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Returning Officers'  
Expenses,  
Northern Ireland

Statement of Accounts  
2020/21

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# Returning Officers' Expenses, Northern Ireland

## Statement of Accounts 2020/21

Presented to the House of Commons pursuant to Section 7 of the Government  
Resources and Accounts Act 2000

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# PERFORMANCE REPORT

## OVERVIEW

The Northern Ireland Office supports the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in promoting the best interests of Northern Ireland within a stronger United Kingdom. It ensures Northern Ireland interests are fully and effectively represented at Westminster and the heart of Government, and the Government's responsibilities are fully and effectively represented in Northern Ireland.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has responsibility for electoral policy in Northern Ireland. As a result, the responsibility for setting the expenses of the Returning Officer for Northern Ireland rests with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

The arrangements for electoral administration in Northern Ireland are different from elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The system in Northern Ireland is administered centrally by the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland who is an office holder independent of Government. She is assisted by the staff of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (the "EONI"), the administrative structure created to support her in the discharge of her duties.

The Chief Electoral Officer is both the electoral registration officer for all 18 constituencies in Northern Ireland and returning officer for all elections and referenda in Northern Ireland. The cost of running Parliamentary Elections is funded by the UK Consolidated Fund, as was that for European elections. Funding for the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections is provided to the Northern Ireland Office by the Northern Ireland Executive through agreed funding mechanisms. The costs of local elections are funded by local authorities.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is accountable to Parliament for all expenditure by the Chief Electoral Officer.

A detailed account of the governance arrangements can be found in the Governance Statement.

## EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS -

	2020-21	2019-20
	£	£
2019 UK Parliamentary Election	19,872	4,264,279
2019 European Election	1,419	3,835,814

This table shows costs from electoral events incurred in 2020-21 and 2019-20.

There were no elections held during the 2020-21 year, costs paid during the year relate to elections held in previous years.

**Madeleine Alessandri**

**Accounting Officer**  
**21 June 2021**





# **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

## **Director's Report**

### **Introduction**

These accounts cover the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and have been prepared in a form directed by HM Treasury.

### **The legislative framework**

Under section 29(3) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 as amended by section 68 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006, a Returning Officer is entitled to recover their charges in respect of services necessarily rendered, or expenses necessarily incurred, for or in connection with, a Parliamentary election and for Northern Ireland Assembly elections as provided by article 3(1) of, and Schedule 1 to, the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections (Elections) Order 2001. The European Parliamentary Elections (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2004 provide for the Returning Officer for NI to recover costs in respect of European Parliamentary elections.

The overall maximum recoverable amount that the Returning Officer in Northern Ireland may recover in respect of services rendered, or expenses incurred, for or in connection with Parliamentary or Assembly elections is set out in an Order by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections charges Orders require the consent of two of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury before being brought into force.

### **Charges Orders**

The Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officer's Charges) (Northern Ireland) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017 No. 652) and European Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officer's Charges) (Northern Ireland) Order 2019 came into force on 10 May 2017. The Charges Orders set the overall maximum recoverable amount that the Returning Officer may recover in respect of each of the eighteen Parliamentary Constituencies in Northern Ireland.

### **Accounts regulations**

Under the Returning Officer's Accounts (Parliamentary Elections) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1991 and The European Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers Accounts) Regulations 2019, the Returning Officer must submit his account to the Northern Ireland Office within the period of twelve months commencing with the day of the declaration of the result of the election to which the charges in the account relate.

### **Funding Mechanism**

UK Parliamentary Elections and European Parliamentary elections are financed from the UK Consolidated Fund. Funding for Northern Ireland Assembly Elections is provided to the Northern Ireland Office by the Northern Ireland Executive through agreed funding mechanisms. The funding covers all costs necessarily incurred in the delivery of an election.

## **Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities**

Under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 (the GRAA), HM Treasury has directed the Northern Ireland Office to prepare, for each financial year, a statement of accounts in respect of the Returning Officers' Expenses for Northern Ireland in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction which they have provided.

The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Returning Officers' Expenses for Northern Ireland at 31 March 2021 and of their income and expenditure, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flow for the financial year. In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Treasury, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis.

HM Treasury has appointed the Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Office as Accounting Officer for Returning Officers' Expenses in Northern Ireland.

## **Statement on the disclosure of relevant audit information**

I hereby confirm that so far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Office's auditors are unaware and that I have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that I am aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Office's auditors are aware of that information.

I hereby confirm that these accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable, and that I take personal responsibility for these accounts and the judgements required for determining that they are fair, balanced and understandable.

