

Report of the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland 2015-2016

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 9(1) of the
Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 1 November 2016

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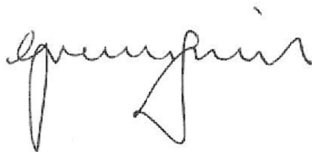
The Rt. Hon James Brokenshire MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Office
1 Horse Guards Road
LONDON
SW1A 2HQ

31 August 2016

Dear Secretary of State,

I have the honour, in accordance with section 9(1) of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006, to present this Report on how I have discharged my functions for the year ending 31 March 2016.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Shields', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Graham Shields

Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland

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15 Church Street
Belfast
BT1 1ER

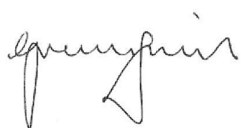
FOREWORD

I am pleased to present my sixth Annual Report which outlines the work of my colleagues in the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland during the year ending 31 March 2016.

The UK Parliamentary General Election was held on 7 May 2015. Work continued on the introduction of online electoral registration in Northern Ireland, with a view to its implementation by the end of this year. Planning also commenced for the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union which took place on 5 May and 23 June 2016, respectively. In addition, work has also been ongoing to restructure the Electoral Office to facilitate the introduction of digital registration and keep the organisation on a sustainable financial footing into the future.

I am indebted for the assistance provided by a wide range of stakeholders throughout the year, including colleagues from the Northern Ireland Office, the Electoral Commission and the Local Councils. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation for the hard work of the Electoral Office staff who have provided their unstinting support throughout the year.

During the reporting period two of our Area Electoral Officers retired, namely Maureen Carroll from the Belfast office and Amanda Mason from the Banbridge office. Both deserve special mention after many years of making a real contribution to electoral services in Northern Ireland. It is with a profound sense of sadness that I must also report that Amanda died earlier this year following a long period of illness. Amanda was an exceptionally capable and highly respected colleague and she will be sorely missed by all of us.



Graham Shields
Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland

31 August 2016

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Electoral Administration in Northern Ireland

1.1 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 (CEO) for Northern Ireland who is a statutory office holder appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The CEO is assisted by the staff of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI), the administrative structure created to support the CEO in the discharge of his duties. The CEO is both the electoral registration officer for all 18 constituencies in Northern Ireland and returning officer for all elections and referendums in that jurisdiction. The CEO's main duties and responsibilities are set out in the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 (as amended by Article 6 of the Electoral Law (Northern Ireland) Order 1972), the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006. The Accounting Officer of the Northern Ireland Office is responsible to Parliament for all expenditure incurred by the CEO.

Role of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

1.2 The main duties of the CEO are:

- to act as electoral registration officer for all constituencies in Northern Ireland;
- to act as returning officer for all elections and referendums in Northern Ireland;
- to recommend to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by 16 April each year whether or not a registration canvass should be conducted;
- to act as an assessor to the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland;
- to act as an assessor to the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner; and
- to lead and manage the EONI.

1.3 The CEO is required to report to the Secretary of State on an annual basis on how he has discharged his functions. Section 9(2) of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 requires him to include in his Report an assessment of the extent to which the relevant registration objectives in Northern Ireland have been met in the year to which the report relates.

Role of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI)

1.4 The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland is the name given to the organisation that supports the CEO in the performance of his duties. It operates from a headquarters building in Belfast and area offices in Belfast (co-located with Headquarters) and six other locations across Northern Ireland.

SECTION 2 - PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

- 2.1 This section summarises the performance achieved against the nine Targets and thirteen Development Objectives set out in the Business Plan 2015/16 which can be viewed at www.eoni.org.uk.
- 2.2 Eight of nine targets were achieved in full. One target was partially achieved.
- 2.3 Eleven of the thirteen Development Objectives were achieved in full. Two were not proceeded with. Further information can be found at Annex A.

