



Prison Service  
Pay Review Body

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Tenth Report on  
Northern Ireland 2018

*Chair: Jerry Cope*





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on  
**Northern Ireland**  
2018

*Chair: Jerry Cope*

Presented to the  
Permanent Secretary, Department of Justice Northern Ireland  
December 2018





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## Glossary of Terms

ASHE	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
CPI	Consumer Prices Index
CPIH	Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs
CPO	Custody Prison Officer
DoF	Department of Finance
DoJ	Department of Justice
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
LRD	Labour Research Department
MGO	Main Grade Officer
NCO	Night Custody Officer
NIC	National Insurance Contribution
NICEI	Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
NITA	Police Service Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance
OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OSG	Operational Support Grade
PECCS	Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service
PCO	Prisoner Custody Officer
PGA(NI)	Prison Governors' Association (Northern Ireland)
POA(NI)	The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers (Northern Ireland)
PPCO	Principal Prisoner Custody Officer

PSNI	Police Service Northern Ireland
PSPRB	Prison Service Pay Review Body
S2P	State Second Pension
SO	Senior Officer
SPA	State Pension Age
SPCO	Senior Prisoner Custody Officer
SRA	Supplementary Risk Allowance
UK	United Kingdom

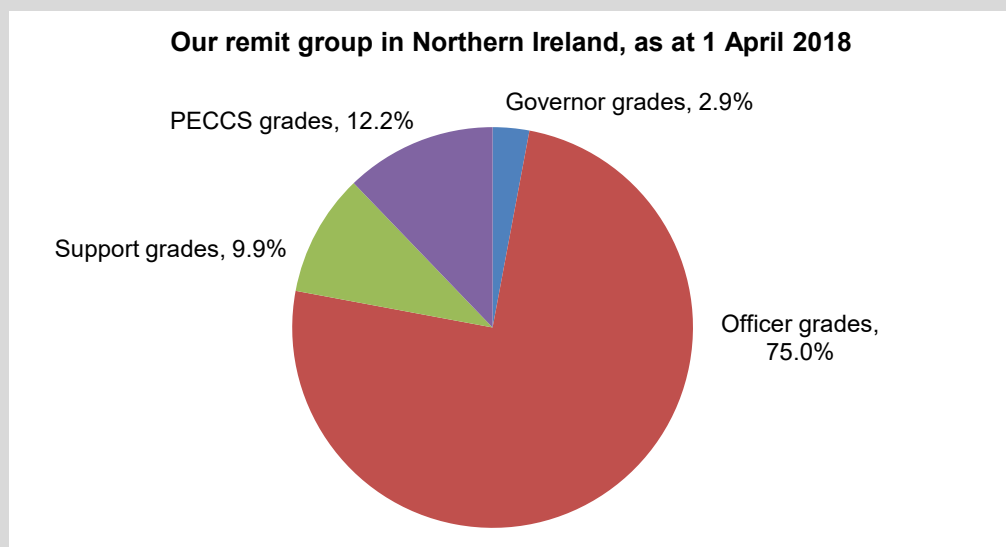
## Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and our remit group

The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is responsible for the operation and delivery of services within the Northern Ireland prison system. Its main statutory duties are set out in the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953. It is an Executive Agency of the Department of Justice. The overall aim of NIPS is to improve public safety by reducing the risk of re-offending through the management and rehabilitation of offenders in custody. The Service, through its staff, serves the community by keeping in secure, safe and humane custody those committed by the courts and, by working with prisoners and with other organisations, seeks to reduce the risk of re-offending. In so doing it aims to protect the public and to contribute to peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

There are three operational establishments in Northern Ireland. The prison population as at week ending 23 November 2018 was 1,420 (2.4% lower than a year earlier).

NIPS paybill costs relating to the remit group in 2017-18 were approximately £51.5 million (including social security and other pension costs).

As at 1 April 2018 there were 1,255 staff (headcount) in our remit, up from 1,229 a year earlier (an increase of 2.1%). The composition is below.



	<i>Headcount</i>
Governor grades	37
Officer grades <sup>1</sup>	941
Support grades <sup>2</sup>	124
Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Service grades <sup>3</sup>	153

Source: NIPS

Notes:

1. Comprising Custody Prison Officers, Main Grade Officers and Senior Officers.

2. Comprising Night Custody Officers and Operational Support Grades.

3. Comprising Prisoner Custody Officers, Senior Prisoner Custody Officers and Principal Prisoner Custody Officers.

# Prison Service Pay Review Body 2018 report on Northern Ireland

## Summary

We recommend, with effect from 1 April 2018:

- That the pay scales for all grades are adjusted as set out in Appendix D. This would deliver consolidated increases of at least two per cent for staff in our remit group, after progression and this award.
- That the rate for the Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA) is increased to £2,950 for all eligible staff.
- That the Governor on-call allowance is increased to the rates set out in Appendix E.
- The introduction of a three-tier, non-pensionable drivers' allowance for the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) staff at the rates set out in Appendix E.
- That the rates for other allowances remain at their current levels (set out in Appendix E).

Specifically, we have followed the joint proposals for governor grades agreed between the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the Prison Governors' Association (Northern Ireland) (PGA(NI)).

We also recommend that proposals are put to us as soon as possible to align the SRA with the Police Service Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA).

### Introduction

In the absence of a Justice Minister in Northern Ireland, the then Department of Justice Permanent Secretary, Nick Perry CB, wrote to our Chair on 9 May 2018 asking us to make recommendations on pay for our remit group in NIPS from 1 April 2018. This report sets out these recommendations.

This is the first report we have produced for this remit group since 2013. Between 2014 and 2017, rather than ask us to make recommendations, NIPS has engaged in collective bargaining with the trade unions on the annual pay

award. We have nevertheless continued to keep up-to-date on the work of our remit group across that period and have visited staff in the establishments, in PECCS and held discussions with NIPS management and the unions annually, most recently in July 2018.

We are conscious that the timing of the activation letter, delayed by the absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive, means that we are submitting this report long after the date on which its recommendations should take effect. We regret that this will mean staff in our remit group again receiving their pay awards later than they should. In considering our recommendations, we have looked in particular at data for April 2018, which is the start of the pay year covered by this report. We note that key indicators have not shifted dramatically at the time of writing.

### **Context**

Consumer Prices Index inflation stood at 2.4% in April 2018 and is currently projected to rise slightly before gradually returning to the Bank of England target of 2.0%. The labour market in Northern Ireland has significant differences from the rest of the United Kingdom (UK), with a much greater proportion of public sector roles. Average earnings growth in Northern Ireland was lower than elsewhere in the UK, at around 1.5% for the year to April 2018.

In terms of public sector pay, 2018 saw the first increases above one per cent for many parts of the UK public sector since 2010 as the Government relaxed its policy of public sector pay restraint. Staff in many of the Pay Review Bodies' remit groups (including our remit group in England and Wales) saw headline consolidated increases of two per cent. The Northern Ireland Department of Finance public sector pay policy for 2018-19 aligned policy in Northern Ireland with that in the rest of the UK and allowed for awards to be greater than one per cent where justified by factors such as recruitment and retention.

### **Evidence**

Against this backdrop, NIPS told us that it had maintained the Service while delivering significant efficiency savings. However, staff leaving rates were now

increasing, and NIPS felt that its overall employment offer was becoming less attractive. It pointed particularly to low morale within PECCS.

NIPS stated that its proposals this year were designed to reduce the disparity of the entry grade pay scales, provide a consolidated increase in overall remuneration and extend the pay scales to deliver future progression for some groups. They considered that this would reduce the recruitment costs associated with higher turnover and enable the Service to retain experienced staff. The proposals were also designed to deliver efficiencies by facilitating cross-deployment between support grades and PECCS.

We were pleased that NIPS and the PGA(NI) held discussions and reached agreement on the proposals for the governor grades. As a result, the PGA(NI) did not submit written evidence. We were disappointed not to receive evidence from the POA (Northern Ireland)<sup>1</sup> (POA(NI)) who declined our request for written and oral evidence in line with its 2015 conference decision. We also received a written submission from the Community trade union this year for the first time.

### **Our recommendations on pay and allowances for 2018**

Our recommendations aim to address the key challenges we have identified this year: a lack of consolidated awards for operational staff since 1 April 2016; an emerging issue with recruitment and retention; and low levels of morale and motivation, particularly for the PECCS grades.

We were broadly supportive of NIPS's proposals (set out in detail in Chapter 3). We welcome the collaborative approach that NIPS took with the PGA(NI) and for this year saw no reason not to follow the proposals agreed for the governor grades. For the other groups of staff, our recommendations retain much of NIPS's proposals but differ in two fundamental respects.

Firstly, the NIPS evidence did not contain a headline award figure but rather proposed changes that targeted money to address differentials between certain grades. We believe that all staff in post should receive consolidated increases of

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<sup>1</sup> The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers.



at least two per cent this year. We believe that NIPS staff should be treated similarly to others in the public sector following the relaxation of pay restraint and therefore that it is worth prioritising more of the available money this year to this end. We have consequently made recommendations that adjust NIPS's proposals to deliver this within the same cost envelope.

Secondly, while we support NIPS's proposal to extend or create new pay scales for some groups, we also support its aspiration to reduce the number of pay points in some scales. In our recommendations we have therefore restricted the scales for PECCS grades to four pay points, the same as NIPS proposed for the Night Custody Officer scale. This will mean quicker progression to the maximum and should assist in sustaining motivation, supporting NIPS to recruit and retain staff within these grades.

This is the first report that we have produced since our report that introduced the SRA at the end of 2013. Since then, the SRA has increased to £2,700. There was an acceptance from all parties this year, including NIPS, that the SRA should be aligned with the NITA. NIPS's proposals this year prioritised available funding for consolidated pay increases and it argued it was not yet affordable to align the SRA with the NITA. We accept this argument and recommend that the SRA should increase to £2,950. We also recommend that NIPS should present proposals to us as soon as possible to align the SRA with the NITA.

On other allowances, NIPS proposed increases to the Governor on-call allowance (introduced last year) and the introduction of a daily PECCS drivers' allowance. NIPS did not present proposals to us to increase any other allowances, so that available money could be targeted at basic pay increases this year. We agree with this approach and recommend the changes that NIPS propose.

Overall, we believe our recommendations retain the key elements of NIPS's proposals but place greater emphasis on NIPS's priority of delivering "fair and equitable" consolidated increases for all staff, in line with the increases seen elsewhere in the UK public sector. They should result in the same total paybill

increase as the NIPS's proposals – 2.8% overall – which NIPS management told us was affordable.

### **Looking ahead**

We were disappointed by the absence of up-to-date evidence on the morale and motivation of staff in our remit group. We were pleased to note that NIPS proposes to implement the Northern Ireland Civil Service People Survey from 2018 and encourage it to do so such that its findings are available for our next round.

We had a number of other concerns this year to which we would like NIPS and the other parties to give consideration in their evidence for future rounds. These include: what might be done to reduce the significant number of people on what appears to be long-term temporary promotion; and whether the new performance management system is fit for purpose, in respect of the merits or otherwise of linking some element of pay to performance. We encourage NIPS to introduce formal exit interviews to gather more systematic evidence on why staff are leaving.

Finally, we remain very concerned at what now seem to be perennial delays to pay awards for NIPS staff. We encourage NIPS to consider giving us a remit for a period of longer than 12 months (with appropriate compensation) that would allow our process to return to its normal timetable and ultimately ensure staff were paid as close as possible to the due date. As part of this evidence we would also like the parties to consider whether a 1 April pay effective date is still appropriate given recent delays.

Jerry Cope ( <i>Chair</i> )	Luke Corkill
Roberta Brownlee	Professor Andrew Dickerson
Mary Carter	Leslie Manasseh MBE
Nicholas Caton	Paul West QPM

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **Our role**

1.1 The Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) was established under statute<sup>1</sup> to examine and report on matters relating to the rates of pay and allowances to be applied in the public sector prison services in England and Wales and in Northern Ireland. For Northern Ireland, following the devolution of justice, separate regulations were established: The Prison Service (Pay Review Body) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012<sup>2</sup>. We have standing terms of reference (at Appendix A) which supplement our statutory remit. They emphasise that we should provide independent advice based on the range of evidence available to us.

## **Our previous reports on the Northern Ireland Prison Service**

### *Ninth Report on Northern Ireland 2013*

1.2 We last made recommendations on pay for Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) operational staff in our 2013 report. At that time, our headline recommendations were a one per cent pay award for all those grades which NIPS said it was still recruiting to, consolidated for those on scales, spot rates and hourly rates, and one per cent non-consolidated for those on scales and spot rates which were not open to new staff.

1.3 The then Northern Ireland Minister of Justice, David Ford MLA, accepted our recommendations and they were implemented in full.

### *Supplementary Report on Northern Ireland 2013*

1.4 Following our 2013 report on the main pay award, we submitted a

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<sup>1</sup> Legislationline, (2001). *The Prison Service (Pay Review Body) Regulations 2001 (SI 2001 No. 1161)*. [online] Available at: <http://legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/7249> [accessed on 14 December 2018]. The PSPRB covers England and Wales, and Northern Ireland; the Scottish Prison Service is outside our remit.

<sup>2</sup> Legislation, (2012). *The Prison Service (Pay Review Body) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012*. [online] Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2012/191/made> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

supplementary Northern Ireland report<sup>3</sup> in late 2013 on the introduction of the Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA) for certain operational grades to reflect the security situation in Northern Ireland.