## **Governance Statement**

### **Introduction**

As Principal Accounting Officer, I have personal responsibility for the robustness of the control and governance arrangements operated by the Chief Electoral Officer. This Governance Statement outlines how I have discharged my responsibility to manage and control the resources made available to the Chief Electoral Officer during the course of the year. This sound governance system, as outlined in this Statement, supports the achievement of the Chief Electoral Officer's and the wider Department's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding public funds and Departmental assets in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money.

I also have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control operated by the Chief Electoral Officer. My assessment of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements is informed by: the work of the internal auditors; the assurances provided by the Chief Electoral Officer who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework; assurances provided by managers within the Department who have sponsorship responsibility for the Chief Electoral Officer; and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports. The Department's Audit and Risk Committee also advise me on the Chief Electoral Officer's system of internal control.

### **Governance Framework**

The Chief Electoral Officer has agreed a Framework Document with the Northern Ireland Office, which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party, including the governance arrangements established in relation to the administrative and financial support provided by the Department to the Chief Electoral Officer. The current Framework Document was signed off in 2018 and due for review in late 2021.

The Framework Document is supported within the Electoral Office (EONI) by internal governance policies and guidance that draw on best practice. EONI Policies are aligned to Departmental guidance on matters such as: Anti-Fraud and Whistleblowing; Gifts and Hospitality; Financial Management; Procurement; Risk Management and Information Assurance.

### **Governance Structure**

The Northern Ireland Office Board has a corporate responsibility for setting objectives, agreeing priorities and implementing ministerial policy, including ensuring that the Chief Electoral Officer discharges her statutory duties and complies with her governance responsibilities. The Board also has responsibility for monitoring the Chief Electoral Officer's financial performance and ensuring that she complies with key policies, such as those relating to risk management, information assurance and workforce planning. Further details of the Board's governance arrangements can be found in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts. The latest version of which can be found at:

<http://www.gov.uk/official-documents>.

At an organisational level, the EONI Senior Management Team (SMT) supports the Chief Electoral Officer. The SMT meets at least monthly, provides collective strategic and operational leadership, and monitors progress against business plans. It also plays an important role in managing corporate governance, audit arrangements, financial management, contracts and procurement, staffing issues, risk management and complaints. The equality and human rights obligations of any policy matter are considered as part of the normal decision making process.

Each year, the EONI publishes a business plan that outlines the practical objectives set for the organisation from the strategic plan. The EONI's business plan for 2020-21 can be found at:

<https://www.eoni.org.uk/getmedia/5c3dc5c6-e07d-4e13-8ebe-e520b57fc699/Business-Plan-2020-21>

The achievement of targets and objectives is contained within the Chief Electoral Officer's Annual Report. The latest version and can be found at:

[www.eoni.org.uk/Utility/About-EONI/Plans-and-reports](http://www.eoni.org.uk/Utility/About-EONI/Plans-and-reports)

## **Audit and Risk Committee**

The Chief Electoral Officer does not operate a separate audit and risk committee; however, there is a long-standing agreement that the Northern Ireland Office Audit and Risk Committee will provide an oversight and challenge function to ensure that resources provided by the Northern Ireland Office are used appropriately. The Committee, in turn, provides assurances to the Principal Accounting Officer.

The Audit and Risk Committee received regular updates on the operation of the EONI's governance arrangements and the Committee took assurance from the Chief Electoral Officer's stewardship statement returns.

Based on the issues discussed and evidence presented at its meetings, the Audit and Risk Committee concluded that the assurances it received throughout the year were satisfactory, and it was not aware of any significant internal control issues.

## **Internal Audit**

During 2020-21, the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) under a Memorandum of Understanding provided internal audit services to the Chief Electoral Officer. The Head of Internal Audit for the EONI is required to submit regular reports to the Chief Electoral Officer and report any significant internal control problems to the Department's Audit and Risk Committee.

The audit plan for 2020-21 focussed on review of Data Transformation, Financial Systems Efficiency and Governance. The Chief Electoral Officer and the EONI Senior Management Team will monitor progress on implementation of the review recommendations.

The auditors provided a 'moderate' annual audit opinion on the EONI's framework of risk management, governance and control. The overall opinion was informed by

completion of the audit programme and is also informed by observations during audit work, engagement with senior management and understanding of the operation of EONI. Whilst the results of the work have highlighted some weaknesses in governance and control in the areas reviewed there was no deterioration compared with the last two years. During this reporting period, the auditor acknowledged the challenges faced in responding to and recovering from COVID-19, noting that EONI was able to successfully continue operations remotely and continued to embed strengthened governance arrangements.