SECTION 3 – REGISTRATION

- 3.1 EONI staff continued their engagement with organisations and community groups throughout Northern Ireland and participation in various registration initiatives continued during the year. Registration forms and promotional material were supplied for display and distribution at the offices of the Registrars, District Councils, the Northern Ireland Youth Forum, the Simon Community and the offices of the Citizens Advice Bureaux. Registration forms were also supplied to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for inclusion in their 'New Tenant' packs. The University of Ulster and Queens University, Belfast each received 5,500 registration forms for inclusion in 'Freshers' student information packs.
- 3.2 EONI continued to receive quarterly data from the Business Services Organisation (BSO) containing the names and addresses of those who had moved address or had registered a change of name with a health professional in the previous quarter. This was 'data matched' against the information held on the EONI database. As a result, during the period covered by this report, initial 'invitations to register' or to update information on the register were issued to around 110,000 electors. 83,934 follow-up letters were also issued to those who did not respond to the initial contact letter. This initiative remains the most effective method of maintaining the accuracy of the register by keeping pace with 'movers'.
- 3.3 In August 2015 my staff contacted 179 Schools with pupils in the age range 17-18 years. Area Electoral Office staff arranged visits with the schools from September through to January 2016 and as a result registered and issued electoral identity cards to 8,282 pupils. Area Electoral Office staff also held registration clinics at Further Education colleges and wrote to all college students not already registered to encourage registration.
- 3.4 In liaison with the National Union of Students Electoral Office staff participated in National Registration week in February 2016. Staff attended events at a number of University and college campuses including Queens University, Downpatrick campus, Titanic/Belfast Metropolitan campus,

Ulster University campuses at Magee and Coleraine to encourage registration amongst students.

- 3.5 In January 2016 my staff wrote to all nursing homes on the property database, enclosing electoral registration forms and application forms for absent voting. Nursing home managers were asked to ensure all residents were registered for the forthcoming elections in May and June 2016 and if required, had applied for postal or proxy votes. This initiative continues to be effective in maintaining the accuracy of the register for this particular group of electors whose details are more likely to be subject to change.
- 3.6 Registration and Electoral Identity Card clinics were held throughout Northern Ireland during February and March 2016. This helped to facilitate registration and the provision of the Electoral Identity Cards in the run-up to the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections and the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union held on 5 May and 23 June 2016, respectively.

Online Registration

- 3.7 Preparations continued for the introduction of online registration in Northern Ireland by the end of 2016. A project board consisting of representatives from EONI, Cabinet Office and NIO was convened to manage the transition to online registration. Regular meetings commenced in the autumn of 2015 to discuss the implementation of online registration including funding, legislation and the procurement of a new computer system to support the online registration service. At the end of the period covered by this report the project to implement online registration remains on target. Legislative changes including the development of an online declaration to replace the wet signature and work around applications for absent votes for those who apply online and do not provide a signature at registration stage are ongoing. Northern Ireland elector 'user journeys' have been developed by the Cabinet Office and 'user testing' will commence in August 2016.

Registration Statistics April 2015 - March 2016

3.8 During the reporting period 82,812 additions were made to the electoral register, 67,148 records were removed as deceased or no longer eligible for registration at a given address and 6,414 records were modified, for example as a result of a name change. As expected there was a 'looming election effect' with over 30,000 registration forms received and processed in the two months preceding the election on 5 May 2015. Of those, nearly 18,000 were received during the 'late' registration period in advance of the election with amendments to the register published on 29 April 2015.

The total number of changes to the register in this period was 156,374. This is indicative of the effectiveness of the various registration initiatives undertaken to achieve the statutory registration objectives as outlined above and the work of EONI staff to maintain the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the electoral register.

Collaboration with Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

3.9 EONI continued to work in partnership with NISRA until the end of the period covered by this report, 31 March 2016. Their data matching expertise was used to improve the comprehensive and accuracy of the register and assisted in removing the need for labour-intensive and time-consuming manual checking processes. Examples of completed work are given below.

3.10 NISRA data matched property data from the EONI database with POINTER the government common address file. As a result a bulk update report was created which led to 95% of properties being allocated a Unique Property Reference Number from the POINTER system. This will assist in future data matching exercises with other government departments.