1.5 During considerations for our 2013 report we were asked by the POA(Northern Ireland)<sup>4</sup> (POA(NI)) to recommend the introduction of an emergency allowance for prison staff, but NIPS stated that it wanted more time to obtain evidence. We therefore indicated to the parties that we would look at this issue again, outside the pay round if necessary, should additional information become available. On 1 July 2013 the then Northern Ireland Minister of Justice, David Ford MLA, wrote to us asking for advice on whether an additional payment should be made to some or all prison staff.

1.6 We submitted our supplementary 2013 report in December 2013, recommending that those staff in grades that had no historical risk allowance previously consolidated into base pay should receive the new SRA, set at £1,320 a year from 1 January 2014. The Justice Minister accepted our recommendations. We also gave a commitment to review this allowance every two years as part of the annual pay cycle, or, if there was a significant change in the level of threat.

### **Summary of pay awards for our remit group since 2013**

1.7 From 2014 through to 2017, rather than set us remits to make recommendations, NIPS has instead engaged in collective bargaining with the trade unions on the annual pay award. These negotiations have resulted in some cases in agreement but in others imposed pay awards, all of which we have noted. We were kept informed of these discussions and across this period we continued to meet regularly with NIPS management and the unions and to visit the Northern Ireland establishments. Appendix G contains the details of historical pay awards from 1 April 2014 to 1 April 2017 which are summarised in the following paragraphs.

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<sup>3</sup> Gov.uk, (2013). *PSPRB supplementary Report on Northern Ireland 2013*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/psprb-supplementary-report-on-northern-ireland-2013> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>4</sup> The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers.

1.8 In 2014 NIPS, the POA(NI) and the Prison Governors' Association (Northern Ireland) (PGA(NI)) reached an agreement which saw all staff receive a consolidated increase of at least one per cent. There were also changes to the grade structures, an increase in the SRA and several changes to terms and conditions that fall outside our remit.

1.9 In 2015 NIPS and the POA(NI) reached an agreement, noted by the PGA(NI), which again saw a consolidated increase for all staff of at least one per cent. There were also changes to pay scales.

1.10 In 2016 the parties were unable to reach an agreed position and NIPS subsequently imposed a pay award. This saw all staff on grade maxima, spot rates and hourly rates receive a one per cent non-consolidated pay award, along with the SRA being increased to £2,460.

1.11 On 15 February 2017 the former Northern Ireland Justice Minister, Claire Sugden MLA, issued us with an activation letter<sup>5</sup> to make recommendations on pay effective from 1 April 2017. However, after receipt of this letter the Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved and elections held, following which there has not been a re-forming of a Northern Ireland Executive or Government. Eventually the former Department of Justice (DoJ) Permanent Secretary, Nick Perry CB, wrote<sup>6</sup> to us on 18 January 2018 formally to withdraw the Justice Minister's activation letter. This was due to NIPS not being in a position to submit timely evidence to us without Ministers in post and a need to make a decision on a 2017 award in a timescale that would not have allowed us to give the issues proper consideration.

1.12 Following the withdrawal of that activation letter, the parties were unable to reach an agreed position and NIPS subsequently imposed the 2017 pay award. Staff saw a one per cent non-consolidated pay award for those on grade maxima and spot rates. There were also changes to pay scales and pay points,

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<sup>5</sup> Gov.uk, (2017). *Activation letter for the PSPRB 2017 Northern Ireland pay round*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/activation-letter-for-the-psprb-2017-northern-ireland-pay-round> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>6</sup> Gov.uk, (2017). *Formal Withdrawal of the PSPRB 2017-18 Northern Ireland Activation Letter by the DoJ Permanent Secretary*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/formal-withdrawal-of-the-psprb-2017-18-northern-ireland-activation-letter-by-the-doj-permanent-secretary> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

an increase in the level of the SRA to £2,700 and the introduction of pensionable on-call allowances for governor grades.

1.13 The pay tables in Appendix F show the pay award for each year from 1 April 2013 to 1 April 2017, along with the level of the SRA from introduction on 1 January 2014 to 1 April 2017.

### **Our remit this year**

1.14 In the absence of a Justice Minister in Northern Ireland, the former DoJ Permanent Secretary, Nick Perry CB, wrote to our Chair on 9 May 2018 asking us to commence our work for pay effective 1 April 2018. This letter asked us to liaise with NIPS on timings for this report. Our former Chair, Dr Peter Knight CBE, wrote to the Permanent Secretary on 16 July 2018, indicating our timetable for the round and committing to submitting our 2018 report by the end of 2018. The letter from the Permanent Secretary can be found at Appendix B and our response is at Appendix C.

### **Our evidence base**

1.15 Following receipt of the Permanent Secretary's letter activating the 2018-19 round, our secretariat invited all the parties to submit written evidence by 12 September 2018. We received joint proposals from NIPS and the PGA(NI) and this year, for the first time, we also received written representations from the Community trade union.

1.16 We held oral evidence by video link on 25 October 2018 with:

- NIPS officials led by the Director General and Director for Reducing Reoffending, Ronnie Armour; and
- Gary Alcock and Dave Kennedy representing the PGA(NI).

1.17 Our Chair also held a supplementary oral evidence session by telephone conference with the Northern Ireland DoJ Permanent Secretary, Peter May, on 1 November 2018.

1.18 We offered the POA(NI) the opportunity to submit written evidence and to attend an oral evidence session with us. However, the union declined both

invitations.

## **Visits**

1.19 Since 2013, to ensure that we were in a position to offer informed, up-to-date views were we to be given a remit, we have continued to undertake annual visits to speak to NIPS management, the unions and our remit group in Northern Ireland.

1.20 In July 2018, in anticipation of this remit, we again undertook a full visit programme to Northern Ireland, where we visited Maghaberry and Magilligan prisons, Hydebank Wood College, and the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) staff, both at Laganside Court and at Maghaberry prison. Our visits typically involve: a briefing with the Governor; discussion groups with governor grades; officer and support grades; and PECCS staff; and a tour of the establishment to speak to staff and see the conditions that staff work in first hand.

1.21 Visits are an important part of our work, enabling us to meet our remit group face-to-face to hear their concerns first hand. These visits allowed us to hear concerns staff had on: the level of their pay and remuneration; the security situation and level of the SRA; Governor on-call allowances; recruitment and retention; and other matters covered by our remit. We regret that the POA(NI) instructed its local branches not to attend their allocated union discussion groups.

1.22 Our visits in 2018 greatly added to our knowledge and the discussion groups provided us a more rounded understanding of our remit group's duties, working environment and concerns. They provide us with a valuable perspective which complements, and enables us to test, the written and oral evidence we receive from the parties. We know that arranging our visits requires considerable effort and we thank all of those involved, as organisers or participants.

## **Our 2018 report**

1.23 In Chapter 2 we set out the economic context, the background issues and parties' evidence we considered when making our decisions. In Chapter 3 we

make our recommendations on pay and allowances and outline the conclusions we reached based on the evidence this year. In Chapter 4 we comment on some wider issues to which we believe the parties should give further attention.



## **Chapter 2: Context and Evidence**

### **Introduction**

2.1 This chapter sets out the context for our recommendations. It provides information on the economic situation, both in the United Kingdom (UK) as a whole and in Northern Ireland specifically, and describes the current state of the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), including its financial position and planned reforms. It then presents background information and evidence on our remit group in terms of recruitment and retention, motivation and morale, and equality and diversity. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main points that came up on our visits to the establishments in Northern Ireland and the parties' proposals to us this year. We are mindful that our report is for pay from 1 April 2018 and we have therefore looked in particular at data for this period. We note that key indicators have not shifted significantly at the time of writing but have used more current data where appropriate.

### **Economic context**

#### *Growth and inflation*

2.2 The Northern Ireland economy has grown slowly but steadily over the past few years. The Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI)<sup>7</sup> calculations show that economic activity increased annually by 1.2%, 2.8% and 0.8% in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively<sup>8</sup>. Corresponding figures for UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) were 2.2%, 1.7% and 1.5%.

2.3 Looking at the period since the end of 2017, the NICEI shows growth of 0.2% and 1.2% in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2018 (corresponding figures for UK GDP were 0.1% and 0.4%).

2.4 In terms of future prospects, available only for the UK more widely, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expects GDP to grow by 1.6% in 2019

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<sup>7</sup> NICEI is an experimental quarterly measure of the performance of the Northern Ireland economy based on available official statistics and published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

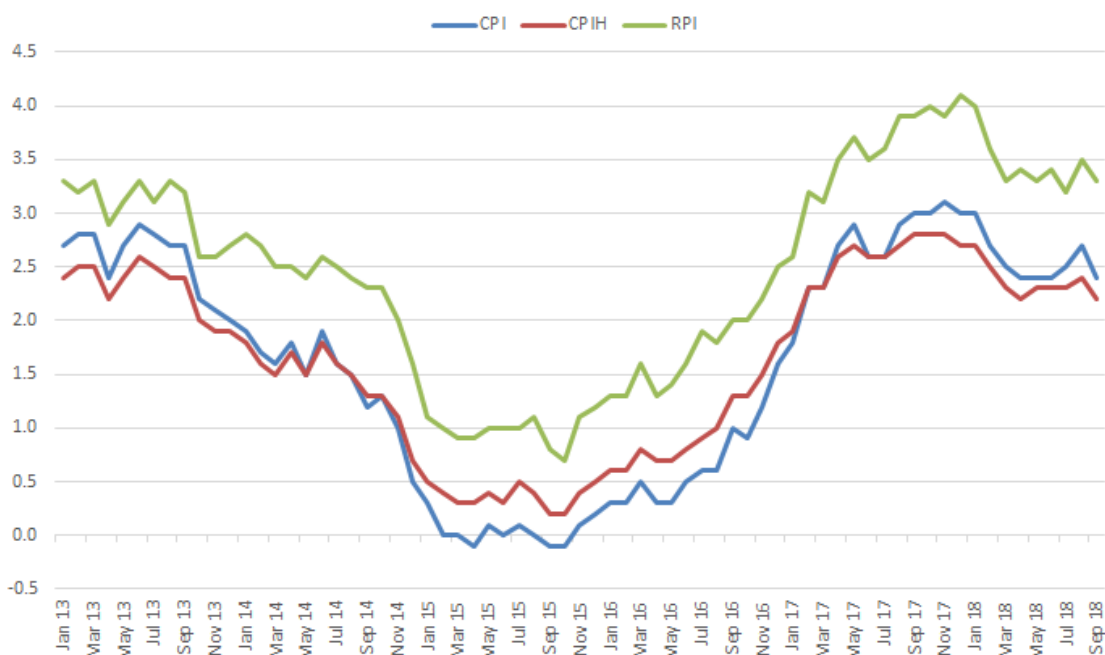
<sup>8</sup> NISRA, (2018). *NICEI Publication and Tables Q2 2018*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/nicei-publication-and-tables-q2-2018> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

and then remain steady at 1.4% in 2020 and 2021.<sup>9</sup>

2.5 As part of our standing terms of reference, we are asked to take the Government's inflation target into account. Inflation, as measured by the annual percentage change in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), increased steadily over 2017 (measuring 1.8% in January and 3.0% in December). The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) was 2.7% in December 2017.

2.6 CPI inflation fell sharply in the first four months of 2018, measuring 2.4% in April. It has since been largely stable and stood at 2.4% in September 2018 (when CPIH was 2.2%). The OBR expects CPI inflation to pick up to 2.6% in the final quarter of 2018, but it is then expected to fall back to 2.0% in 2019 and 2020.

**Figure 2.1: Inflation (CPIH, CPI and RPI) percentage change over 12 months, April 2013-18<sup>10</sup>**



<sup>9</sup> OBR, (2018). *Economic and Fiscal Outlook October 2018*. [online] Available at:

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-october-2018/> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>10</sup> ONS, (2018). *Inflation and Price Indices (Data series: RPI (CZBH), CPI (D7G7) and CPIH (L55O))*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

## *Labour market*<sup>11</sup>

2.7 The Northern Ireland seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period October to December 2017 was 3.9%. The employment rate for the same period was 68.7% and the inactivity rate 28.4%.

2.8 More recent data, for the period June to August 2018, suggest the unemployment rate in Northern Ireland was 4.3%, slightly above the UK average of 4.0%. Approximately half (51 per cent) of those unemployed in Northern Ireland were unemployed for one year or more, compared to a UK average rate of 25 per cent%. The employment rate in Northern Ireland for this period was 69.2% and the economic inactivity rate 27.5% (compared to 75.5% and 21.2% respectively for the UK as a whole<sup>12</sup>).

## *Pay*

2.9 NIPS included in its evidence analysis of the April 2017 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).<sup>13</sup> This showed that for Northern Ireland:

- Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in Northern Ireland at April 2017 were £501, an increase of 1.5% over the year. This was 8.9% lower than the UK median (£550), which increased by 2.2% that year.
- In Northern Ireland, private sector full-time median gross weekly earnings increased by three per cent over the year to April 2017, an increase higher than CPI or CPIH inflation. The corresponding increase in public sector full-time median gross weekly earnings was one per cent; this was below inflation indicating a decrease in real terms.

