u>94,865</u>	<u>93,500</u>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### **16. Commitments under PFI Contracts and Other Services Concession Arrangements Contracts**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no commitments under PFI Contracts and Other Services Concession Arrangements Contracts in 2023-24. There similarly were no such commitments in the 2022-23 year.

### **17. Other Financial Commitments**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no other Financial Commitments in 2023-24. There were no such commitments in the 2022-23 year.

### **18. Contingent Liabilities**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has no contingent liabilities in 2023-24. There were no such liabilities in the 2022-23 financial year.

### **19. Related-Party Transactions**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited is an Arm's Length Body sponsored by The Executive Office. The Executive Office is regarded as a Related Party. During the year the Victims and Survivors Service Limited had various material transactions with The Executive Office (Grant in Aid cash funding - £20,397,000, settlement of HIA recharge £32,355, CPD Recharges - £7,614). It should be noted that CPD Recharges are invoiced through The Executive Office rather than CPD directly.

During 2023-24 the Victims and Survivors Service Limited was also in receipt of PEACE IV grant funding from the Special EU Programmes Body. Income accrued totalled £65,046.

During the year no members of the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Board, Audit and Risk Committee, Senior Management Team nor other related parties have directly undertaken any material transactions with the Victims and Survivors Service Limited.

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited has had a small number of transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies.

Compensation for Directors and the Chief Executive & Accounting Officer has been disclosed in the Remuneration Report.

### **20. Third Party Assets**

The Victims and Survivors Service Limited had no Third Party Assets in 2023-24. There similarly were no such assets in the 2022-23 year.

## **Notes to the Financial Statements**

### **21. Guarantee**

The Executive Office, undertake to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of the same being wound up while such party is a member, or within one year after such party ceases to be a member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before such party ceases to be a member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of the rights of its contributories among themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding one pound.

### **22. Events after the Reporting Period**

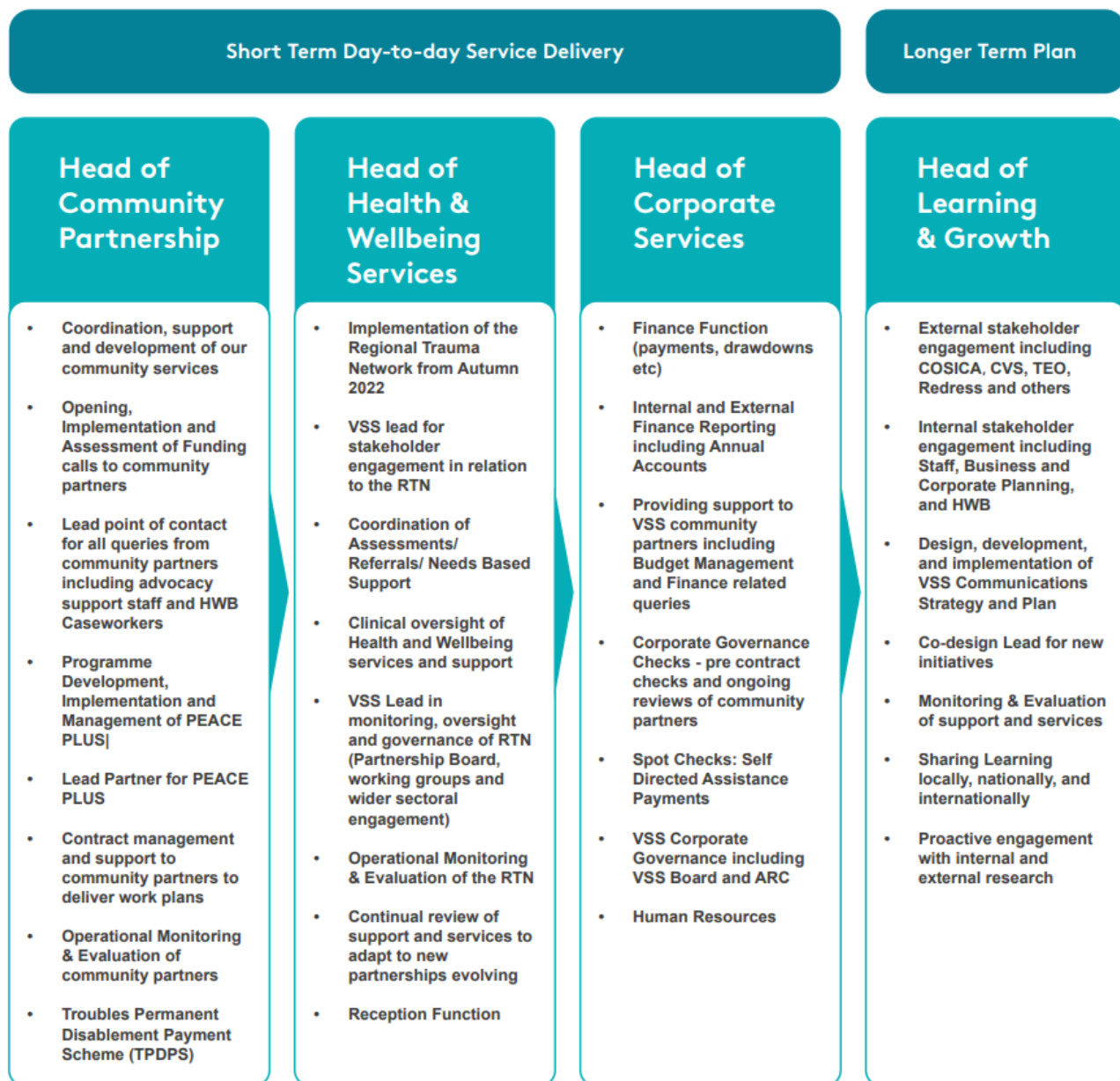
There were no events after the reporting period.