3.11 NISRA assisted in identifying those who are no longer eligible for registration; the deceased (comparison of the data from the General Registrars Office); convicted prisoners (comparison of data from the Northern Ireland Prison Service) and those who had left Northern Ireland (comparison of data from the Business Services Organisation). NISRA

also assisted in data matching the quarterly information from the BSO with the information held on the EROS electoral database to highlight those who were new to the register and those who appeared to have changed their details. The results of this initiative are recorded at paragraph 3.2. This included development of a database used by EONI Helpline staff and Area Office staff to record information received from the public and to produce statistics which greatly assisted in the management of the process.

- 3.12 NISRA developed a data matching process for the deceased records received from Vital Statistics and a bulk removal process for matched records. This has greatly improved the efficiency with which deceased electors can be removed from the register.
- 3.13 It is regrettable that the collaboration between NISRA and EONI has now ended because of budgetary constraints. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to the NISRA staff for their positive contribution to the maintenance of the register in recent years.

Registration of New British Citizens

- 3.14 Responsibility for the registration of new British Citizens passed from the NIO to Lisburn and Castlereagh District Council (LCDC) and a Service Level Agreement was created between EONI and LCDC to continue the provision of information on all those in Northern Ireland who became British Citizens. Between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 my staff sent letters to 273 individuals who were not already registered or who had changed their details. By 31 March 2016 approximately 60% had responded and been added to the electoral register.

Meeting the Registration Objectives

- 3.15 Under Section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 I am required to include in the Annual Report an assessment of the extent to which the relevant registration objectives have been met.

3.16 These objectives are set out in Section 10ZB of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and are –

“to secure, so far as reasonably practicable –

- (a) that every person who is entitled to be registered in a register is registered in it,
- (b) that no person who is not entitled to be registered in a register is registered in it, and
- (c) that none of the required information relating to any person registered in a register is false.”

3.17 I am satisfied that the work completed during the reporting period has ensured, so far as reasonably practicable, the successful delivery of these objectives. The register published in December 2015 held 1,270,764 electors. The NISRA mid-year population projection figures for 2015 for those aged 17 and over is 1,442,137. This suggests the register is approximately 88% comprehensive¹. This reflects little change from the register published in December 2014.

3.18 Accuracy of the register is more difficult to measure. The Electoral Commission carried out a survey to assess the comprehensiveness and accuracy of electoral registers throughout the United Kingdom in January 2016. An assessment has been published for Great Britain however the report for Northern Ireland will not be published until the autumn of 2016. There is no reason to believe that there was any significant change in accuracy during the period of this report. The work described in the report and the level of matching achieved with the records of the Department of Work and Pensions (around 98% of those registered) suggest that accuracy remains at a high level.

3.19 Having regard to the comments and observations above, no recommendation for a canvass in the year 2015/16 was made to the Secretary of State.

¹ The figure provided by NISRA is a projected total population figure not the number eligible to register. For instance those who are convicted prisoners or who are not a British, Irish, European or Commonwealth citizens would not be eligible. The figure of 88% is therefore an estimate.

SECTION 4 - ELECTIONS

UK Parliamentary Election 2015

- 4.1 The UK Parliamentary Election was held on 7 May 2015. The eligible electorate was 1,236,765.
- 4.2 There were 1370 polling stations and over 4,000 polling staff appointed and trained. Polling day proved successful with all polling stations across Northern Ireland being opened on time and no queues were reported at the close of poll.
- 4.3 Eight count venues were utilised throughout Northern Ireland and over 1500 staff were employed. The counts commenced immediately after the close of poll and all 18 Parliamentary constituencies were completed by 5.15am on Friday 8 May 2015.
- 4.4 The overall turnout was 722,904 (58.45%) and the total number of spoiled votes was 4,769 (0.66%) of the votes cast. The total number of postal votes issued was 17,103 (1.38%) and the total number of proxy votes issued was 5,406 (0.44%).