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<sup>11</sup> NISRA, (2018). *Labour Force Survey*. [online] Available at:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/labour-force-survey> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>12</sup> ONS, (2018). *UK Labour Market, October 2018*. [online] Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/october2018#employment> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>13</sup> NISRA, (2018). *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2017 Regional Earnings*. [online]

Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/news/annual-survey-hours-and-earnings-2017-regional-earnings> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

- Over the year, full-time median gross weekly earnings of private sector employees (at £446) were 28.4% lower than in the public sector (£623).
- Median earnings of public sector employees in Northern Ireland were four per cent higher than in the UK as a whole. This is the third consecutive year where earnings in the public sector have been higher in Northern Ireland. Median earnings of private sector employees in Northern Ireland were 16.1% lower than in the UK as a whole.

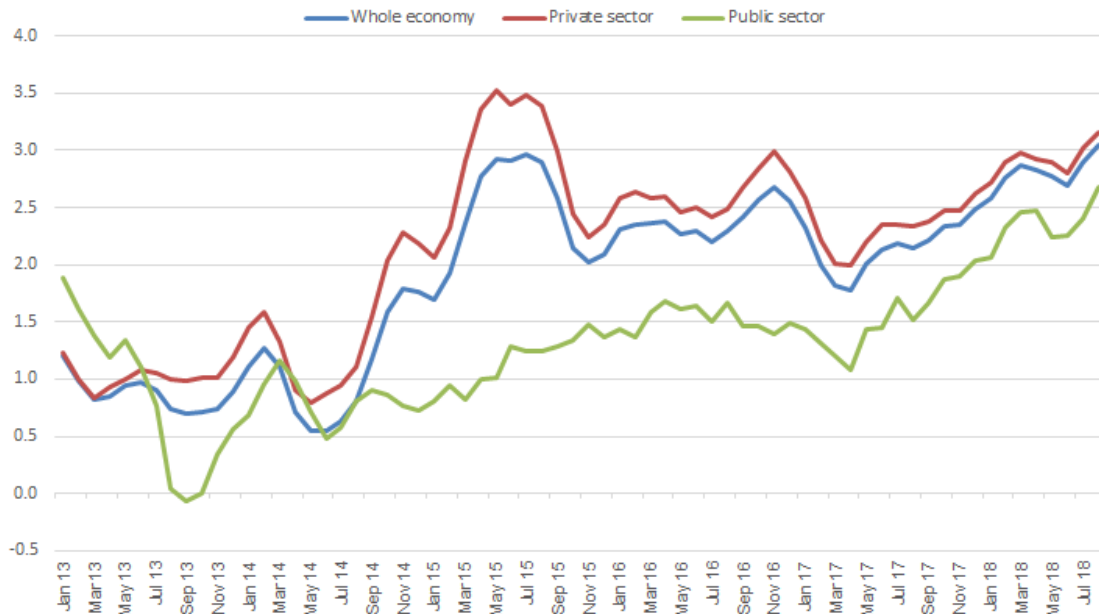
2.10 As we noted in previous reports, we have only limited economic evidence relating specifically to Northern Ireland. We include below our analysis of changes in average weekly earnings (covering Great Britain only) and pay settlements to provide some additional context here.

2.11 Estimates show that average weekly earnings excluding bonuses for employees in the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) increased by 3.1% (in nominal terms) in the three months ending August 2018 compared with the corresponding period a year earlier - the highest annual growth for some ten years. The growth rate for public sector employees was 2.7%. Weekly earnings including bonuses for all employees also increased by 2.7%.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> ONS, (2018). *Average Weekly Earnings ERN01*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/averageweeklyearnings01/current> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

**Figure 2.2: Growth in average weekly earnings, percentage change year on year, three-month average from January 2013 to August 2018, Great Britain<sup>15</sup>**



2.12 The OBR projects wage growth to ease slightly in 2019, partly reflecting the continued roll out of auto-enrolment into workplace pensions. From 2020 onwards, the OBR forecasts average earnings to rise gradually, reaching 3.2% in 2023, reflecting an expected modest pick-up in productivity growth in those years.<sup>16</sup>

2.13 Median pay settlements increased at the start of 2018 to around 2.5%, having been close to 2.0% for over five years. Both XpertHR and Incomes Data Research (IDR) report a median of 2.5% for the three months to August 2018, while the Labour Research Department (LRD) report a median of 3.0%. Two per cent exactly remains the most common pay award, constituting 28 per cent of pay reviews in 2017 (11 per cent of public sector reviews and 29 per cent of private sector reviews) and 21 per cent in 2018 to date (53 per cent of public

<sup>15</sup> ONS, (2018). *Average Weekly Earnings ERN01*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/averageweeklyearnings01/current> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>16</sup> OBR, (2018). *Economic and Fiscal Outlook October 2018*. [online] Available at: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-october-2018/> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

sector reviews and 20 per cent of private sector reviews), according to XpertHR.<sup>17</sup>

### **Wider changes affecting our remit group's employment offer**

2.14 We noted in our 2013 report that the UK Government had started to make reforms to public sector pensions. These reforms have been completed and moved schemes from final salary to career average revalued earnings, aligned normal retirement ages with the State Pension Age (SPA) and introduced tiered contribution rates. Whilst Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Schemes are covered by separate legislation, the changes made to Civil Service Pension Schemes in Great Britain were also applied to Northern Ireland schemes. We note changes to the pension schemes offered to prison staff are a matter for the Government and pensions are not formally within our remit. Nevertheless, the value of the pension, and pension contributions, is an important element when considering total reward for our remit group. We note the main current pension scheme for our remit group is the 'alpha' scheme that is offered to other civil servants in both Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, although there are some staff on legacy Civil Service Pension Schemes (noted below).

2.15 Prior to 1 April 2012, members of the remit group were in one of four different Civil Service Pension Schemes: Classic; Classic Plus; Premium; and Nuvos. Classic was the most common scheme for our remit group. This scheme had a retirement age of 60 and an employee contribution rate of 1.5%. Those on Classic Plus and Premium also had a retirement age of 60 but a contribution rate of 3.5%. Those on Nuvos had a retirement age of 65 and a contribution rate of 3.5%. In these schemes all staff paid the same contribution rate, irrespective of grade. The Government's pension reform package that introduced the current 'alpha' scheme in 2015 saw the introduction of tiered contribution rates linked to salary.

2.16 Our remit group currently pay the following contribution rates,<sup>18</sup> dependent on salary, for 2018-19:

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<sup>17</sup> Office of Manpower Economics analysis of IDR, XpertHR and LRD data.

- Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) and support grade contribution rates are generally either 4.60% or 5.45%;
- Prison officer grade contribution rates are generally either 4.60% or 5.45%, although most will pay the higher rate.
- Governor grade contribution rates are generally either 5.45% or 7.35%.

2.17 The Department of Finance (DoF) publishes<sup>19</sup> Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) employer contribution rates on its website.

2.18 The significant change is that contribution rates for staff on Civil Service pension schemes are generally significantly higher than the previous rates of 1.5% and 3.5%, and so this change has had a negative impact on take home pay for the staff in our remit group who have been moved to it.

2.19 Another change in the position of NIPS employees that has had a negative impact on take-home pay relates to National Insurance contributions (NICs). NICs rose from 6 April 2016 for those, including staff in our remit group, that had previously been on the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme “contracted-out” arrangements. From that date, the current basic state pension and the state second pension (S2P) were abolished and replaced by a single-tier state pension. The abolition of S2P resulted in the end of contracting-out.<sup>20</sup> In the past, contracted-out schemes had to provide a certain level of defined benefits, and in return both employer and employees paid lower NICs. Therefore, the abolition of contracting-out had cost implications for both employees and employers as a result of the loss of the NIC reductions: employees’ Class 1 NICs<sup>21</sup> increased by 1.4% (of relevant earnings between Her Majesty’s Treasury

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<sup>18</sup> Department of Finance, (2018). *Employee Contribution Rates*. [online] Available at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/employee-contribution-rates> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>19</sup> Department of Finance, (2018). *Employer Contribution Rates*. [online] Available at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/employer-contribution-rates> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>20</sup> The measures to implement the single-tier state pension and abolition of contracting-out are contained in the Pensions Act 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Employees earning more than £162 a week and under State Pension age.

(HMT) thresholds<sup>22</sup>).<sup>23</sup> Again, while NICs are Government's responsibility, we note that, as with increased pension contributions, this change had a negative impact on the take-home pay of staff in our remit group.

### **The Spending Review, public sector pay policy and affordability**

2.20 The previous Government published a joint Spending Review and Autumn Statement on 25 November 2015<sup>24</sup>. The then Chancellor, George Osborne, reiterated his public sector pay policy that the Spending Review would fund public sector workforces for an average pay award of one per cent in each of the four years from 2016-20, in order to help protect jobs and the quality of public services.

2.21 The 2017 Autumn Budget announced a change in the Government's approach in relation to public sector pay awards and moved away from the previous policy of awards of an average of one per cent. Nevertheless, the Government said that pay discipline remained central to its overall approach and Departments had only been funded for a one per cent average increase in public sector pay awards in the Spending Review.

#### *Northern Ireland public sector pay*

2.22 In January 2017, the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive was dissolved and has yet to be re-established. At the time the parties submitted evidence to us (in September 2018) the DoF had not yet published Northern Ireland public sector pay guidance for 2018-19. We therefore understood that the previous DoF pay guidance announcement for 2017-18<sup>25</sup> would continue to apply and that NIPS would therefore follow the policy issued by the Finance Minister for 2016-17. This 2016-17 policy followed HMT guidelines and limited pay increases to one per cent.

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<sup>22</sup> The relevant earnings for employees for this purpose being £6,032 (the Lower Earnings Limit) and £46,350 at 2018-19 rates.

<sup>23</sup> In addition, employers' Class 1 NICs increased by 3.4% (or relevant earnings), to the standard rate of 13.8%.

<sup>24</sup> HM Treasury, (2015). *Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015: documents*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-and-autumn-statement-2015-documents> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>25</sup> Department of Finance, (2018). *Public Sector Pay Policy set for 2017-18*. [online] Available at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/news/public-sector-pay-policy-set-201718> [accessed on 14 December 2018].



2.23 On 22 November 2018, the DoF published its pay guidance for the 2018-19 pay year<sup>26</sup> (the period to which this report refers). This guidance set out that Northern Ireland was keeping within the overarching policy set by the UK Government of moving away from cross-public sector pay policy of limiting average awards to one per cent. Instead pay awards could be informed by a range of factors, including recruitment and retention. The guidance also noted that there may be flexibility in return for improvements to public sector productivity.

2.24 The DoF also noted that in the absence of a Finance Minister, the public sector pay policy could now be agreed by the Department as laid out in the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018. We note that a number of 2018 public sector pay awards are still waiting a decision from the Northern Ireland administration.

#### *Context for the Northern Ireland Prison Service proposals*

2.25 NIPS noted in its evidence that pay restraint was still in force in Northern Ireland and asked that we reflect on this when making our recommendations.

2.26 In the absence of Northern Ireland Ministers, NIPS has been unable to seek prior approval for its 2018 pay proposals. It states that its proposals this year aim to deliver a “fair and equitable” pay award. NIPS has targeted its proposals at the lower paid staff to tackle recruitment and retention issues and improve levels of motivation and morale.

2.27 Although the grade specific nature of NIPS’s proposals means that there is no headline figure for its proposed award, it has costed its total proposals at 4.2% of paybill (including progression), a figure which it told us was just affordable. We do not consider progression to be part of the annual award, and NIPS costed the award component of its proposals (including both changes to scales and to allowances) at 2.8% of paybill (just over £1.4 million).

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<sup>26</sup> Department of Finance, (2018). *Public Sector Pay Policy set for 2018-19*. [online] Available at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/news/public-sector-pay-policy-set-201819> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

### *Efficiencies*

2.28 Since 2010, NIPS reported it has delivered efficiency savings of 24 per cent, while its staffing complement has been reduced by 27 per cent. In its evidence to us this year, NIPS told us that while there were no explicit efficiency targets in place this year, it nevertheless expected to continue to operate within a context of constrained resources and would continue to seek to deliver savings where possible.

2.29 In this context, NIPS stated that its proposals are designed to reduce the disparity in the entry grade pay scales, provide an increase in overall remuneration and, in some cases, extend the pay scales, delivering future guaranteed progression (subject to satisfactory performance). NIPS anticipate this will reduce the recruitment costs associated with a high level of turnover and enable the Service to retain more experienced staff, building on this to establish a mentoring process for new recruits. It would also deliver efficiencies by facilitating cross-deployment between support and PECCS grades, addressing short-term staff shortages, reducing the need to source people through agencies and providing a wider span of experience and variety for staff.

### **The Northern Ireland Prison Service and our remit group**

#### *Staffing*

2.30 We receive the latest available staffing data from NIPS on an annual basis and use these figures in our deliberations. For this report, we have used staffing data as at 1 April 2018, when there were 1,255<sup>27</sup> staff in our remit group.

2.31 There have been changes to the group structures over a number of years. In particular, the grade of Principal Officer was abolished, Night Custody Officer (NCO) was not-recruited-to but is now recruited-to, and the Operational Support Grade (OSG) grade is now not-recruited-to, although some staff have since been allowed to revert back from Custody Prison Officer (CPO) to OSG.

2.32 Table 2.1 provides figures for the period 2012 to 2018. The key points are:

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<sup>27</sup> This is on a headcount basis.