### **Date for authorisation for issue**

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 28 October 2024.

# APPENDIX 1

## Appendix 1: Organisation Chart - 31 March 2024



APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2: Delivery Plan Extract 2023-24

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Troubles/conflict (Core funding)	Victims Support Programme	Ensure access and availability of <b>Psychological Therapies</b> to <b>2,100</b> Victims and Survivors (T/c) <b>delivered by up to 19 VSS Community Partners</b>	- <b>60%</b> of individuals report positive outcomes and improvement is across all 4 domains.	<b>Achieved</b>
		Ensure access and availability of Complementary Therapies to <b>3,000</b> Victims and Survivors (T/c) in line with best practise and minimum standard, <b>delivered by up to 20 VSS Community Partners.</b>	- <b>80%</b> of individuals report an improvement in their health and wellbeing.	<b>Achieved</b>
		Provision of Social Support activities to <b>9,400</b> individuals (T/c) through VSS funded organisations including befriending, respite, and other activities in line with the Take 5 framework. <a href="http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com">www.makinglifebettertogether.com</a>	- Improved mental health - Improved physical and social function -Reduction of symptoms -Positive Attitude -Improved Integration -Improved quality of life -Reduced Isolation and improved social networks -Improved family relationships	<b>Achieved</b>

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
	Individual Needs Programme	Ensure access and availability of <b>additional needs-based support packages</b> (disability aids, persistent pain, psychological support) to <b>500</b> victims and survivors (T/c) under the Individuals Needs Programme	- Improved wellbeing, function and independence for 65% -70% of individuals as a result of these interventions.	<b>Achieved</b>
Troubles/conflict (PEACE Gap funding)	Community Partner Activity	Maintain the network of up to <b>25 Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers</b> across community partner organisations to assist <b>2,700</b> victims and survivors access services, information, and support to improve their health and wellbeing.	Ongoing improvement in: - responsiveness to individual needs - pathways of referral across the victims/survivors sector - Consistency and timely access to support and interventions - communication across victims/survivors' sector	<b>Achieved</b>
	Resilience Activity	Ensure access and availability of <b>additional needs-based support packages</b> (Trauma Focused Physical Activity/Social Isolation, Volunteering) to <b>200</b> victims and survivors (T/c) under the Individuals Needs Programme	- Improved wellbeing, function and independence for 65% -70% of individuals as a result of these interventions	<b>Achieved</b>