Electoral Offences

- 4.5 Nine suspected fraudulent absent vote applications were reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland in May 2015. The Public Prosecution Service directed 'No Further Action' in respect of all cases.

Election Count Planning

- 4.6 During the autumn of 2015 my staff and I worked in collaboration with senior personnel from the Electoral Commission to examine how election counts could be made as quick and efficient as possible. Input was also provided by experienced election officials from Scotland and the Association of Electoral Administrators. A mock election count was held at Ballymena Leisure Centre in November 2015 during which a number of potential changes to the count process were tested. This was a very useful engagement and lessons learned were incorporated in the plans for the counts at the Northern Ireland Assembly elections and EU referendum.

SECTION 5 – CENTRAL SERVICES

Premises

- 5.1 There were no changes to the premises occupied by Headquarters or the seven Area Electoral Offices.

Recruitment/Staffing

- 5.2 External advertising was carried out during the reporting period to recruit reserve poll staff, count assistants and short-term administrative support staff in preparation for the Northern Ireland Assembly Election and EU referendum. A test was undertaken by all count staff applicants in various locations including Omagh, Newtownards, Londonderry/Derry and Belfast. This recruitment ensured that there was a sufficient reserve list of election staff.
- 5.3 A number of internal temporary transfers and promotion arrangements were put in place to cover staffing requirements arising as a result of maternity leave and business requirements.
- 5.4 There were three resignations and two retirements during the course of the year. One fixed term employee was recruited for the Belfast Area Electoral Office.

Training

- 5.5 In January 2016 all permanent and casual staff completed e-learning based training on data handling. The training was mandatory as part of EONI's annual security risk management overview return and incorporated sections on fraud awareness and the use of social media.
- 5.6 A comprehensive training programme was developed for poll staff, count calculators and count supervisors. Presentations and training workshops took place at various locations throughout Northern Ireland.

- 5.7 A number of staff attended training provided by the Equality Commission, including Introductions to Understanding Equality for AO grade staff and Equality Training for Managers at EO2 grade and above.

Equality

- 5.8 The annual fair employment monitoring return was submitted to the Equality Commission in April 2015.
- 5.9 A Section 75 annual progress report was completed and submitted to the Equality Commission in August 2015.
- 5.10 A revised Disability Action Plan was agreed in October 2015 following a consultation. EONI management liaised directly with the Equality Commission to ensure challenging targets and action measures were incorporated.

Sick Absence

- 5.11 Sickness absence continues to be closely monitored and reviewed by the Management Board on a monthly basis. There were approximately 14 average sick days per person taken during the period, however, the majority of absence related to long term sickness.

Funding

- 5.12 Total operational funding, excluding capital and depreciation, provided to EONI for 2015/16 was £2.104m compared with £2.270m in 2014/15. Total expenditure excluding capital and depreciation was £2.092m, an underspend of £12k. Capital expenditure was £197k with corresponding budget of £203k.
- 5.13 Approximately 250 separate procurement exercises were completed and 630 invoices were sent to NIO Central Finance during the reporting period. The majority of valid invoices were paid within five working days.

- 5.14 Funding for elections is non-voted money and does not form part of EONI core funding. Election expenditure is accounted for in the annual Returning Officer's Expenses, Northern Ireland which are audited by the National Audit Office before being presented to Parliament.
- 5.15 The budget for the UK Parliamentary Election held on 7 May 2015 was £3.278m. Actual expenditure at 31 March 2016 was £2.839m. The cost of Candidates mailing expenses are funded separately from Returning Officer's Charges for all elections. These amounted to £1.053m for the UK Parliamentary Election 2015.

Stakeholder and Media Relations

Media

- 5.16 Responsibility for all matters relating to public awareness of elections and registration remained with the Electoral Commission.
- 5.17 A number of press releases were issued during the year and I participated in a number of printed and broadcast interviews on electoral registration and election issues.
- 5.18 Area Electoral Officers continued to engage with their local newspapers and radio stations. These relationships are used to good effect to give free publicity for local registration and election matters.
- 5.19 I continued to receive invaluable support in my dealings with the media from the staff of the Press & Communications Team within the Northern Ireland Office. These staff played a vital role in advising on the arrangements for the media at the UK Parliamentary Election in May 2015. Feedback from the media on the arrangements made for them was complimentary.