- Staff numbers in the governor grades declined substantially between 2012 and 2013 following an efficiency and voluntary redundancy programme.
- Overall officer numbers declined from 2012 to 2016 but have since increased modestly. Within the officer grades, the number of:
  - Senior Officers (SO) has remained relatively stable;
  - Main Grade Officers (MGO) have steadily decreased (especially following voluntary redundancy programmes in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2015-16); and
  - CPO (a new grade from 2012) more than quadrupled between 2012 and 2013, but then subsequently decreased in the period to 2016. Since then the number of CPOs has increased modestly.
- NCO numbers fell sharply between 2012 and 2013. Since then numbers have remained broadly stable.
- PECCS numbers halved in 2013 before returning to previous levels.

**Table 2.1: Northern Ireland Prison Service Staffing, 2012-2018 (headcount at 1 April)<sup>28</sup>**

Grade / group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Governor 1	2	2	1	1	2	1	} 12
Governor in Charge / Gov 2 and Gov 3	6	5	4	4	4	5	
Head of Function / Gov 4	9	10	6	8	10	9	
Head of Unit / Gov 5 and Principal officer	55	23	26	23	26	25	25
<b>Governors</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>
Senior officer	126	112	121	114	129	126	117
Main grade officer	842	606	485	443	358	341	308
Custody prison officer (new in 2012)	120	530	481	443	416	446	516
<b>Officers</b>	<b>1,088</b>	<b>1,248</b>	<b>1,087</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>941</b>
Night custody officer	162	107	100	96	101	102	110
Operational support grade	10	12	19	18	14	14	14
<b>All uniformed prison staff</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>1,367</b>	<b>1,206</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>1,018</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>1,065</b>
PECCS (Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service)	157	78	174	168	160	160	153
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,489</b>	<b>1,485</b>	<b>1,417</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>1,229</b>	<b>1,255</b>

2.33 At April 2018, 23 of the 37 staff in the governor grades (62%) were aged over 50. The Prison Governors' Association (Northern Ireland) (PGA(NI)) expressed concern during oral evidence about the number of governors approaching retirement age. NIPS noted that it has launched the LEAD

<sup>28</sup> Data provided by NIPS.

(Leadership, Engagement and Development) programme specifically to build leadership and succession planning at the governor grades. It has also launched a development programme to bring SOs through to Head of Unit.

### *Prison population*

2.34 The prison population in Northern Ireland has been gradually decreasing from a peak of 1,859 in 2013. At the end of August 2018, the prison population was 1,410. When compared with full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing of 1,053<sup>29</sup>, this equates to 1.3 prisoners per establishment based remit group staff member.<sup>30</sup>

2.35 NIPS reported that the cost per prisoner place in Northern Ireland in 2017-18 had been £55,304, below its target of £58,118. The cost per prisoner place has been falling since 2006 and the actual cost has been lower than target levels for the last decade.

### *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons reports*

2.36 The Chief Inspector of Prisons, Peter Clarke, commented in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) 2017-18 Annual Report<sup>31</sup> that the Inspectorate had conducted a series of low-impact reviews of Maghaberry prison and an inspection of Magilligan prison in 2017 with the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland. This visit to Maghaberry prison followed a full inspection in 2015 and 2016, when serious concerns were raised about the stability of the prison and the outcomes for prisoners. In 2018, a further unannounced inspection was undertaken at HMP Maghaberry<sup>32</sup> where the Chief Inspector noted that the prison had transformed due in part to "excellent leadership". He said that the prison was no longer unsafe and unstable and had seen decreases

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<sup>29</sup> FTE number of all governor grades and uniformed prison staff (excluding PECCS) as at 1 April 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Data provided by NIPS.

<sup>31</sup> Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, (2018). *Annual Report 2017-18*. [online] Available at: [https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/07/6.4472\\_HMI-Prisons\\_AR-2017-18\\_Content\\_A4\\_Final\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/07/6.4472_HMI-Prisons_AR-2017-18_Content_A4_Final_WEB.pdf) [accessed on 14 December 2018].

<sup>32</sup> Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, (2018). *Report of an unannounced inspection at HMP Maghaberry 9-19 April 2018*. [online] Available at: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/11/CJINI-Maghaberry-Prison-unannounced-with-tables.pdf> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

in both the levels of violence and the availability of illegal drugs. He praised the motivated and enthusiastic prison staff who he said were doing excellent work.

2.37 The inspection of Magilligan prison was also positive with HMIP praising the prison for its work in regard to respect and resettlement. In addition, the leadership at the prison and the quality of relationships between prisoners and staff were commended.

### *Prisons 2020*

2.38 In 2018, NIPS published<sup>33</sup> its Prisons 2020 strategy, aimed at embedding change and driving continuous improvement over a three-year period. The Prisons 2020 strategy is focused on delivering rehabilitation in order to make the community safer and improve the effectiveness of the justice system.

2.39 The strategy has four aims:

- Our People – developing, supporting and motivating staff.
- Our Services – focusing on the work NIPS and its partners do.
- Our Infrastructure – developing the estate and the use of technology to facilitate rehabilitation.
- Our Partnerships – developing and enhancing partnerships across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

2.40 We look forward to hearing about the progress of this strategy.

### **Recruitment and retention**

2.41 During oral evidence, NIPS told us that it was actively recruiting which had resulted in 236 individuals joining the Service in the last 15 months. Table 2.2 shows the number of applicants and direct appointments following external recruitment since 2008. NIPS evidence noted that the number of applicants had been falling as the Northern Ireland labour market has started to tighten. The Service was experiencing problems recruiting to the lower paid grades, particularly Prisoner Custody Officers (PCOs) within PECCS.

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<sup>33</sup> Department of Justice, (2018). *Prisons 2020*. [online] Available at: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/prisons-2020-way-forward> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

**Table 2.2: Applicants and direct appointments in external recruitment competitions, 2008-2018<sup>34</sup>**

Year	Competition	Applicants	Appointees
2008	Operational Support Grade	1884	59
	Night Custody Officer	(1027)	14
	Nursing Officer	28	4
2009	Operational Support Grade	(1884)	53
	Nursing Officer	27	6
2010	Gov in charge Maghaberry	2	0
2011	Cleaner	44	4
	Director General	8	1
	Head of Women's Custody	2	1
	Gov in charge Hydebank	2	1
2012	Higher Psychologist	15	4
	Senior Psychologist	4	0
	Director Finance and Corporate Services	-	1
	Director General	15	1
	Psychology Assistant	-	5
	Gov in charge Hydebank	1	1
	Dep Governor Hydebank	5	1
	Director of Offender Policy	2	1
	Director of Rehabilitation	4	0
	Custody Prison Officer / Prisoner Custody Officer – only PCOs appointed	2124	102
	2015	Prisoner Custody Officer	2078
Custody Prison Officer and Night Custody Officer		1730	148
Grade 6 Reducing Offender Director		-	1
2017	Custody Prison Officer, Night Custody Officer, and Prisoner Custody Officer	1699	158
2018	Custody Prison Officer, Night Custody Officer	957	n/a
	Prisoner Custody Officer (Driver Escort)	271	n/a
	Prisoner Custody Officer (20 and 35 hour contract)	403	n/a

#### Notes

1. Figures in brackets denote recruitment from the applicant pool of the previous competition.
2. The 2015 and 2018 competitions involved joint recruitment exercises across CPO and NCO grades. The 2017 competition was a joint exercise across CPO, NCO and PCO grades.
3. '-' denotes data unavailable to NIPS as these campaigns were run by HR Connect.
4. 'n/a' denotes data not yet available.

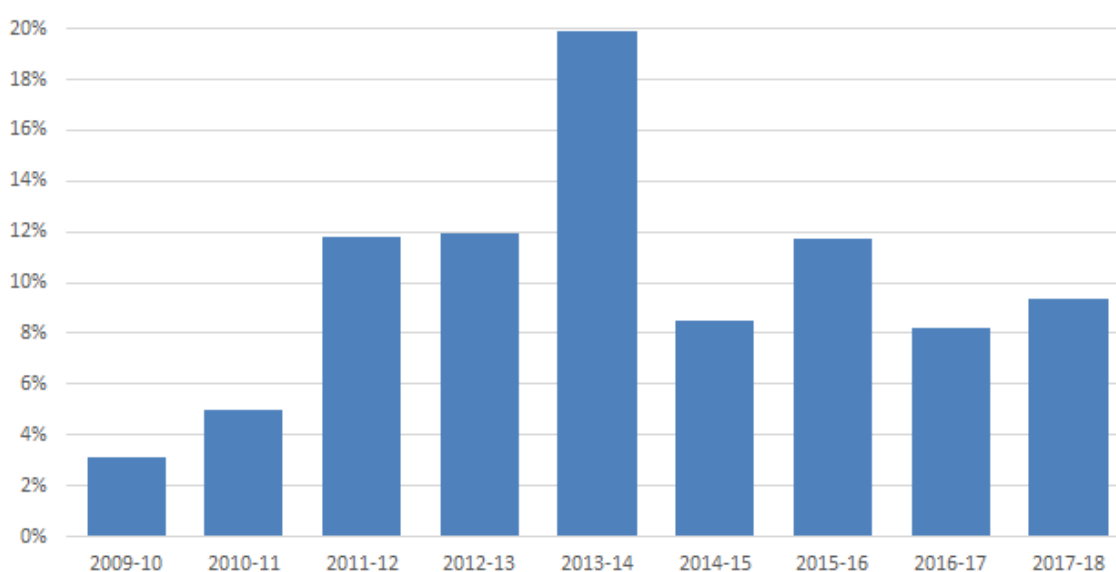
2.42 During oral evidence, the PGA(NI) said that there continued to be a good number of applicants for governor grade promotion boards but raised a concern about the number of staff on temporary promotion. There are currently 38 members of staff on temporary promotion across the three prisons, including six in the governor grades. The length of time for these individuals on temporary promotion ranges from less than six months to up to four years.

2.43 Figure 2.3 shows the percentage leaving rates for the eight years to March 2018. NIPS noted in its evidence that, although historically it had not had

<sup>34</sup> Data provided by NIPS.

a problem with retention, there has been an increase in turnover in recent years. Between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018, 115 members of staff left the Service, or 9.4% of staff in post (the corresponding figures for 2016-17 were 101, or 8.2% of staff in post). In 2017-18, 51 members of staff (44 per cent of all leavers) resigned while a further 42 (37 per cent) left through medical retirement. On 1 April 2018, there were 1,225.3 FTE staff, together with 18 agency workers within PECCS.

**Figure 2.3: Leaving rate of remit group staff (%), 2009-10 to 2017-18<sup>35</sup>**



2.44 Looking at leaving rates by length of service, 38 per cent of staff who left did so in their first four years of service, although this proportion varied by grade. In absolute terms, CPOs saw the highest number of leavers, with 44 members of staff leaving between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. During oral evidence, the PGA(NI) noted that it felt that the CPO starting salary was too low considering the risks faced in the role and staff were leaving for better paid or safer jobs that paid a comparable rate.

2.45 During oral evidence, NIPS reported that it was losing around eight to ten staff per month, although this was partly due to a significant increase in the number of medical retirements and permanent injury awards. The number of staff

<sup>35</sup> Data provided by NIPS. There was a NICS wide Voluntary Exit Scheme between March 2015 and May 2016.

leaving was not higher at any particular prison but spread across the estate. Surprisingly, NIPS informed us that there was no formal process to explore why staff were leaving as the NICS had no requirement to hold exit interviews. It reported that Governors at a local level collect anecdotal evidence and it was believed that a number of staff left to join the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI).

2.46 NIPS stated during oral evidence that it was not overly concerned at the overall rise in leaving rates, although it recognised that this presented capability issues and increased recruitment costs. However, turnover in the CPO and PCO grades was considered an issue. NIPS therefore targeted its proposals at the lower paid staff to improve their levels of pay in an effort to reduce their leaving rate.

### **Motivation and morale**

2.47 Our terms of reference require us to take staff motivation into consideration when making recommendations. The evidence we received on this issue took a variety of forms. We received updated information from the sources we regularly consider in this context: published statistics on assaults on staff, sickness absence data, union feedback, oral evidence, and information provided to us on visits by staff.

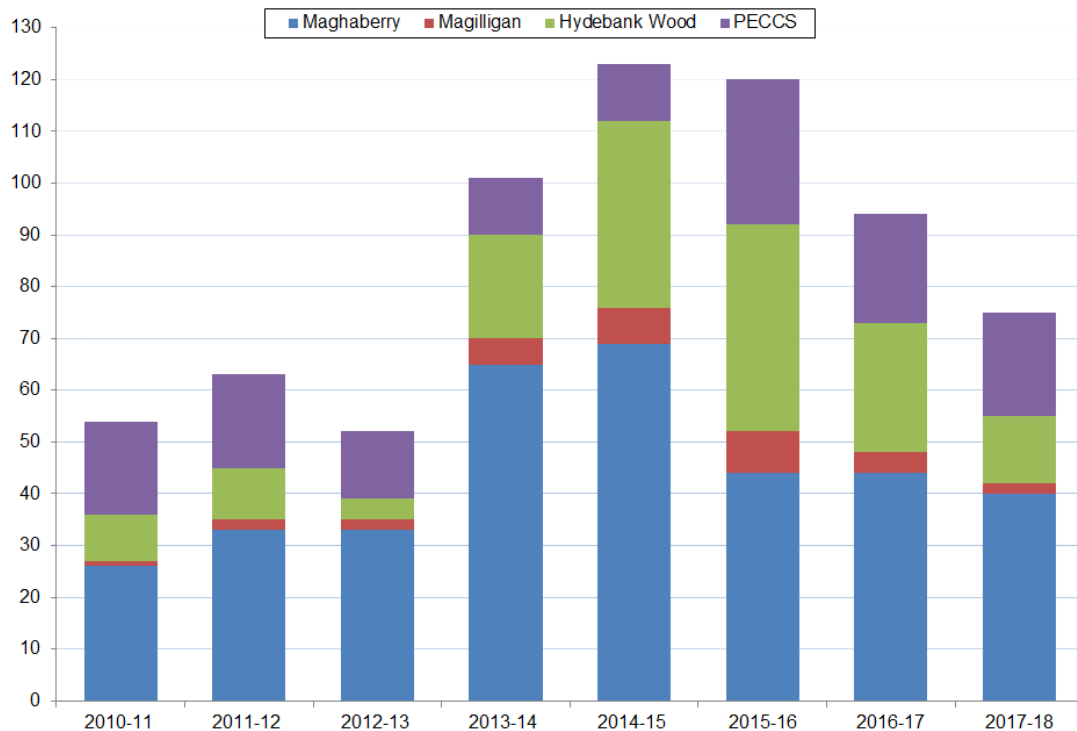
2.48 The overall picture from the range of evidence we received indicates that motivation is generally good in the Service but appears to be at a lower level amongst the staff who work in PECCS.