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Historical Institutional Abuse	Community Partner Activity	Ensure access and availability of <b>Psychological Therapies</b> to <b>100</b> Survivors of HIA delivered by VSS Community Partners	- <b>60%</b> of individuals report positive outcomes and improvement is across all 4 domains.	Achieved
		Ensure access and availability of <b>Complementary Therapies</b> to <b>50</b> survivors of HIA	- <b>80%</b> of individuals report an improvement in their health and wellbeing.	Achieved
		Provision of <b>Social Support</b> activities to <b>250</b> survivors of HIA including befriending, respite, and other activities in line with the Take 5 framework.	- Improved mental health - Improved physical and social function -Improved Integration -Improved quality of life -Reduced Isolation and enhanced social networks	Achieved
	Individual Needs	Ensure access and availability of <b>additional needs based support</b> packages (disability aids, persistent pain, physical activity etc.) to <b>100</b> survivors of HIA under the Individuals Needs Programme	- Improved wellbeing, function and independence for 60% of individuals	Achieved
Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene	Community Partner Activity	Ensure access and availability of <b>Psychological Therapies</b> to <b>100</b> survivors of MBMLW delivered by VSS Community Partners	- <b>60%</b> of individuals report positive outcomes and improvement is across all 4 domains.	Partially achieved

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Laundries and Workhouses		Ensure access and availability of <b>Complementary Therapies</b> to <b>50</b> Survivors of MBMLW	- <b>80%</b> of individuals report an improvement in their health and wellbeing.	<b>Partially achieved</b>
		Provision of <b>Social Support</b> activities to <b>150</b> survivors of MBMLW including befriending, respite, and other activities in line with the Take 5 framework.	- Improved mental health - Improved physical and social function -Improved Integration -Improved quality of life -Reduced Isolation and enhanced social networks	<b>Partially achieved</b>
	Individual Needs	Ensure access and availability of <b>additional needs based support</b> packages (disability aids, persistent pain, physical activity etc.) to <b>75</b> survivors of MBMLW under the Individuals Needs Programme	- Improved wellbeing, function and independence for 60% of individuals	<b>Partially achieved</b>

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2: IMPROVED ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Troubles/conflict (Core funding)	Victims Support Programme	Ensure access and availability of <b>Personal and Professional Development</b> : Supporting, <b>1,300</b> Individuals delivered by 28 organisations.	- Increased opportunities to develop interests and time to connect with other people.	<b>Achieved</b>
	Individual Needs Programme	Ensure access and availability of <b>Education and Training including numeracy &amp; literacy support</b> via the Individual Needs Programme to <b>75</b> victims and survivors (T/c).	- Increased opportunities for employment progression and/or career development.	<b>Partially achieved</b>
Troubles/conflict (Peace Gap Funding)	Trauma Education	Ensure access and availability of <b>Psycho-educational workshops</b> for 200 participants in areas to include Psychological Trauma, Trauma and Addiction, PTSD and Traumatic Grief and Loss.  Support 17 Individuals to study towards <b>BSc (Hons) in Trauma Studies</b> .	- Increased awareness of trauma and the impact of violent conflict.	<b>Achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2: IMPROVED ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Historical Institutional Abuse	Community Partner Activity	Ensure access and availability of <b>Personal and Professional Development:</b> Supporting <b>25</b> survivors of HIA.	- Increased opportunities to develop interests and time to connect with other people.	<b>Achieved</b>
	Individual Needs Programme	Ensure access and availability of <b>Education and Training including numeracy &amp; literacy support</b> via the Individual Needs Programme to <b>5</b> survivors of HIA.	- Increased opportunities for employment progression and/or career development.	<b>Achieved</b>
Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses	Community Partner Activity	Ensure access and availability of <b>Personal and Professional Development:</b> Supporting <b>25</b> survivors of MBMLW.	- Increased opportunities to develop interests and time to connect with other people.	<b>Partially achieved</b>
	Individual Needs Programme	Ensure access and availability of <b>Education and Training including numeracy &amp; literacy support</b> via the Individual Needs Programme to <b>10</b> survivors of MBMLW.	- Increased opportunities for employment progression and/or career development.	<b>Partially achieved</b>

## APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 3: VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS, AND THOSE MOST IN NEED, ARE HELPED AND CARED FOR				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Troubles/conflict (Core funding)	Regional Trauma Network	Develop and implement a comprehensive <b>regional trauma service (RTN)</b> across both statutory and community services to enable those experiencing psychological trauma to access support at the right place at the right time	-Enhanced protected access to high intensity step 3-5 interventions for victims and survivors experiencing clinically significant levels of psychological trauma.  -Victims & survivors have access to right services at the right time	<b>Achieved</b>
	Self Directed Assistance Programme	Provide <b>Self Directed Assistance Payments</b> to up to <b>6,300</b> individuals (T/c).  Provide Additional Needs Payments to up to <b>1,500</b> individuals (T/c).  Provide Home Heat Payments up to <b>670</b> Individuals (T/c).	-Payments made by 30 April 2023	<b>Achieved</b>
	Victims Support Programme	Ensure access and availability of <b>Welfare Advice</b> : Facilitate <b>1,600</b> interventions (T/c), delivered by 5 organisations who will deliver services	-Financial maximisation for clients (receiving benefits entitled to, appealing where appropriate and justified)	<b>Achieved</b>

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 3: VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS, AND THOSE MOST IN NEED, ARE HELPED AND CARED FOR				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
		to assist victims and survivors make sense of what they are entitled to as well as provide support and guidance on general welfare concerns.		
Troubles/conflict (TPDPS funding)	TPDPS (Community Partner Delivery)	<p>Ensure access and availability of support for up to <b>3,000</b> victims and survivors who wish to apply for the <b>Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS)</b>, delivered by 5 organisations to support victims and survivors at all parts of the journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre applications support</li> <li>- Post application support</li> <li>- Appeals</li> <li>- Signposting and referral to HWB support and services</li> </ul>	-Increased access to welfare support for victims and survivors applying to TPDPS	<b>Achieved</b>
	TPDPS – VSS Delivery	Ensure victims and survivors have <b>access to records</b> held by VSS which may support their <b>TPDPS</b>	-Increased access to welfare support for victims and survivors applying to TPDPS	<b>Achieved</b>

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 3: VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS, AND THOSE MOST IN NEED, ARE HELPED AND CARED FOR				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
		<p><b>application.</b> Requests can be made by victims and survivors, VSS Community Partners and/or the Victims Payment Board who are administrating the scheme.</p> <p>VSS will provide information with a <b>20 day</b> turnaround timeframe.</p>		
Historical Institutional Abuse	Community Partner Activity	<p>Ensure access and availability of <b>Welfare Advice:</b> Facilitate <b>500</b> interventions for up to <b>200</b> survivors of HIA and monitor the impact of Welfare Reform on survivors.</p>	<p>- Increased access to welfare support for survivors</p> <p>-Financial maximisation for clients (receiving benefits entitled to, appealing where appropriate and justified)</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses	Community Partner Activity	<p>Ensure access and availability of Welfare Advice: Facilitate <b>130</b> interventions for up to <b>80</b> survivors of MBMLW and monitor the impact of Welfare Reform on survivors.</p>	<p>- Increased access to welfare support for survivors</p> <p>-Financial maximisation for clients (receiving benefits entitled to, appealing where appropriate and justified)</p>	<b>Partially achieved</b>