### **Information Assurance**

I am responsible for ensuring that information risks are assessed and mitigated to an acceptable level. Information is a key business asset for the Chief Electoral Officer and she continues to make Information Assurance a priority.

In her role as Information Asset Owner, the Chief Electoral Officer manages information assurance and risk across her organisation with clear roles and responsibilities for all staff including the Data Protection Officer (DPO) and Information Officer. Training programmes consider the needs of all staff and training is designed on this basis. All EONI staff are required to complete an annual mandatory Data Handling e-learning package, "Responsible for Information", provided by Civil Service Learning and other tailored, scenario based training is provided to specific groups.

The Data Protection Officer has the authority, support and resources to carry out their responsibilities, monitors GDPR compliance and reports to SMT, including the Chief Electoral Officer, via monthly Corporate Governance meetings.

A suite of policies and procedures approved by senior management are in place and regularly reviewed for updates to ensure all categories of data are protected and any complaints handled. A practice of carrying out Data Protection Impact Assessments to identify and minimise the data protection risks for projects has been established and where required Data Sharing agreements are produced and subject to regular review. There were no data losses in the year, which were above the threshold for reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

I am satisfied that the Chief Electoral Officer has implemented the necessary internal controls and measures, policies and training to ensure that her employees continued to comply with Government standards.

### **Risk Management**

As Accounting Officer, I acknowledge my overall responsibility for the effective management of risk within the Northern Ireland Office and its sponsored bodies. In meeting this responsibility, I am supported by the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee. The Board owns and maintains the corporate risk register, which sets out the key strategic risks facing the wider Department and the controls in place to manage these risks, and reviews this document on a quarterly basis. The Audit and Risk Committee receive the register for periodic review, as well as regular updates on the Department's sponsored bodies.

The senior risk owner within the EONI is the Chief Electoral Officer who delegates accountability for risk management to her Senior Managers. Senior Managers are in

turn responsible for personally managing the risks in their respective business area and reporting to the Chief Electoral Officer.

The EONI Strategic Risk Register is regularly submitted to the sponsor team who report any significant risks to the Audit and Risk Committee.

During the reporting period, I received assurance first hand through discussions with the Chief Electoral Officer, sponsoring Deputy Director and the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

### **Review of Effectiveness**

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control within the Department and its sponsored bodies. My review is informed by the work of auditors, an assurance from the Department's sponsor team and the stewardship statement from the Chief Electoral Officer, which includes assurances from her that the EONI's system of internal control is based on a framework of regular management information, financial regulations, administrative procedures including segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability.

For the period 2020-21, I am able to report that there were no significant weaknesses in the Chief Electoral Officer's system of internal controls, which affected the achievement of the EONI's objectives, the Chief Electoral Officer's statutory duties or the Department's key policies, aims and objectives. In addition, I am satisfied that the Chief Electoral Officer exercised effective control over the election expenses through detailed expenditure reviews.

**Madeleine Alessandri**  
**Accounting Officer**  
**21 June 2021**

## Parliamentary Accountability and Audit Report

### Parliamentary Accountability Disclosures

(This section is subject to audit)

#### 1. Income payable to the Consolidated Fund

<b>Forfeited Deposits</b>	<b>2020-21</b> £	<b>2019-20</b> £
2019 Parliamentary Election	-	14,000
2019 European Election	-	25,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39,000</b>

#### 2. Regularity of expenditure - losses and special payments

There are no losses and special payments to report (2019-20: Nil).

#### 3. Remote Contingent Liabilities

There are no specific remote contingent liabilities requiring disclosure (2019-20: Nil).



## **THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

### **Opinion on financial statements**

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland) for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000. The financial statements comprise: Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and International Accounting Standards as interpreted by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual.

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

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland)'s affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland)'s comprehensive net expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and HM Treasury directions issued thereunder.

### **Opinion on regularity**

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament 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 of Public Sector Entities 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.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019. I have also elected to apply the ethical standards relevant to listed entities. I am independent of the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland) in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

The Northern Ireland Office'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 Northern Ireland Office'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.

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

The going concern basis of accounting for the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland) is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government 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.

## **Other Information**

The other information comprises information included in the annual report, but does not include the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited, the financial statements and my auditor's certificate thereon. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

## **Opinion on other matters**

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

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

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

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland) and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not

identified material misstatements in the Performance and Accountability reports. 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 returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual 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 HM Treasury's guidance.

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

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer, is responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines are necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and
- assessing the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland)'s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland) will not continue to be provided in the future.