### *Assaults on staff*

2.49 Both NIPS and the PGA(NI) highlighted in oral evidence that, compared to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Scottish Prison Service, NIPS had fewer issues with drugs and violence. NIPS had not experienced the same impact from new psychoactive substances that had affected HMPPS in recent years.



**Figure 2.4: Assaults on prison staff by prisoners, 2010-11 to 2017-18<sup>36</sup>**



2.50 As demonstrated in Figure 2.4, the number of recorded assaults on prison staff has decreased each year since 2014-15. The total number of assaults in 2017-18 was 75, a 20 per cent decrease compared to the previous year. The total number of assaults on prison and PECCS staff by prisoners had also decreased at every site this year.

#### *The security risk in Northern Ireland*

2.51 As summarised in Chapter 1, the Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA) was introduced in January 2014 following our 2013 supplementary Northern Ireland report. The SRA was introduced “in recognition of the particular situation in which NIPS staff and their families live because of the jobs they do, and to compensate them for additional costs they incur”. This year, we heard extensive evidence both from staff on visits and the parties that staff still faced dissident threats as a result of the jobs they undertake. We are mindful that since our last report, a prison officer was murdered in 2016 outside his home by a device planted underneath his vehicle. This is the second prison officer to have died

<sup>36</sup> Data provided by NIPS.

because of their job at the hands of paramilitaries in the last six years and it was still painful and fresh in the minds of staff.

2.52 NIPS staff still have to check under their cars daily and take additional precautions when in public. Staff also have to take care where they choose to live and may be subject to higher housing costs in those areas considered to be safer. On our visits, we heard an example of a prison officer who had to move her young family away from their home and school at short notice because of a threat against her and her family's safety.

2.53 PECCS staff told us that they felt particularly at risk in their working environment as they are routinely in full public view alongside prisoners, both escorting prisoners that they are handcuffed to, and when working in the courts and visible to those in public galleries.

2.54 In gathering evidence from all the parties and from staff during our visits, there was a strong feeling that the SRA should be set at the same level as the Police Service Northern Ireland's Transitional Allowance (NITA).

#### *Staff survey*

2.55 As part of a wider Civil Service process, the NICS People Survey launched in November 2018 with the intention that it will be run as an annual survey. Although NIPS ran a series of focus groups across establishments as part of the development of Prisons 2020, it has not run a formal staff survey since 2015. This therefore remains the most recent data available on the views of NIPS staff.

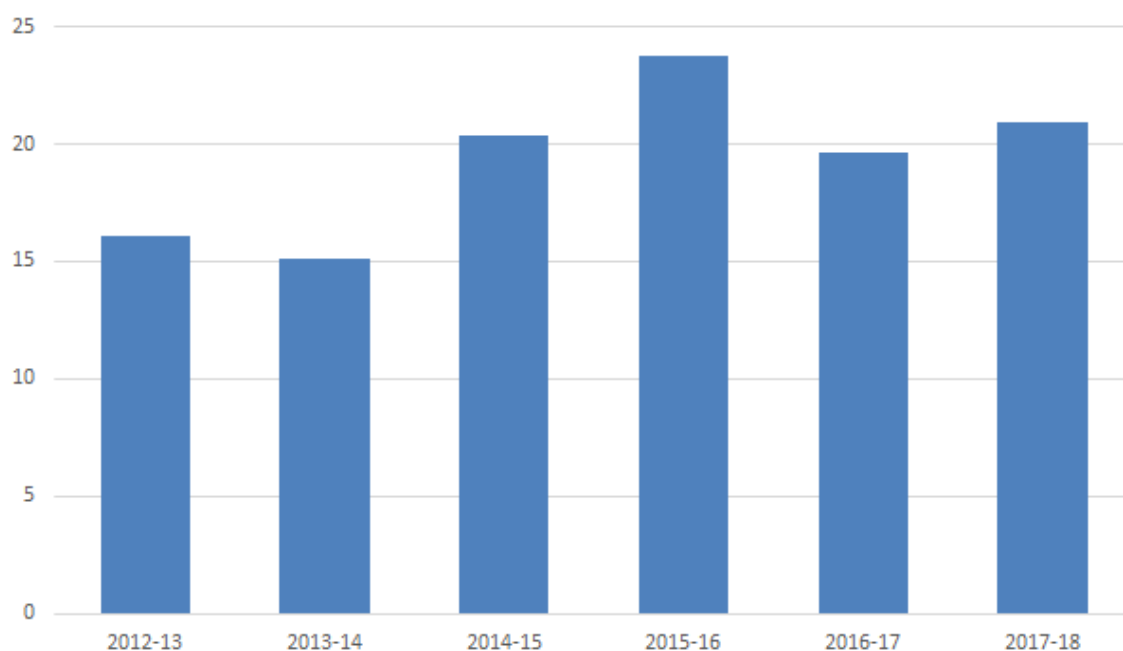
#### *Sickness absence*

2.56 Information on sickness absence is important as it significantly affects operational staffing levels. High levels of sickness absence are also an indicator of low morale and motivation. Figure 2.5 shows the annual average number of days of absence per staff member since 2012-13. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency recorded an overall provisional average figure of 20.9 days lost for prison grade staff in 2017-18, up slightly from 19.6 days in 2016-17. This is more than double that of average working days lost in the England and

Wales Prison Service in 2017-18 (9.7 days). NIPS shared in its evidence that 23.5% of prison grade staff had a long-term absence and the average duration of prison grade absences was 66.5 working days: 86.9% of all working days lost by prison grade staff were due to long-term absences.

2.57 NIPS said that reducing sickness absence has been and remains a priority for the NICS and it continues proactively to manage sickness absence in all instances through early intervention with absentees, regular contact with line management and engagement with Occupational Health Services and Staff Welfare Services.

**Figure 2.5: Average days absence per prison grade staff, 2012-13 to 2017-18<sup>37</sup>**



*Evidence from trade unions on motivation*

2.58 We did not receive any written evidence from the POA (Northern Ireland)<sup>38</sup> (POA(NI)) or separately from the PGA(NI) this year. During oral evidence, the PGA(NI) said that staff felt that morale in the Service had declined and reiterated the view that it was unrealistic to expect prison officers to work up until the age of 67/68.

<sup>37</sup> Data provided by NIPS.

<sup>38</sup> The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers.

## **Equality and diversity**

2.59 Our standing terms of reference ask us to consider:

*“Relevant legal obligations on the Prison Service in England and Wales and the Northern Ireland Prison Service, including anti-discrimination legislation regarding age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion and belief and disability.”*

2.60 We monitor the diversity of our remit group using the data available. The most recently available figures (1 April 2018) demonstrate that around 30 per cent of the remit group are female. While the percentage of female uniformed grades (31 per cent) has remained stable since 2016, the percentage of female governor grades (16 per cent) has increased (from nine per cent in 2015).

2.61 We note that 76 per cent of staff in the remit group defined themselves as coming from a Protestant community background, compared to 14 per cent that defined themselves as coming from a Catholic community background. The data indicated that 29 per cent of those identifying themselves from a Protestant background were female, compared to 40 per cent of those identifying themselves from a Catholic background. These figures are stable compared to recent years.

2.62 We would welcome data on all aspects of diversity from the parties for future reports, including plans to make the remit group as reflective as possible of the community as a whole.

2.63 A key theme in NIPS’s proposals this year was making adjustments to address disparities in the pay scales. NIPS stated that its proposals will address the following:

- The Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) exceeding the Senior Civil Service Grade 5 maximum. NIPS proposed to restrict further increases to the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) maximum by £200 to address this.
- The SO post-2002 (a management grade) starting salary being less than the MGO starting salary. NIPS’s proposals would reduce the differential between the maximum of the two.

- The current differential between the SO post-2002 pay scale maximum and the SO pre-2002 spot rate.
- The current differential between the MGO pre- and post-2002 scale with the CPO scale.
- The lack of alignment between the maximum of the OSG, PCO and NCO grades (when adjusted for different working hours). NIPS proposals would align these (after adjustment for the different working hours) and equalise the number of steps in their scales. This would allow for redeployment between the three grades to cover staff shortages.

### **Feedback from the visits round**

2.64 In July 2018, we visited Hydebank Wood College, PECCS Laganside Court, HMP Magilligan, HMP Maghaberry and the PECCS HMP Maghaberry base. We have grouped the issues raised in the discussion groups into main categories for ease of reference, although many span more than one group.

2.65 The main pay and allowances issues raised with us on our visits were:

- Staff were unhappy that the 1 April 2017 pay award was imposed and that it was non-consolidated for those at pay maxima or on spot rates, with no increases to the intermediate pay points (except for some scale adjustments).
- It was felt that other Northern Ireland public sector workers had received higher consolidated pay awards than operational prison staff. A lack of parity in awards across the public sector was a common complaint.
- Staff have seen their take-home pay eroded by a number of factors: low pay awards; non-consolidated pay awards; and increases in pension and National Insurance Contributions. Some staff reported that their take-home pay on wage slips was now lower than it had been 10 years ago.
- Pay levels in PECCS were considered to be poor and staff regularly reported that more could be earned working in other sectors, such as supermarkets or factories. Although the introduction of pay points for

PECCS staff in previous awards had been a good start, scales were still set too low and there were too few pay points.

- PECCS staff on 40 hour contracts only received 39 hours of this as pensionable pay. The remaining hour was non-pensionable<sup>39</sup>.
- CPOs earned too little for the job they did.
- Governor grades said they felt that the level of the newly introduced Governor on-call allowance was “derisory”, noting that it was set at a lower rate than the equivalent allowance for the NICS.

2.66 The main recruitment and retention issues raised were:

- Staff were concerned about the high turnover rates for CPOs. Many considered this to be as a result of low rates of pay.
- The quality of new CPOs was good and a number had degrees, but this meant that many saw NIPS as a stepping stone, usually to the PSNI or wider NICS.
- Staff routinely reported that the main competitor for CPOs was the PSNI, citing higher pay levels as the main reason for staff leaving. However, other public and private sector competitors were also mentioned.
- PECCS was currently going through a recruitment campaign for a significant number of new PCOs. Staff reported that turnover of staff was too high in PECCS which was linked to the poor levels of pay. PECCS needed better career progression to encourage staff to stay.

2.67 The main motivation and morale issues raised were:

- PECCS felt forgotten and marginalised by the Service. They did not feel respected by prison colleagues and this was evidenced when they were allowed to wear the same epaulettes as prison colleagues, only to have them taken away a day later. This has been both embarrassing and demoralising for them.
- NIPS considered staff to be Civil Servants when it suited its agenda and prison officers when it did not. This was particularly evident within

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<sup>39</sup> We welcome NIPS’s assurance in its evidence that it plans to address this anomaly from 1 April 2019.

PECCS, where members of staff were not allowed to apply internally for NIPS jobs.

- There was camaraderie between staff and a good sense of teamwork.

2.68 The main performance management issues raised were:

- The performance management system did not work and it was rare for staff to get anything other than a 'Good' performance marking.
- It was felt to be a "tick box" exercise by many staff with little opportunity for them to discuss their performance with their line managers.

2.69 Other issues raised on our visits were:

- Staff wanted to be paid an adequate rate for working Christmas Day and other public holidays.
- There was unhappiness in PECCS about the rota system for Saturday working. It was said that PECCS was organised around Monday to Friday working patterns despite staff being expected to work on Saturday to service the courts at Laganside.
- A number of staff in PECCS wanted longer than 20 hour contracts but this was not available to them under current arrangements.

### **The parties' proposals**

2.70 As noted in Chapter 1, NIPS and the PGA(NI) successfully concluded negotiations on the governor grade pay scales and the revised rates for the Governor on-call allowance. These were agreed in principle and set out in NIPS's evidence. The PGA(NI) therefore did not submit its own separate evidence to us this year. The key points in NIPS's evidence are summarised below:

- A consolidated increase for all staff, targeted to deliver more money to lower paid staff and that addressed the relativities between pay levels for different grades;
- Scales adjusted to ensure equal sized steps between pay points;
- A closer alignment of the number of steps on each scale (with the stated aim of reaching 5 points on all pay scales in the future);
- An increase to the SRA from £2,700 to £2,950 (a 9.3% increase);

- The introduction of a daily PECCS driver allowance;
- An increase in the three rates of on-call for specific rostered commitments for governor grades; and
- Restricting the maximum of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) scale until it is lower than the maximum of the scale for the Senior Civil Service grade to which it reports.