Political Parties

5.20 I attended all of the Assembly Parties Panel meetings convened by the Electoral Commission to discuss electoral matters. At these meetings, I provided information on changes made to electoral law and practice, on current initiatives and planning arrangements for the elections.

5.21 Candidates seminars were held at a number of locations across Northern Ireland in advance of the UK Parliamentary Election to advise of polling and count arrangements.

Electoral Commission

5.22 A mutually beneficial and constructive working relationship continued to exist at all levels between my staff and the Head of the Commission's Belfast Office and her staff. This included regular planning meetings in advance of the UK Parliamentary Election.

Northern Ireland Office

5.23 I worked closely with the staff from the Economic & Constitutional Group and the Corporate Governance Team at the Northern Ireland Office throughout the year. There was daily contact on a range of issues, including suggested amendments to various aspects of electoral legislation.

5.24 I also attended the quarterly meetings of the Electoral Policy and Co-ordination Group and the Electoral Advisory Board in London.

Helpline

5.25 The Helpline at Headquarters dealt with 43,977 enquiries from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

Website

5.26 There were 197,554 visits to the EONI website during the year.

Records Management

5.27 19 requests were received for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and 26 requests were received for information under the Data Protection Act 1998. All requests were answered within the required timescales in accordance with EONI's Freedom of Information procedures.

Electoral Identity Cards

5.28 There were 24,232 Electoral Identity Cards issued during the year.

Complaints

5.29 During the year 87 formal complaints were received compared with 78 in 2014/15. The increase in the number of complaints is directly related to the issues connected with the UK Parliamentary Election in May 2015. The nature and outcome of the formal complaints is summarised in Table 1 below: –

Table 1 – Formal Complaints Received 2015/16

Nature of Complaint	No.	Outcome
Registration evidence requirements/ tone of letter	4	Relevant legislation explained/ evidence requirements and tone of letter revised
Registration issues/difficulties encountered	26	Apology issued/remedial action taken where applicable
Postal Voting deadlines/ Rejected AV applications	14	Relevant legislation explained
Polling Station	16	Advised of remedial action planned/ Relevant legislation explained
Service received at an Area Office/Headquarters	3	Relevant legislation explained/ apology issued
Voting issues/difficulties encountered	18	Relevant legislation explained/ apology issued/remedial action taken where applicable
Political Party Canvassers	6	Remedial action taken/ voluntary Code of Conduct
Total	87	

IT System

5.30 EONI IT systems were accredited to IL3 in 2014. This is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. All EONI IT systems, services and software are configured to reduce the level of vulnerability with a stringent patch management policy in place. EONI are currently in the process of migrating to PSN (Public Service Network) in order to connect to the new online registration system in late 2016. EONI IT systems are subject to annual independent internal and external IT Health Checks. All identified vulnerabilities are addressed and mitigated against with a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) update.

SECTION 6 – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Management Board

- 6.1 There were no significant changes to the composition or practices of the Board during the year. It continued to meet monthly or more often as required. I chaired the Board which was comprised of the Assistant and Temporary Assistant CEO and the Head of Corporate Services. One of the Area Electoral Officers also attends on a rotational basis. Two members of staff, who are Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) representatives, received copies of all Board papers and were invited to all the meetings.
- 6.2 In addition to taking all strategic business decisions, the Board reviewed performance against targets and development objectives, finance, contracts and procurement, staffing issues, risk management, contingency planning and complaints. The Board continued to take account of equality and human rights considerations as part of the normal decision making process.