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

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

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 the following:

- Inquiring of management, the Northern Ireland Office's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Northern Ireland Office's policies and procedures relating to:
  - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
  - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
  - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including the Northern Ireland Office's controls relating to the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000, Managing Public Money, Employment Law and tax legislation.
- discussing among the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: posting of unusual journals.
- obtaining an understanding of Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland)'s framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland) operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Returning Officers' Expenses (Northern Ireland). The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000, Managing Public Money, Employment Law and tax legislation.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management and the Audit Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members including internal specialists and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [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 income and expenditure reported in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

## **Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

**Gareth Davies**  
**Comptroller and Auditor General**

**Date 25 June 2021**

National Audit Office  
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road  
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SW1W 9SP

# **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

## Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

		2020-21 £	2019-20 £
	<b>Note</b>		
<b>2019 European Election</b>			
Conduct of the poll	2	1,419	2,526,545
Candidate Mailing Costs		-	1,309,269
<b>2019 Parliamentary Election</b>			
Conduct of the poll	2	19,872	3,230,759
Candidate Mailing Costs		-	1,033,520
<b>Total Election Expenses</b>		<b>21,291</b>	<b>8,100,093</b>
Income payable to the consolidated fund		-	<b>(39,000)</b>
<b>Comprehensive Net Expenditure</b>		<b>21,291</b>	<b>8,061,093</b>

The notes on pages 28 to 32 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of Financial Position As at 31 March 2021

		31 March 2021	31 March 2020
		£	£
	Note		
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	514,167	809,574
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>514,167</b>	<b>809,574</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	4	(514,167)	(809,574)
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>(514,167)</b>	<b>(809,574)</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Taxpayers' equity</b>			
General fund		-	-
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

The notes on pages 28 to 32 form part of these accounts.

**Signed:**

**Accounting Officer: Madeleine Alessandri**

**Date: 21 June 2021**



## Statement of Cashflows for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

		2020-21	2019-20
	Note	£	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Comprehensive net expenditure		(21,291)	(8,061,093)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	4	(295,408)	779,673
<i>less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</i>	4	-	-
		<b>(316,699)</b>	<b>(7,281,420)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
From the Consolidated Fund (non-supply)		21,291	8,355,454
<b>Net financing</b>		<b>21,291</b>	<b>8,355,454</b>
Non-Voted receipts of current year surrendered to the consolidated fund		-	(294,361)
Non-Voted receipts of prior year surrendered to the consolidated fund		-	-
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period after adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund</b>	3	<b>(295,408)</b>	<b>779,673</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period</b>	3	<b>809,574</b>	<b>29,901</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	3	<b>514,167</b>	<b>809,574</b>

The notes on pages 28 to 32 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the Year ended 31 March 2021

	2020-21	2019-20
Note	£	£
<b>Balance at 1 April</b>	-	-
Consolidated Fund Standing Services (non-supply)	21,291	8,316,454
Non-voted receipts surrendered to the Consolidated Fund	-	(294,361)
Comprehensive Net (expenditure) / Income for the year	(21,291)	(8,061,093)
Utilisation of election advances from consolidated fund	-	39,000
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	-	-

The notes on pages 28 to 32 form part of these accounts.

**NOTES TO THE RETURNING OFFICERS' EXPENSES ACCOUNTS****1. Statement of accounting policies**

## 1.1 Statement of compliance

This statement of accounts has been prepared in accordance with the 2020-21 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) and the specific Account Direction both 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 for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the statement of accounts.

## 1.2 Basis of preparation

This statement of accounts has been prepared under the modified historic cost convention.

## 1.3 Going concern

The statement of accounts has been prepared on the basis of going concern. The election expenses of the Returning Officer for Northern Ireland for European, Parliamentary and Assembly elections are met directly from HM Treasury's Consolidated Fund as a Consolidated Fund Standing Service without the need for further annual authorisation from Parliament.

## 1.4 Income payable to the Consolidated Fund

The forfeited deposits of unsuccessful election candidates are accounted for on an accruals basis and are treated as non-voted receipts surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund; see Note 1.8. Deposits are forfeited by those candidates who fail to obtain one twentieth of the total valid votes cast at UK Parliamentary elections and by-elections or one quarter of the quota at Northern Ireland Assembly Elections.

## 1.5 Value added tax

The activities performed by the Returning Officers are outside the scope of VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the relevant expenditure category.

## 1.6 Financial assets

Trade and other receivables are recognised and carried at the lower of their original invoiced value and recoverable amount. Provision is made where there is objective evidence that balances will not be recovered in full. Balances are written off when the probability of recovery is assessed as being remote.