2.71 NIPS requested that, in making our recommendations, we reflect on the current grading evaluation of operational prison posts (also known as the grading review) and the need to therefore avoid introducing further complexities into the pay structure this year.

2.72 This year, for the first time, we received a written submission from Community. The union indicated that it was representative of the majority of workers within PECCS. The union does not currently have recognition rights for collective bargaining with NIPS.

2.73 Community made the following proposals in its written submission:

- A five per cent consolidated pay uplift to all grades and pay points. Incremental progression should be applied from 1 April 2018;
- All previous non-consolidated pay awards from 2012 to 2018 should be consolidated retrospectively into pay;
- The CPO pay scale be reduced to a maximum of four equally-spaced pay points;
- Each pay point should receive the annual pay uplift, not just those staff on maxima or on spot rates;
- The SRA be set at the same level as the NITA; and
- Community also asked for a number of terms and condition changes which are not within our remit, for example, a move from a 39 to 37 hour week.

2.74 We regret that we did not receive evidence from the POA(NI) this year. This was as a result of a motion passed at the POA's May 2015 Conference not to engage with us and to withdraw from the Prison Service Pay Review Body



process. NIPS attempted to negotiate with the POA(NI), but we were informed during oral evidence that those negotiations had produced no agreement.



## **Chapter 3: Our recommendations on pay and allowances for 2018**

### **Introduction**

3.1 This chapter summarises what we consider to be the key aspects of the evidence and then sets out our recommendations. These aim to address the key challenges we have identified this year: a lack of consolidated pay awards for operational staff since 1 April 2016; the emerging issues with recruitment and retention caused by the tightening of the labour market and an increase in leaving rates; and the low levels of morale and motivation, particularly for the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) grades. Where we feel that we need further information next year or see a need for longer-term action, we have addressed this in Chapter 4.

3.2 We are aware that we are submitting this 2018 report long after the pay award date of 1 April 2018. As we note in Chapter 1, this is a consequence of not receiving an activation letter until May 2018 and the subsequent delay this caused to our visits round and written evidence submissions. We regret that this will result in our remit group again receiving their pay award later than they should. In light of the current political situation in Northern Ireland, we are currently unsure when we will receive a remit to produce a report for 2019.

### **Analysis**

#### *The Northern Ireland Prison Service*

3.3 The Chief Inspector of Prisons, in his 2017-18 annual report<sup>41</sup>, noted considerable improvements at HMP Maghaberry and highlighted the excellent work being undertaken at HMP Magilligan. On a separate unannounced inspection in April 2018, the Chief Inspector highlighted that HMP Maghaberry had achieved some excellent outcomes, felt safer and calm, and praised the leadership at all staff levels. The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) has not faced the same levels of use of new psychoactive substances as has been

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<sup>41</sup> Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, (2018). *Annual Report 2017-18*. [online] Available at: [https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/07/6.4472\\_HMI-Prisons\\_AR-2017-18\\_Content\\_A4\\_Final\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/07/6.4472_HMI-Prisons_AR-2017-18_Content_A4_Final_WEB.pdf) [accessed on 14 December 2018].

experienced in the prison estate in England and Wales, and has seen a decrease in the number of recorded assaults on staff for the third year in a row. Staff spoke positively during our visits about their colleagues, working with prisoners, and about their roles.

3.4 NIPS has nevertheless recognised the need to drive continuous improvement throughout the Service and has developed a comprehensive three-year strategy - "Prisons 2020". We look forward to hearing about the implementation of year one of the plan next year.

#### *Context of Northern Ireland Prison Service pay*

3.5 We last made recommendations on pay for NIPS operational staff in 2013 and therefore were conscious when preparing this report that both public sector pay policy and the political situation in Northern Ireland have changed significantly since then. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the 2017 Autumn Budget announced a shift in the United Kingdom (UK) Government's approach in relation to public sector pay awards and a move away from the previous policy of awards of an average of one per cent. The position is somewhat complicated in Northern Ireland by the current absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive.

3.6 The Department of Finance (DoF) only published the Northern Ireland public sector pay guidance for 2018<sup>42</sup> on 22 November 2018. This new policy indicated that the DoF was also moving away from the one per cent pay policy and that future pay awards would be influenced by a range of factors including recruitment and retention. The DoF also recognised there may be flexibility in return for improvements in public sector productivity.

3.7 In its evidence to us this year, NIPS highlighted the ongoing grading evaluation of operational prison posts (commonly referred to as the grading review). There is no clear time frame for this review to be completed but NIPS informed us in oral evidence that it was making good progress with the majority of grades. While this review is ongoing, NIPS's pay proposals this year were

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<sup>42</sup> Department of Finance, (2018). *Public Sector Pay Policy set for 2018-19*. [online] Available at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/news/public-sector-pay-policy-set-201819> [accessed on 14 December 2018].

designed to start addressing differentials within the pay structure in a targeted manner. In that context NIPS requested that we avoid introducing additional complexities through our recommendations. The Prison Governors' Association (Northern Ireland) (PGA(NI)) informed us during oral evidence that it had adopted a neutral stance on the grading review but nevertheless felt that the review focused too much on comparing operational staff with Northern Ireland Civil Servants. We would like to continue to receive updates on the grading review.

### *Economic context*

3.8 As we describe in Chapter 2, the Northern Ireland economy has grown slowly but steadily over the past few years. The Consumer Price Index rate of inflation increased steadily over 2017 but fell sharply in the first four months of 2018, measuring 2.4% in April. The Northern Ireland seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period October to December 2017 was 3.9%, although this increased for the period June to August 2018 to 4.3%. We have limited economic evidence on average weekly earnings for Northern Ireland but, in April 2017, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings indicated that median gross weekly earnings for full time employees in Northern Ireland had increased by 1.5% over the year to £501 and median earnings of public sector employees were four per cent higher than in the UK.

### *Recruitment and retention*

3.9 Our remit requires us to consider the need to recruit and retain suitably able and qualified staff. In its evidence, NIPS shared its concern at the tightening of the labour market in Northern Ireland and a subsequent fall in the number of applicants for vacant roles.

3.10 The turnover rate has increased this year but remains below ten per cent. Staff on visits told us that many staff, particularly within PECCS, are leaving because of the rates of pay.

### *Motivation and morale*

3.11 Our remit also requires us to consider the morale and motivation of staff in our remit group. In the absence of any 2017-18 staff survey it is difficult to gauge

levels of motivation and morale within NIPS but anecdotal evidence from the parties and from staff on our visits indicated that motivation and morale was an issue, particularly for PECCS staff. We received strong feedback from PECCS staff themselves that they felt like the “forgotten service” and that they had been marginalised by the rest of the Service. Factors such as being required to apply externally for internal NIPS or Civil Service roles, working a 40-hour contract but only receiving 39 hours of this as pensionable pay, and the introduction and immediate removal of epaulettes for PECCS staff have only added to this frustration. It was evident to us that PECCS staff perform a high-risk role, escorting prisoners to and from court in full view of the public, and there is not always proper recognition of this risk. During our visits, we were impressed at the professionalism and cohesion of this group of staff and how they set out their case to us for pay and recognition.

3.12 When we spoke to staff on visits, we also heard about the impact of the imposed 2017 pay award on levels of motivation and morale more generally. Staff at all grades felt that certain aspects of the award were badly received and had damaged goodwill. Our evidence indicated that staff were increasingly demotivated by the decrease in take-home pay in real-terms over recent years, in part as a consequence of the previous public sector pay policy, limiting awards to an average of one per cent. In addition, they referred to a disparity between non-consolidated awards for NIPS operational staff, and some consolidated awards for non-operational Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) counterparts in prisons and headquarters. The levels of the new on-call allowance for governor grades were also regularly referred to as “derisory”.

3.13 We remain concerned at the high level of sickness absence among operational staff within NIPS which we believe is also a key indicator of motivation and morale. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the current level of sickness absence is 20.9 days lost for prison grade staff (for the year to 31 March 2018). NIPS assured us that this is largely due to long-term sickness absence cases, which it said it was proactively addressing.

3.14 We recognise that much of this evidence is anecdotal, both from the parties and from staff we spoke to during our visits. We are disappointed that

there have been no formal feedback mechanisms for staff since the NICS Staff Attitude Survey in 2015. NIPS informed us during oral evidence that it is now planning to implement the NICS People Survey. We encourage it to do so in time for our 2019 report so that we have more information next year on the levels of motivation and morale within specific groups.

### *Performance management*

3.15 One way of rewarding performance and motivating staff is through having a pay system that links pay to the performance management system. NIPS did not include any proposals in its evidence this year for performance-related pay. NIPS informed us in oral evidence that it was now aligned with the NICS performance management system and would shortly implement an electronic version of this system. NIPS acknowledged that the current system was not entirely satisfactory and tended to focus on the number of completed forms rather than the quality and effectiveness of conversations. During our visits, we heard from a large proportion of the staff we spoke to that the system did not work and that many staff were simply signing their forms without having a conversation about their performance. Staff also felt that poor performance was not being adequately challenged. The PGA(NI) informed us during oral evidence that the performance management system was “not as objective as it could be”.

3.16 As there is currently no formal staff feedback mechanism within NIPS, we have no data on how effective the system is in practice. We again encourage NIPS to put such a mechanism in place before our next report. We hope that the NICS performance management system will be improved to provide an opportunity to address some of the shortcomings of the current system.

### *Affordability*

3.17 In its evidence to us this year, NIPS asked that we have regard to public sector pay restraint still in force in Northern Ireland and pay guidance from Her Majesty’s Treasury. Subsequently, on 22 November 2018, the DoF published its pay guidance for the 2018-19 pay year. The guidance stated that Northern Ireland was maintaining the overarching policy set by the UK Government of moving away from the cross-public sector pay policy of limiting average awards

to one per cent in return for improvements to public sector productivity and where cases could be made on the grounds of recruitment and retention.

3.18 During oral evidence, NIPS said it was confident that its proposals were just deliverable within its current budget for the year but that this was an upper limit to what was affordable. NIPS stated that any alternative proposals we might recommend would have to be made within the same cost envelope. We return to the costing and affordability of the award at the end of the chapter.

### **Recommendations on pay and allowances**

3.19 As summarised in Chapter 2, we received joint proposals from NIPS and the PGA(NI) this year and written evidence from Community. We did not receive evidence from the POA (Northern Ireland)<sup>43</sup> (POA(NI)). We were also cognisant of the fact that the staff in our remit group are not permitted to take industrial action and that we are regarded as a compensatory mechanism (see footnote to Appendix A).

3.20 The NIPS evidence to the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) proposed that all staff in the remit group should receive a “fair and equitable” consolidated award but that more should be invested in the lower paid staff to improve their levels of pay. NIPS did not propose a percentage headline award, instead recommending restructuring and revalorisation by different amounts for individual grades. This approach was intended to address disparities in the length of pay scales and the value of steps within pay scales in anticipation of the conclusion of the ongoing grading review.

3.21 The PGA(NI) did not submit written evidence to us because it reached a joint agreement with NIPS. During oral evidence, the PGA(NI) confirmed that the NIPS proposals accurately reflected the agreement for the grades it represents and that it had achieved its three highest priorities: a consolidated pay award; a reduction in the number of pay points; and an increase in the Governor on-call allowance.

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<sup>43</sup> The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers.



3.22 Community proposed a five per cent uplift to all grades and pay points and asked that all previous non-consolidated awards from 2012 to 2018 were consolidated retrospectively into base pay. It requested that the Custody Prison Officer (CPO) pay scale be reduced to a maximum of four equally-spaced pay points and also asked that the Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA) be set at the same level as the Police Service Northern Ireland's Transitional Allowance (NITA).

#### *Overall approach*

3.23 As we indicated earlier, we see our recommendations this year, for a late award effective from 1 April 2018, as a response to the particular challenges in Northern Ireland. Our terms of reference require us to consider a number of factors, including the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified staff. Our recommendations attempt to address all three factors.

3.24 NIPS put costed proposals to us this year. We are broadly supportive of the aims of those proposals in relation to all staff seeing a "fair and equitable consolidated pay increase, better alignment of the pay scales, and changing the number of points on some scales. We also acknowledge the fact that NIPS and the PGA(NI) have reached agreement on the proposals that relate to the governor grades and we welcome this. Reflecting this, overall our recommendations broadly retain the NIPS proposals. They differ on two points of principle.

3.25 Firstly, we believe that all staff in post should receive consolidated increases of at least two per cent this year. After a long period of public sector pay restraint which has seen pay across the UK public sector limited to one per cent or less for a number of years or paid as non-consolidated awards, this year saw many groups in the public sector in the rest of the UK receive consolidated awards with a headline amount of two per cent. We believe that staff in the Northern Ireland Prison Service should be treated similarly. We have therefore adjusted NIPS's proposals to deliver this while staying within the same cost envelope. We believe that it is right to use more of the available money this year in this way. We consider this to be further supporting NIPS's priority of delivering "fair and equitable" consolidated increases for all staff. We have therefore made

recommendations that would result in all staff in post receiving at least a two per cent consolidated increase, after progression and the 2018 award. Our calculations suggest that the only exception to this would be one governor at the top of the pay scale where we concluded that we should honour this year the agreement between NIPS and the PGA(NI) that would deliver 1.9% to that point.