Internal Audit

- 6.3 During 2015/16, internal audit services were provided by the Ministry of Justice. The internal audit services undertook planned audits of four areas agreed by the Chief Electoral Officer as suitable for detailed examination.
- 6.4 The auditors made a total of sixteen recommendations which were accepted by the Management Board. Progress on the implementation of these recommendations was monitored in year by the Management Board.
- 6.5 Internal Audit reported that they were satisfied with progress made and the majority of recommendations were implemented by agreed dates or explanations provided where there was slippage. Progress reports were provided to the NIO's Audit and Risk Committee.

6.6 The Internal Audit opinion for 2015/16 reported a moderate level of assurance. Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of control arrangements but overall the EONI's risk control and governance framework was adequate during the reporting period.

SECTION 7 – THE AREA OFFICES

- 7.1 There are seven Area Electoral Offices located across Northern Ireland to provide a point of contact for members of the public on electoral and registration matters.
- 7.2 The locations of these offices and the constituencies for which they were responsible are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Area Electoral Offices

LOCATION	CONSTITUENCIES
Londonderry/Derry	Foyle East Londonderry
Ballymena	North Antrim Mid Ulster
Omagh	West Tyrone Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Banbridge	Upper Bann Newry & Armagh South Down Lagan Valley
Newtownabbey	Belfast North East Antrim South Antrim
Newtownards	Belfast East Strangford North Down
Belfast	Belfast South Belfast West

- 7.3 Each office is managed by an Area Electoral Officer who acted as Deputy Registration Officer for either 2 or 3 constituencies. As such, these officers had, under my supervision, responsibility for all matters relating to electoral registration. Each Area Electoral Officer was supported by an Assistant Area Electoral Officer and a number of registration officers appropriate to the workload of that office.
- 7.4 Throughout the year each of the offices participated in a range of registration and electoral ID events aimed at encouraging registration. These included a total of 145 visits to post primary schools and 15 registration “clinics”. The Area Electoral Officers and their staff also played an important role in organising and managing the UK Parliamentary Election on 7 May 2015.