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 4: VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES, ARE SUPPORTED TO ENGAGE IN LEGACY ISSUES, INFORMATION RECOVERY AND REDRESS PROCESSES				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Troubles/conflict (Peace Gap funding)	Community Partner Activity	A <b>regional network</b> of up to <b>21.5 Advocacy Support Caseworkers</b> and <b>6 Advocacy Case Managers</b> maintained to assist <b>1,000</b> victims and survivors to engage with all legacy processes/ mechanisms in place, however they wish to engage in these processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased confidence and reduced isolation due to being acknowledged and supported.</li> <li>- Renewed relationships and trust within families and communities.</li> <li>- Improved mental health and social networks.</li> <li>- Agreed narrative with families and agencies around the incident</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Historical Institutional Abuse	Community Partner Activity	Provide <b>Advocacy Support</b> with agreed processes, procedures and referral pathways to provide support and assistance to those <b>retrieving information</b> or engaging with <b>Redress Board or solicitors</b> to <b>75</b> survivors of HIA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased access to Truth Justice and Acknowledgment for Survivors of HIA</li> <li>- Improved mental health and social networks</li> <li>- Increased confidence and reduced isolation due to being acknowledged and supported</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses	Community Partner Activity	Provide support with agreed processes, procedures and referral pathways to provide support and assistance to those <b>retrieving information or engaging in family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased access to Truth Justice and Acknowledgment for Survivors of MBMLW</li> <li>- Enhanced opportunities for family reunification</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 4: VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES, ARE SUPPORTED TO ENGAGE IN LEGACY ISSUES, INFORMATION RECOVERY AND REDRESS PROCESSES				
Business Area	Programme	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
		<p><b>tracing processes</b> - 75 victims and survivors.</p> <p><b>Advocacy Support</b> with agreed processes, procedures and referral pathways to provide support and assistance to 75 victims and survivors engaging in the inquiry process.</p> <p>Facilitate <b>DNA Testing Pilot Programme</b> for up to 20 victims and survivors and ensure access and availability of pre &amp; post DNA testing therapeutic wrap around support.</p> <p>Ensure access and availability of <b>facilitated therapeutic support groups</b> to 20 victims and survivors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved mental health and social networks</li> <li>- Increased confidence and reduced isolation due to being acknowledged and supported</li> </ul>	

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION			
Business Area	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Programme Management	<p>Ensure that all <b>PEACE IV closure</b> requirements are met by completing the action plan to ensure all Peace IV closure requirements are delivered on time including submission and verification of claims and as well as output data</p> <p>PPE submitted</p> <p>Final Project Report submitted</p>	- Successful Closure of Peace IV project	Partially Achieved
	<p>Develop and complete the <b>PEACE PLUS application</b> as per the SEUPB call document building on the learning from PEACE IV</p> <p>Continue to engage with CVS, WAVE and potential cross border partners to develop their contribution to the project.</p> <p>Establish the VSS PEACE PLUS Partnership of 10 C&amp;V Partners, CVS and Pobal (with VSS as Lead Partner)</p>	- Submitted PEACE PLUS application that builds on the experience of PEACE IV and meets the health and wellbeing needs of victims and survivors	Achieved

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STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION			
Business Area	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
	<p>Develop robust Partnership Agreement with shared values and commitments to deliver the VSS PEACE PLUS project.</p> <p>Review VSS reporting mechanisms to ensure that they are amended in line with PEACE PLUS requirements</p>		
	<p>Initiate planning for a new Victims Support Programme following on from the new Victims Strategy (currently in development). Ensure that the processes are in place to enable a funding call to be opened to the sector in the Autumn of 2024 including consideration of a range of delivery options.</p>	<p>- Action plan to be developed along with operational timeframes to ensure open call is ready for Autumn 2024.</p>	<b>Achieved</b>
	<p>Secure long-term substantive specialist Health and Wellbeing, Information Recovery and Family Tracing services to those impacted by <b>Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses</b>, incorporating the learnings from the initial pilot phase which concludes 31 March 2024.</p>	<p>- 2 organisations appointed to deliver specialist Health and Wellbeing, Information Recovery and Family Tracing services to those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses from 1 April 2024</p>	<b>Achieved</b>