3.26 Secondly, we have concerns over the proposal to extend or create new pay scales for some groups of staff. We agree with NIPS's overall aspiration to reduce the length of some scales (and retain this in our recommendations) and accept the argument for introducing scales for the different grades of staff in PECCS (specifically to create headroom for these staff to progress in future years). However, we felt that some of the scales proposed had too many pay points. In our recommendations we have therefore restricted the scales for PECCS grades to four pay points, the same as NIPS proposed for the Night Custody Officer (NCO) pay scale. We believe this will still assist in sustaining motivation and allow NIPS to recruit and retain staff within these grades. We acknowledge that our proposals recommend a lower percentage change to the minimum for some grades than the NIPS's proposals, but this is balanced by shorter scales allowing staff to progress more quickly than proposed by NIPS.

### **Governor grades**

3.27 As mentioned previously, this year, NIPS and the PGA(NI) agreed joint proposals for the governor grade pay scales. These proposals ensure that all governor grades receive consolidated pay rises through increases to the band minimum and maximum and include increases to intermediate points that result in a reduced number of pay points with even steps for future progression. NIPS informed us in oral evidence that these proposals also aim to address the issue of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) being paid more than their line manager. The detailed joint proposals are as follows:

#### *Governor in Charge (Maghaberry)*

- A reduction in the pay scale from nine pay points to six.
- Increase the band minimum by 1.0% and the maximum by 0.2%.
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £1,300.

- Agreement that the maximum point of the scale will increase by £200 per annum from 2019 until 2021. All points below the maximum will be revalorised in line with other governor pay scales, if applicable to that year's pay award. Once the Senior Civil Servant Grade 5 maximum exceeds the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) maximum, the arrangement to restrict the maximum would fall.

*Governor in Charge (other posts)*

- A reduction in the pay scale from eight pay points to six.
- Increase the band minimum by 4.0% and increase the maximum by 1.9%.
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £1,300.

*Governor – Head of Function*

- Increase the band minimum by 2.0% and increase the maximum by 2.0%.
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £885.

*Governor – Head of Unit*

- Increase the band minimum by 2.0% and increase the maximum by 2.0%
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £770.

3.28 During oral evidence, we questioned the parties on the justification for these proposals. We subsequently discussed whether it would be preferable to treat all governor grades the same and apply a simpler award, in line with the two per cent figure we apply elsewhere.

3.29 We concluded that it was important on this occasion to follow the agreement between NIPS and the PGA(NI). We are conscious that it is not always easy to reach an agreement on joint proposals and we commend both sides for engaging in constructive dialogue on these issues. We felt that there were no compelling reasons for us not to follow this agreement for this award. The proposals deliver benefits to these grades and to NIPS and, importantly, the proposed awards deliver consolidated increases of at least around the two per cent level for staff in these grades.

3.30 We therefore recommend a consolidated increase for all governor grades in line with the joint agreement between NIPS and the PGA(NI), including the reduction in the number of pay points and even steps for future progression. The new scales are set out in Appendix D.

**Recommendation 1:** We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2018 the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry), Governor in Charge (other posts), Head of Function and Head of Unit pay scales are adjusted as set out in Appendix D.

3.31 In endorsing the joint proposals, we are concerned about the agreement to restrict the maximum of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) pay scale. Whilst we understand NIPS's desire not to have the pay scale maximum for this post exceeding the maximum of the scale for the Senior Civil Service post to which that Governor reports, we are not convinced that this is a necessary criterion. We consider that these roles are fundamentally different. The Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) is a high-profile operational post that oversees the largest and most complex prison in Northern Ireland. We endorse the proposals on this occasion because it is part of the agreement between NIPS and the PGA(NI) but we do not think it necessarily appropriate to restrict the maximum of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) pay scale beyond this 2018 report. We will consider the issue on its merits in future years.

### **Officer grades**

3.32 In its evidence, NIPS proposed consolidated pay rises for all officer grades of varying amounts. NIPS stated during oral evidence that these proposals sought to address relativities in the current pay structure: they would reduce the gap between the Senior Officer (SO) post-2002 pay scale and SO pre-2002 spot rate; and they would increase the starting salary of a SO post-2002 relative to the salary of a pre-2002 Main Grade Officer (MGO) which should encourage the latter to apply for promotion. NIPS's detailed proposals were:

#### *Senior Officer pre-2002*

- Increase the spot rate by 1.5%.

*Senior Officer post-2002*

- Increase the band minimum by 4.8% and increase the maximum by 4.8%.
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £910.

*Main Grade Officer pre-2002*

- Increase the band minimum by 1.5% and increase the maximum by 1.5%.

*Main Grade Officer post-2002*

- Increase the spot rate by 1.5%.

*Custody Prison Officer*

- Reduce the pay scale from seven pay points to six.
- Increase the band minimum by 2.0% and increase the maximum by 2.0%.
- Increase the recruit-to starting point by 5.0%.
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £920.

3.33 During oral evidence, we questioned NIPS on the justification for these proposals. We are sympathetic to and understand NIPS's desire to close the gap between the 'recruited-to' and 'not-recruited-to' grades. Nevertheless, all staff continue to make a significant contribution to NIPS and have seen limited awards in recent years. We also note that NIPS has not generally applied a differential award to these two groups in previous years and consider that this year, with basic pay generally increasing below the cost of living, there is no strong justification to apply a differentiated award. As summarised above, ultimately, we concluded that our priority this year should be to ensure that all staff saw a minimum increase of at least two per cent and that other objectives, such as closing the long-standing differentials should be secondary to that. This is what our recommendations seek to deliver, within an affordable cost envelope.

3.34 We therefore recommend consolidated increases for staff in the SO, MGO and Custody Prison Officer (CPO) grades as set out at Appendix D. These can be summarised as follows:

- On the scales for the not-recruited-to grades – SO pre-2002, MGO pre-2002 and MGO post-2002 – all existing points increase by around two per cent<sup>44</sup>.
- The maximum and minimum of the recruited-to SO post-2002 scale are both increased by two per cent, with four equally spaced intermediate points.
- On the CPO scale, the entry point increases by five per cent, and the main scale is increased by two per cent, and reduced to six equally spaced points.

3.35 We recommend that, following progression, staff should move onto the new scales to the first higher point that delivers them a total increase (following both progression and award) of at least two per cent.

**Recommendation 2:** We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2018 the Senior Officer pre-2002, Senior Officer post-2002, Main Grade Officer pre-2002, Main Grade Officer post-2002, and the Custody Prison Officer pay scales and spot rates are adjusted as set out in Appendix D.

### **Support grades**

3.36 NIPS targeted its proposals at the lower paid this year, primarily to deliver more money to the lower paid staff but also in a way that was intended to address the relativities that exist between the Operational Support Grade (OSG), NCO and Prisoner Custody Officer (PCO) grades. Through its proposals, NIPS aimed to align the maximum point, adjusted for hours, of the three pay scales which it anticipates will bring about greater operational efficiencies through the possibility of cross-deployment of these staff. This would also decrease the need to supplement the PCO workforce with agency workers and CPOs. NIPS's detailed proposals were:

#### *Operational Support Grade*

- Introduce a two point pay scale with a maximum of £21,000.

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<sup>44</sup> In calculating the values in Appendix D, we followed the NIPS approach of rounding figures to the nearest £5.

#### *Night Custody Officer*

- Introduce a four point pay scale with a maximum of £23,695 (equivalent to £21,000 on a 39 hour contract).
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £465.

3.37 Again we are recommending awards for support grades that retain key elements of NIPS's proposals but place a higher priority on sending a clear message that the basic increase this year is two per cent. Specifically:

- For OSGs, we recommend retaining NIPS's new maximum (set at a level to create equivalence in terms of hourly rates with the maximum rates for NCOs and PCOs), but not introducing the additional lower pay point that NIPS proposed. Our recommendations would see all OSGs moving to the proposed NIPS maximum – an increase of 2.44%.
- For NCOs, our recommendations follow NIPS's proposal for a four point scale with a maximum set to pay an equivalent hourly rate to that for OSGs and PCOs. NCOs will see a 2.1% increase on assimilation to that new scale.

**Recommendation 3:** We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2018 the Operational Support Grade spot rate and Night Custody Officer pay scale are adjusted as set out in Appendix D.

#### **Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service grades**

3.38 NIPS's detailed proposals for PECCS grades were:

##### *Principal Prisoner Custody Officer*

- Introduce a five point pay scale with guaranteed pay progression and increase the maximum to £26,840.

##### *Senior Prisoner Custody Officer*

- Increase the scale from three pay points to five.
- Increase the band minimum by 5.1% and the maximum by 10.1%.
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £435.

### *Prisoner Custody Officer*

- Increase the scale from three pay points to five.
- Increase the band minimum by 3.8% and increase the maximum by 9.3% to £21,540 (a level equivalent to £21,000 on a 39 hour contract).
- Change the step value of individual pay points to £410.

3.39 We applied a similar method to our recommendation for PECCS grades, as for the support grades. Whilst we retain key elements of NIPS's proposals, including significantly higher awards to the maximum of the three grades, we have applied basic increases of two per cent to the minimum. We also recommend restricting the PECCS scales to four pay points, the same as NIPS proposed for the NCO scale. This will mean quicker progression to the maximum and should assist in sustaining motivation, supporting NIPS to recruit and retain staff within these grades. Specifically:

- For PCOs, we recommend the creation of a new scale with four equally spaced pay points, one point fewer than in the NIPS proposals. The minimum will be 2.0% above the old minimum and the maximum set at the level NIPS proposed (which, again, was set at a value to create an equivalent hourly rate as for OSGs and NCOs). All PCOs would see increases of at least 4.0% following progression and assimilation onto this scale.
- For Senior Prisoner Custody Officers and Principal Prisoner Custody Officers, we recommend the creation of four point scales (again one point fewer than proposed by NIPS) with the minima two per cent higher than existing minima, the maxima set at the levels proposed by NIPS and two equally spaced intermediate points.

**Recommendation 4:** We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2018 the Principal Prisoner Custody Officer, Senior Prisoner Custody Officer and Prisoner Custody Officer pay scales are adjusted as set out in Appendix D.



## **Allowances**

### *Supplementary Risk Allowance*

3.40 This is the first report that we have produced since the inception of the SRA. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the security threat to staff working for NIPS is still a real and significant issue. We kept this at the front of our minds when reviewing the evidence from the parties this year.

3.41 There was an acceptance from all parties this year, including NIPS, that the SRA should be aligned with the NITA<sup>45</sup>. NIPS stated its commitment to match the SRA to the NITA in oral evidence but noted its need to phase this over a number of years due to budget constraints. NIPS informed us that it would be a trade-off between matching the NITA and giving all staff a consolidated pay award this year; it placed a higher priority on the latter. NIPS highlighted that the SRA had increased significantly since 2014. It proposed increasing the SRA by 9.3% from £2,700 to £2,950.

3.42 Governor grades (along with some of the older, not-recruited-to officer grades) previously had an allowance consolidated into their pay (for pre-2002 officer grades between 1994 to 1997 and for Governors 1 to 5 in 2006) and therefore do not receive the SRA. However, the PGA(NI) said during oral evidence that it could not understand why NIPS had not aligned the SRA with the NITA so that staff felt the value placed on their lives was equivalent to that of the Police in Northern Ireland.

3.43 In making our recommendations, we remain concerned that operational staff working in NIPS still face a real threat, not just to themselves but also to their families and home life. The Review Body is fully supportive of aligning the SRA to the NITA but, in reaching our decision, we had to balance this with our wish to give all staff a consolidated pay award. We listened to the parties' requests for consolidated pay awards to be prioritised and agreed this would be the appropriate way to target the money available this year following a period of

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<sup>45</sup> As at 1 September 2017, the NITA was £3,225. The Police Remuneration Review Body 2018 Northern Ireland report has not been published, therefore a decision on the 1 September 2018 rate has not yet been made.

austerity. We therefore endorse NIPS's proposals to uplift the SRA to £2,950, with a view to aligning it to the NITA as soon as possible.

**Recommendation 5:** We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2018 the rate for the Supplementary Risk Allowance is increased to £2,950 for all eligible staff. We also recommend that proposals are put to us that align the SRA with the Police Service Northern Ireland's NITA as soon as possible.

### *Governor on-call allowance*

3.44 This year, NIPS and the PGA(NI) agreed a joint proposal to increase the Governor on-call allowance<sup>46</sup> as follows:

- Weekday – increase the allowance from £4.95 to £11.65.
- Weekend and Privilege Holiday – increase the allowance from £14.14 to £18.65.
- Bank and Public Holiday – increase the allowance from £17.91 to £22.65.

3.45 During oral evidence, the PGA(NI) said it had been one of its top three priorities to see this allowance increased and, while agreeing with the proposals for this year, it highlighted that it was still not at the final level they would like it to be. The union claimed that many comparable allowances started at £15 and it would be aiming to achieve this in future years. NIPS informed us during oral evidence that this proposal was in line with the funds available and it would be open to reviewing the value in future years.

3.46 On consideration of this evidence, we endorse NIPS's and the PGA(NI)'s joint agreement to increase the Governor on-call allowance in line with the rates proposed.

**Recommendation 6:** We recommend that from 1 April 2018 the Governor on-call allowance rates are increased as set out in Appendix D.

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<sup>46</sup> Paid for on-call continuously from the end of one shift to the start of the next. This allowance is pensionable.