Performance Against targets and Development Objectives 2015/16

OT	On Target
A	Achieved
PA	Partially Achieved
NP	Not Proceeding

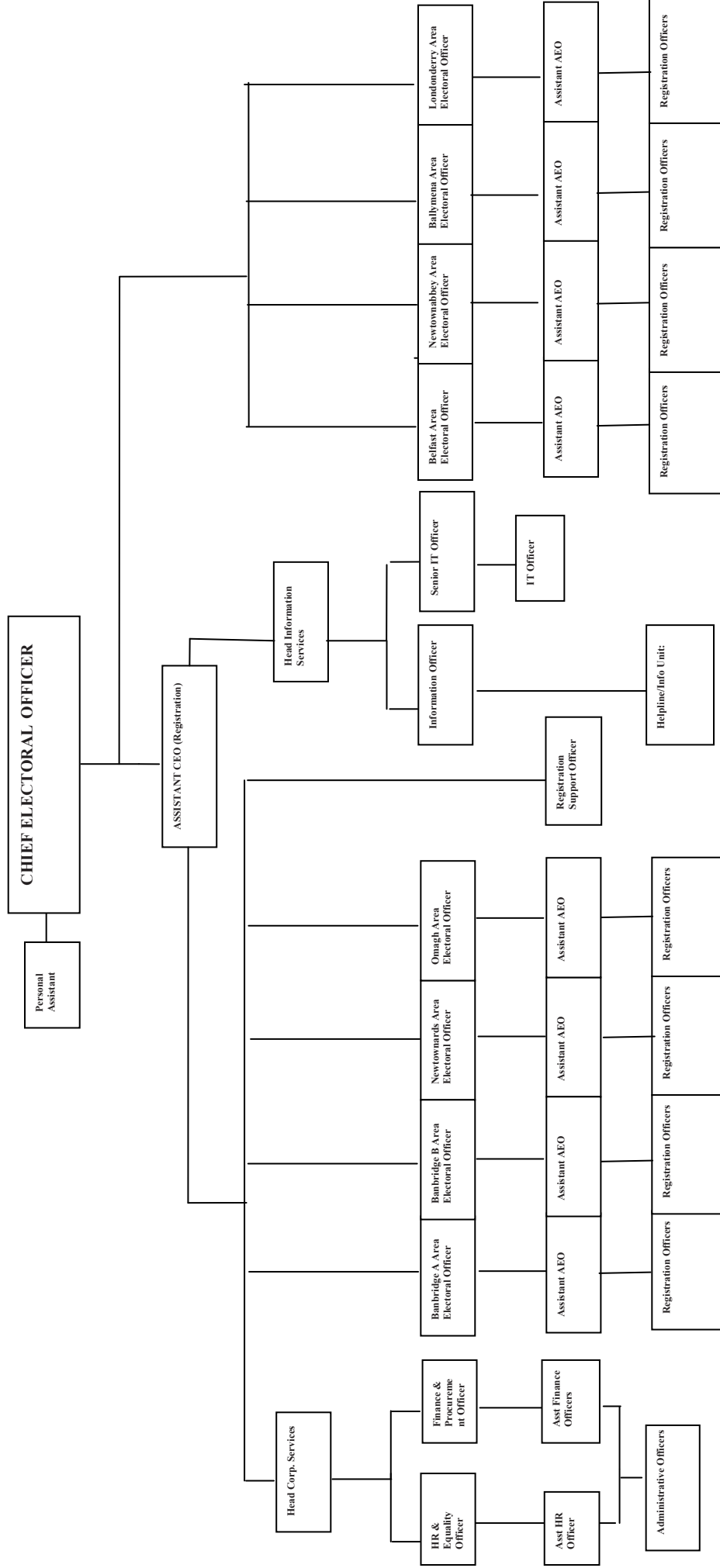
REGISTRATION		
Target:	Status	Comments
1. To publish on 1 December 2015 a register that contains more electors than the December 2014 register.	A	The December 2015 register contained 1,270,764 electors; 13,696 more electors than the register published in December 2014.
Development Objectives:	Status	Comments
1. By 1 December 2015 to have increased the number of attainers on the register by contacting schools with pupils in the 17-18 age range, implementing registration initiatives aimed at contacting those in Further Education Colleges.	A	179 schools were contacted. 8,282 pupils registered and electoral identity cards issued.
2. By 1 December 2015 to have increased the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the register by the use of prescribed data sources to contact those entitled to be registered who are not registered, those whose details on the register have changed and to remove those not entitled to be registered.	A	See paragraphs 3.2-3.6 above.

3.	By 1 December 2015 to have implemented changes in the property database as a result of addressing projects initiated in local councils and to have streamlined the database in line with the POINTER addressing protocol.	A	Over 95% of properties on EONI database matched with those on POINTER and a Unique Property Reference number assigned.
4.	By 31 March 2016 to have improved the accuracy of the register by achieving verification of 90% of information (surname, date of birth and national insurance number) on the database relating to an elector and to have implemented initiatives to query discrepancies.	A	A data match between the information held on the database and the DWP database demonstrated that 98% of the information held is verified on surname/DOB/NINO.
5.	During the current financial year to collaborate with the Electoral Commission on the development and implementation of a registration performance standards pilot study.	NP	The Electoral Commission advised that this work would not proceed during the current financial year.
ELECTIONS			
Targets:		Status	Comments
1.	To conduct the UK Parliamentary election 2015 effectively, impartially and within budget.	A	The UK Parliamentary election took place successfully on Thursday 7 May 2015 and was assessed as free, fair and well-run by the Electoral Commission. Election expenditure was within budget at year end.
2.	By 30 September 2015 to have a project plan and risk register in place for the Northern Ireland Assembly elections scheduled for 5 May 2016.	A	Project Plan and Risk Register for 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly elections completed July 2015 and quality assured by the Strategic Planning Committee.