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STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION			
Business Area	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Clinical Governance	<p>Embed the <b>VSS Clinical governance Framework</b> with VSS staff and VSS funded organisations.</p> <p>Incorporate and embed <b>clinical governance checks</b> within quarterly programme support visits to ensure compliance with standards of services to victims and survivors with robust reporting arrangements.</p> <p>Initiate process for obtaining a Trauma Informed Quality Mark for the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased staff confidence and competence</li> <li>- Confidence that clinical governance is embedded in practice and consistently applied throughout the sector to ensure the safety of victims and survivors and the staff who are engaged with them.</li> <li>- VSS is viewed as a trauma informed service committed to evidence-based practise.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Human Resources	Completion of <b>staffing re-structure</b> as agreed through BCS review to include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased staff capacity</li> <li>-Manageable workloads and suitably resourced teams</li> </ul>	<b>Partially achieved</b>

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STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION			
Business Area	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Development of funding options to include optimal utilisation of PEACE and TEO funds;</li> <li>-Business case approval for staffing structure through TEO;</li> <li>-continued staff consultation through-out process;</li> <li>-JEG's processes completed;</li> <li>-recruitment processes completed; and</li> <li>-successful appointments made to all posts</li> </ul> <p>Protect and enhance the <b>health and well-being</b> of <b>VSS employees</b>.</p> <p>Develop and monitor an organisational learning and development plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improvement in staff wellbeing</li> <li>-A healthier workforce, with time to dedicate to their own learning and development while meeting both their personal and corporate objectives to a high standard.</li> <li>-Employees are upskilled where appropriate, and suitably trained to undertake their roles resulting in higher quality of service.</li> </ul>	
Corporate Governance	Maintain robust <b>corporate governance arrangements</b> within VSS (including Board, Committees, Policies, and Partnership Agreement etc).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintenance of a high degree of transparency on the accountability arrangements with VSS.</li> <li>- Transparency over governance arrangements.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>

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STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION			
Business Area	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
	<p>Ensure a robust <b>risk management</b> process is in place and followed.</p> <p>Engage with <b>TEO</b> with view to completing the <b>Partnership Agreement</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assurance over VSS activities and use of public funds.</li> <li>- Assurance over VSS management of risk</li> <li>- Appropriate mitigating strategies applied to identified risks</li> <li>- Maintenance of a high degree of transparency on the accountability arrangements with VSS</li> <li>- improved collaborative working between VSS and TEO.</li> </ul>	
Finance	<p>Maintain and improve <b>financial management</b> within the organisation to include:</p> <p>By year-end operate within allocated budget <b>avoiding overspend and</b></p>	<p>-98.5% of the budget utilised</p> <p>-95% of INP &amp; Corporate invoices paid within the statutory time frame of 30 days</p>	<b>Partially achieved</b>

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STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION			
Business Area	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
	<p><b>managing underspend</b> within a tolerance of <b>1.5%</b>.</p> <p>Manage <b>Cash drawdown</b> efficiently throughout financial year, ensuring adequate cash available for all contractual commitments.</p> <p>Embedding of <b>new financial accounting system</b>, with financial policies and procedures reviewed in line with changes.</p> <p>Development of robust <b>governance processes</b> for each programme to provide detailed monitoring of expenditure against budget and improved forecasting of anticipated spend.</p> <p>Enhance and develop <b>procurement processes and controls</b>, leveraging new accounting system where appropriate.</p>	<p>- 90% of corporate invoices paid within 10 days</p>	