## 1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash in the Statement of Financial Position comprises cash at bank. For the purpose of the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents consist of cash, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

## 1.8 Financial liabilities

Trade and other payables are recognised at cost which is deemed to be materially the same as the fair value. Trade and other payables include cash drawn down to fund elections which if unspent is surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund.

Non-voted receipts surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund:

Election expenses are classified as Consolidated Fund Standing Services which Parliament has decided by statute should be met directly from the Consolidated Fund rather than being voted annually by Parliament. The Consolidated Fund is the Government's current account operated by HM Treasury. Non-voted receipts include forfeited deposits (see Note 1.4).

## 1.9 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards adopted in the year ended 31 March 2021

The accounting policies adopted are consistent with those of the previous financial year. IFRS9, IFRS7, IFRS17 and IFRS4 were amended in August 2020, which are effective for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2021 (aside from IFRS 17 for which effective date is deferred until 2023) however none of these amendments impact on these accounts.

## 1.10 Impending application of newly issued accounting standards not yet effective

The following standards or interpretations have been issued by the International Accounting Standards Board but have not yet been adopted:

IFRS 16 - Leases replaces IAS 17 Leases and related interpretations and has an effective date of 1st January 2019. The new standard provides a single lessee accounting model, requiring lessees to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases unless the lease term is 12 months or less or the underlying asset has a low value. Lessors continue to classify leases as operating or finance, with IFRS 16's approach to lessor accounting substantially unchanged from its predecessor, IAS 17. The new standard's implementation has been delayed by COVID-19 and is now expected to be applied in central government from 1st April 2022. It is anticipated that the adoption of this standard is unlikely to have material impact on the financial statements in the period of application.

**2. Election Expenses**

	£	£	£	£
	2020-21	2020-21	2019-20	2019-20
Constituency	2019 European Election	2019 Parliamentary Election	2019 European Election	2019 Parliamentary Election
Belfast East		982		166,983
Belfast North		1,214		182,563
Belfast South		881		175,902
Belfast West		683		169,426
East Antrim		635		167,804
East Londonderry		711		170,786
Fermanagh and South Tyrone		2,373		179,893
Foyle		783		182,217
Lagan Valley		1,280		186,050
Mid Ulster		1,074		176,446
Newry and Armagh		1,094		200,480
North Antrim		1,113		191,078
North Down		512		165,978
South Antrim		1,098		175,948
South Down		1,213		201,259
Strangford		734		166,377
Upper Bann		1,455		204,860
West Tyrone		2,037		165,671
Northern Ireland	1,419		2,526,545	1,038
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,419</b>	<b>19,872</b>	<b>2,526,545</b>	<b>3,230,759</b>

This note discloses expenditure incurred in conducting election polls for the Parliamentary Election in 2019 and the European Parliament Election in 2019.

**3. Cash and Cash Equivalents**

	2020-21	2019-20
	£	£
<b>Balance at 1 April</b>	<b>809,574</b>	<b>29,901</b>
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	(295,408)	779,673
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>514,167</b>	<b>809,574</b>
The following balances at 31 March were held at :		
Government Banking Service	514,167	809,574
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>514,167</b>	<b>809,574</b>

**4. Trade and Other Payables**

	2020-21	2019-20
	£	£
Accruals	1,325	134,609
Advances from the Consolidated Fund	-	285,062
Advances from NIO	512,842	389,903
<b>Total</b>	<b>514,167</b>	<b>809,574</b>

**5. Financial instruments**

Funding for the Returning Officers' expenses is received directly from the Consolidated Fund and therefore there is no exposure to liquidity risk. Material deposits are held with the Government Banking Service so there is no exposure to interest rate risk. All material assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling so there is no exposure to exchange rate risk.

## **6. Related Party Transactions**

During the year, transactions were conducted with the Consolidated Fund as described in the accounts, as provided for by the funding arrangements for election expenses.

In addition, neither the Chief Electoral Officer nor the EONI had any material transactions with other entities which, for reporting purposes, are regarded as related parties.

None of the key managerial staff or other related parties had undertaken any material transactions with the Chief Electoral Officer or the EONI during the year.

## **7. Events after the reporting period**

In accordance with the requirements of IAS 10 Events after the Reporting Period, events after the reporting period are considered up to the date on which the accounts are authorised for issue by the Accounting Officer. This is interpreted as being the date on the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the House of Commons. There are no events after the reporting period which affects these accounts.





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