Development Objectives:		Status	Comments
1.	By 31 March 2016 to have implemented plans and procedures for the Northern Ireland Assembly elections scheduled for Thursday 5 May 2016.	A	Plans and procedures implemented for the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly elections.
2.	By 31 March 2016 to ensure the 2015 UK Parliamentary Election Account is within the maximum limit set in the Returning Officer's Charges Order.	A	The UK Parliamentary Election Account was within the maximum limit at year end.
3.	By 31 March 2016 to have staff recruited for the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly elections.	A	Staff review completed and reserve list utilised to fully staff 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly elections. Sufficient pool of poll and count staff recruited.
CENTRAL SERVICES			
Target:		Status	Comments
1.	We will endeavour to provide high standards of service for the people of Northern Ireland through continuous improvement.	A	Feedback received from customers and via complaints used to continually improve our services.
Development Objectives:		Status	Comments
1.	During 2015-2016 to continue to implement professional electoral qualifications for staff through EONI's Performance Management Framework.	NP	Staff were unable to undertake any professional electoral qualifications in this financial year due to pressure of work.
2.	Throughout the year ensure training opportunities are provided to continuously improve standards and increase efficiency.	A	Training provided in-house and externally within budget available.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE			
Targets:		Status	Comments
1.	Throughout the year to ensure EONI operates efficiently in a manner consistent with the agreed budget.	A	EONI remained within operational budget of £2.104m, underspending by £12k.
2.	Throughout the year to ensure all tendering and procurement processes are run and managed in accordance with procurement policies and relevant EU Directives.	A	All tendering and procurement processes managed efficiently during the year.
3.	To submit an annual report for the year ending 31 March 2015 to the Secretary of State by 30 June 2015.	A	Annual Report 2014/15 submitted to the Secretary of State 12 June 2015.
4.	By 31 March 2016 a strategy will be agreed on how a full review of EONI estate will be carried out.	PA	No decisions have been reached in respect of reorganisation but a decision on how to conduct the review is broadly agreed.
5.	By 31 March 2016 to prepare the Business Plan for the year commencing 1 April 2016.	A	Business Plan 2016/17 prepared and on EONI website.
Development Objectives:		Status	Comments
1.	Throughout the year financial management systems will be continually monitored against business needs, with policies, procedures and processes being updated as required.	A	Financial management systems were continually monitored against business needs throughout the year. Policies and procedures were reviewed and updated accordingly.
2.	By 31 August 2015 to complete a further three year Action Plan for the period 2015-2018 in accordance with the Equality Scheme.	A	Action plan completed July 2015 and consultation carried out accordingly.
3.	By 31 March 2016 to ensure the Business Continuity and IT Disaster Recovery Plan is tested and reviewed.	A	The Business Continuity Plan was tested and reviewed February 2016.

ELECTORAL OFFICE STAFF STRUCTURE AS AT 31 MARCH 2016



PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES:

Belfast West Belfast South	Belfast North East Antrim South Antrim	North Antrim Mid Ulster	Foyle East Londonderry
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PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES:

Upper Bann Newry & Armagh	Lagan Valley South Down	Strandford North Down Belfast East	West Tyrone Fermanagh & South Tyrone
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OPERATING COSTS 2015/16

	£k
<u>Basic Pay -</u>	
Permanent Staff	837.0
Temporary Staff	32.2
Basic Pay Total	869.2
<u>Overtime -</u>	
Permanent Staff	4.5
Temporary Staff	0
Overtime Total	4.5
<u>Employers National Insurance -</u>	
Permanent Staff	95.7
Temporary Staff	1.0
Employers National Insurance Total	96.7
Accrued Superannuation Liability Charge	273.7
Total Staff	1,244.1
Power, Rates, Water	134.5
Premises	249.7
Staff Costs	10.9
Training	0.2
Travel	4.9
Hospitality	0.4
Printing, Stationery, Postage	198.6
Computers (Software, Hardware, Maintenance, Line Rental etc)	179.0
Professional Services	84.3
Telecommunications	82.4
Fees and charges	1.1
Total Goods & Services	946.0
Electoral Identity Card	25.5
Non Cash Costs (Depreciation)	74.9
Receipts	-123.2
TOTAL PROGRAMME	2,167.3
Capital	197.1
GRAND TOTAL	2,364.4

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