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STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION			
Business Area	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
Verifications	<p>Ensure <b>eligibility of expenditure across all programmes</b>. This will be supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sample based testing processes which will be reviewed with community partners and internal teams for lessons learnt, and implementation of these improvements/learnings through process amendments.</li> <li>-completion of corporate governance checks on all VSS funded organisations</li> <li>-continuing to <b>support Community partners</b> with guidance and training to improve the quality of claims submissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eligibility of programme expenditure confirmed in line with VSS guidance</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Monitoring and Evaluation	Maintain and develop the <b>Management Information Systems</b> across the VSS with a view to further integration and consolidation with outcomes based monitoring and evaluation strategy (in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VIM upgraded to version 9.1x</li> <li>- Implement VSP data-capture portal for VSP groups</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>

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STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION			
Business Area	Output Targets	Outcome Targets	Performance
	<p>line with GDPR requirements) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of more efficient reporting procedures/processes.</li> <li>-Review of internal M&amp;E reporting for middle and senior management.</li> </ul> <p>Develop M&amp;E requirements for the PEACEPLUS project, in line with project bid proposal and in collaboration with all project partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased use of Power BI models</li> <li>-Develop PEACEPLUS M&amp;E reporting system</li> </ul>	
Communication	<p>Regular <b>engagement</b> with VSS Community Partners through a mix of Working Groups, project visits, information sessions and e-mail communications.</p> <p><b>Strong communication</b> with relevant agencies &amp; sectors.</p> <p>Strong and relevant <b>key messages</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved communication and engagement with key stakeholders</li> <li>- Informed and dynamic engagement with key stakeholders that is responsive to changing views and emerging concerns.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>

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<b>STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION</b>			
<b>Business Area</b>	<b>Output Targets</b>	<b>Outcome Targets</b>	<b>Performance</b>
	Updated <b>publicity and communications information.</b>		

## APPENDIX 3

### Appendix 3: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

*Measuring the Victims and Survivors Service Limited Strategic Outcomes for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict, Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) and those impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses (MBMLW).*

Area	Strategic Outcome	Potential Indicators	How will this be measured?
Health & Wellbeing Social Support	Improved health and wellbeing of victims and survivors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved mental health</li> <li>● Reduced risk</li> <li>● Improved physical and social function</li> <li>● Reduction of symptoms</li> <li>● Positive Attitude</li> <li>● Improved Integration</li> <li>● Improved quality of life</li> <li>● Reduced Isolation and improved social networks</li> <li>● Improved family relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>CORENET (Talking Therapies)</b> <i>Collects client reported outcome measures and uses this to manage therapeutic outcomes.</i></li> <li><a href="http://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_Tools.html">http://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_Tools.html</a></li> <li>● <b>MYMOP (Complementary Therapies)</b> <i>Client centred and individualised outcome questionnaire focusing on specific problems but also general wellbeing</i></li> <li>● <b>Work &amp; Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS)</b> <i>A Client-centred self-report scale of functional impairment attributable to an identified problem</i></li> <li>● <b>Case Studies</b></li> <li>● <b>UCLA Loneliness Scale</b> <i>measure that assesses how often a person feels disconnected from others.</i></li> </ul>
Personal Development	Improved access to opportunities for learning and personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhanced self-esteem and self-worth</li> <li>● Enhanced opportunities to contribute to wellbeing of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Case Studies</b></li> <li>● <b>Surveys (pre and post training)</b></li> </ul>

Area	Strategic Outcome	Potential Indicators	How will this be measured?
Financial & Welfare Support	Victims and survivors, and those most in need, are helped and cared for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved Financial Support</li> <li>● Greater sense of responsibility and independence in addressing practical needs</li> <li>● Increased access to benefits and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Welfare Changes and Support reporting</li> <li>● Financial maximisation reporting</li> </ul>
Truth, Justice & Acknowledgement	Improved access to opportunities for learning and personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhanced self-esteem and self-worth</li> <li>● Enhanced opportunities to contribute to wellbeing of others</li> </ul>	● Case Studies
Information Recovery & Family Tracing	Victims and survivors, and their families are supported in information recovery and family tracing processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased confidence due to being acknowledged and supported</li> <li>● Victims and survivors feel informed and empowered</li> </ul>	● Case studies