### *Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Services drivers' allowance*

3.47 In its evidence to us, NIPS presented proposals for an annual PECCS drivers' allowance. Just prior to oral evidence, following further discussion with PECCS management, NIPS revised its proposals from a two-tier annual allowance to a three-tier daily PECCS drivers' allowance (both non-pensionable). The rationale for introducing this allowance was to account for the long hours necessary to service the courts dispersed across Northern Ireland, the contractual requirement for the transport of prisoners to Lagside court on Saturdays, and to recognise that driving cellular vans is part of regular duties for some PECCS staff. NIPS told us that daily rates were preferable as PECCS management would then have the flexibility to rotate driving duties amongst PECCS staff, whilst also being able to reward court-based staff who undertook ad-hoc driving duties.

3.48 The detailed proposal was:

- Tier 1 (1 to 4 cell vehicles) - £4 per day when driving.
- Tier 2 (6 and 8 cell vehicles) - £6 per day when driving.
- Tier 3 (12 cell vehicles) - £8 per day when driving.

3.49 We agree with these proposals and therefore recommend the introduction of the three-tier daily, non-pensionable drivers' allowance for PECCS staff in line with the rates proposed by NIPS. This will further improve the earnings potential for PECCS grades.

**Recommendation 7:** We recommend the introduction of a three-tier daily, non-pensionable drivers' allowance for PECCS staff with effect from 1 April 2018. The daily rate for each tier is set out in Appendix E.

### *Other allowances and payments*

3.50 Our remit covers a range of different allowances for operational grades. A full list of the allowances we make recommendations on is at Appendix E. In its evidence this year, NIPS did not propose any changes to any other allowances and we did not receive evidence from any other parties to increase other allowances or payments. The money available this year is to be used to give: all

staff a consolidated pay award; increase the SRA and Governor on-call allowance; and introduce a PECCS drivers' allowance. We agree with this targeted approach and therefore recommend this year that other allowances remain at existing rates.

### **Affordability of our recommendations**

3.51 As stated earlier, we see our recommendations as a response to: a lack of consolidated pay awards for operational staff since 1 April 2016; the emerging issue with recruitment and retention caused by the tightening of the labour market and an increase in leaving rates; and the low levels of motivation and morale, particularly for the PECCS grades.

3.52 We estimate that our recommendations will cost the same overall amount as the NIPS proposals and, on that basis, estimate that the cost of our recommendations for base pay should be 2.1% of paybill, with the additional cost of the recommendations to allowances costing a further 0.7% (0.54% for the SRA, 0.08% for the PECCS drivers' allowance and 0.06% for the Governor on-call allowance). This results in an overall cost of our recommendations of around 2.8% of paybill. In line with our usual approach, we do not consider that progression costs, whether contractual or not, should be included in calculating the cost of the annual award.

3.53 The success of NIPS is wholly dependent on its staff. There are significant potential monetary and other costs, both to the Service and to society at large, if it proves difficult to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able people. Our recommendations should contribute to improving the productivity and efficiency of the Service, by directly improving recruitment and retention (and reducing the costs associated with managing these), and by improving the effectiveness of the pay structure to allow for cross-deployment of separate grades to address staff shortages.

3.54 We consider that our recommendations deliver a fair award to recognise the contribution and effort that staff within our remit group have made over the past year and offer value for money.

## **Chapter 4: Looking ahead**

### **Introduction**

4.1 This final chapter offers comments on a range of issues which we think the parties should give attention to over the coming year and address in their evidence to us for our next report.

### **Supplementary Risk Allowance**

4.2 As we note in Chapter 3, there is an acceptance by the parties that the Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA) be set at the same level as the Police Service's Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA). We therefore ask that the parties, in their evidence to us in future years, consider how this should happen and how parity might be maintained given the different pay effective dates for the two staff groups.

4.4 We noted in our 2013 supplementary report that we would review the SRA on a two-year cycle or if the security situation changed significantly. We now consider that we should review the SRA alongside the main pay award cycle on an annual basis.

### **Motivation and morale**

#### *People Survey*

4.5 As we note in Chapter 2, the information we had this year on motivation and morale – both views we heard from staff on visits and material provided by the parties in their evidence – was largely anecdotal. Monitoring motivation will prove particularly important with the Northern Ireland Prison Service's (NIPS) transformational changes as part of Prisons 2020. In our main 2013 report, we recommended that the parties work together to plan and pilot a staff survey and present the results to us. We did not receive evidence from the parties showing the result of this work.

4.6 We were pleased to hear that NIPS is now implementing the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) People Survey which should give improved information on staff views for the future. We encourage NIPS to report on this in

time for our 2019 report. We also ask that all parties provide evidence for our next report on the concerns, in terms of motivation and morale, that most affect staff in our remit group and proposals for how these issues can be addressed.

#### *Sickness absence*

4.7 As we previously noted, we are concerned about the high level of sickness absence among operational staff within NIPS. Although NIPS assured us in its evidence that it is proactively managing sickness absence, we ask that for our next report NIPS provides evidence to us on how this programme of work is progressing.

### **Recruitment and retention**

#### *Temporary promotion*

4.8 Data sent to us by NIPS on the composition of the staffing group indicated that there were 38 staff on temporary promotion. Of these, 15 had been on temporary promotion for over 12 months, including four who had been on temporary promotion for over three years.

4.9 The operation of a promotions policy is not within our remit and we note that temporary cover can be used for specific legitimate business requirements, such as maternity or secondment cover. Nevertheless, we are concerned that some individuals have been on temporary promotion for some considerable time. The pay structure needs to be able to incentivise staff to apply for substantive promotion. We would therefore like the parties to provide us with evidence for our next report on the issue of temporary promotion and whether there are any pay barriers or disincentives to applying for a substantive promotion.

#### *Exit interviews*

4.10 NIPS informed us that the overall leaving rate had risen this year. This reduces experience and leads to higher recruitment costs. NIPS told us in oral evidence that it does not conduct official exit interviews with the staff who are leaving, and that such information is only collected anecdotally by governors. We were surprised by this, since exit interviews can provide valuable data about why staff are leaving and help indicate when and where resources should be best

directed. We would encourage NIPS to consider introducing formal exit interviews for all staff who leave the Service.

### **Performance management**

4.11 As we noted in Chapter 3, NIPS acknowledged in its evidence this year that the current performance management system was not entirely satisfactory. NIPS did not present us with proposals to link the pay of staff to the performance management system. We are pleased that NIPS have acknowledged the shortcomings of the current system and plan to implement improvements over the coming year. We would like to receive evidence from all the parties for our next report on whether they consider the system fit for purpose for all staff in our remit group and in respect of the merits or otherwise of linking some element of pay to performance.

### **Industrial relations**

4.12 We were disappointed to receive no evidence from the POA (Northern Ireland)<sup>47</sup> (POA(NI)) this year, following the decision at the POA's May 2015 Conference not to engage with the Review Body. We believe this is a missed opportunity by the union particularly now that public sector pay policy is changing. Our recommendations directly affect POA(NI) members. We continue to believe there is mutual advantage in dialogue between ourselves and the POA(NI) as part of the process of collecting evidence and making our decisions.

4.13 We were however, pleased to see that the Prison Governors' Association (Northern Ireland) and NIPS worked constructively together and submitted joint proposals that will benefit all governor grades. Although industrial relations are a matter for the parties, good communications and relations with, and between, the parties are very important to us and this will continue to be the case.

### **2019 pay award**

4.14 We are mindful that there will be a serious delay in staff receiving the 2018-19 pay award. The current political situation in Northern Ireland may also affect whether the 1 April 2019 pay award is paid on time. This is unsatisfactory.

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<sup>47</sup> The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers.

Staff are working in difficult circumstances and should receive pay awards as close as possible to the due date. During oral evidence, we asked NIPS about recommending a two year pay award, in order that we get back to a more normal timetable. We were told that this would be difficult as NIPS did not know its funding arrangements beyond the current financial year. For our next report, we would like the parties to present evidence to us on the benefits of a longer than 12 month award, with appropriate compensation, that would allow our process to return to its normal timetable and ultimately ensure staff were paid in a timely fashion. As part of this evidence we would also like the parties to consider whether a 1 April pay effective date is still appropriate given recent delays.

4.15 In our 2013 report, and repeated in Chapter 2 of this report, we asked NIPS to investigate whether there were any further sources of economic data specific to Northern Ireland. We repeat this request and ask NIPS to provide us with any other available sources of Northern Ireland data that demonstrates the labour market within which the Service operates.

## **Conclusion**

4.16 We concluded this year that all staff should receive recognition in the form of a consolidated pay increase of at least two per cent for the difficult job they are doing in protecting the public and the prisoners in their care.



## **Appendix A: Standing terms of reference**

The role of the Prison Service Pay Review Body is to provide independent advice on the remuneration of governing governors and operational managers, prison officers and support grades in the England and Wales Prison Service. The Review Body will also provide independent advice on the remuneration of prison governors, prison officers and support grades in the Northern Ireland Prison Services.<sup>48</sup>

In reaching its recommendations the Review Body is to take into account the following:

- The need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified staff taking into account the specific needs of the Prison Service in England and Wales and the Northern Ireland Prison Service;
- Regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;
- Relevant legal obligations on the Prison Service in England and Wales and the Northern Ireland Prison Service, including anti-discrimination legislation regarding age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion and belief and disability;
- Government policies for improving the public services, including the requirement to meet Prison Service output targets for the delivery of services;
- The funds available to the Prison Service in England and Wales and the Northern Ireland Prison Service as set out in the Government's departmental expenditure limits; and
- The Government's inflation target.

The Review Body shall also take account of the competitiveness of the Prison Service in England and Wales with the private sector, and any differences in terms and conditions of employment between the public and private sectors taking account of the broad employment package including relative job security.

The Review Body may also be asked to consider other specific issues.

The Review Body is also required to take careful account of the economic and other evidence submitted by the Government, staff and professional representatives and others.

Reports and recommendations for the Prison Service in England and Wales should be submitted to the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice. Reports and recommendations for the Northern Ireland Prison Service will be submitted to the Minister of Justice, Northern Ireland.

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<sup>48</sup> The International Labour Office 336<sup>th</sup> Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association made clear that we are regarded as a compensatory mechanism for the condition that prison officers do not have the right to strike. As a result, whilst our recommendations are not legally binding, Government has confirmed that it would only depart from them in exceptional circumstances. We note this aspect of our role.

## Appendix B: Permanent Secretary's activation letter

**FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY**  
**Nick Perry CB**



Rm B5.10, Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST BT4 3SG

via email: [Elizabeth.Waterfall@beis.gov.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.Waterfall@beis.gov.uk)

Dr Peter Knight  
Chair, Prison Service Pay Review Body  
Office of Manpower Economics  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
LONDON EC4Y 8JX

9 May 2018

Dear Peter

### THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE 2018/19 PAY ROUND

I am writing to request the re-engagement of the Prison Service Pay Review Body to provide a Report and recommendations in respect of 2018 pay for operational staff in the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

In my letter of 18 January, I explained that Ronnie Armour, Director General of the NI Prison Service and I had both reluctantly agreed to withdraw the 2017 activation letter. I also explained that we both valued the significant benefits to be gained from the independent recommendations of the Review Body. Negotiations in respect of the 2017/18 pay round between NIPS Senior Management and the trade unions are ongoing. The Northern Ireland Prison Service will update you on the conclusion of those negotiations, but I am conscious that the 2018 pay remit now needs to be considered.

I would be grateful if you could consider when visits could take place and the timescales for evidence and reporting for the 2018 pay round. Following this, I would ask that your Secretariat liaise with the Northern Ireland Prison Service, to discuss the detail of any arrangements to be made in this respect.

Once the Prison Service has confirmation of the timescales involved for the 2018 pay round, Ronnie Armour will make a decision on whether to seek temporary approval from the Department of Finance for paying incremental progression for 2018.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Perry". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**N P PERRY**

## Appendix C: Chair's response to the activation letter



Office of Manpower  
Economics

PRISON SERVICE PAY REVIEW BODY  
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FLEETBANK HOUSE  
2-6 SALISBURY SQUARE  
LONDON EC4Y 8JX

Direct Telephone Line 020 7211 8257  
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Nick Perry CB  
Permanent Secretary  
Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate  
Belfast BT4 3SG

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/prison-services-pay-review-body>

16 July 2018

BY EMAIL

Dear Nick,

Thank you for your letter of 9 May, asking the Prison Service Pay Review Body to re-engage for the 2018-2019 pay round.

At the beginning of July, we visited Northern Ireland to meet the parties and to see the establishments and the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service to ensure our understanding of the issues was up to date and to hear evidence directly from staff. I have now asked our secretariat to liaise with Ronnie Armour and his team with the aim of commissioning evidence and producing a report for 2018 as soon as is practicable. Subject to finalising a detailed timetable, the Review Body is working towards submitting a report to you by the end of the year.

I am copying this letter to Ronnie Armour, Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Yours,  
Peter

*Dr Peter Knight*  
Chair, Prison Service Pay Review Body



## **Appendix D: Current and recommended pay levels**

### **Current and recommended pay levels for governor grades**

Grade	Current pay scale £ a year	Recommended pay scale from 1 April 2018 £ a year
<b>Governor in Charge (Maghaberry)</b>	82,170	82,375
	80,550	81,075
	79,750	79,775
	78,960	78,475
	78,177	77,175
	77,401	75,875
	76,633	
	75,873	
	75,120	
<b>Governor in Charge (other posts)</b>	73,629	75,035
	72,200	73,735
	70,900	72,435
	69,900	71,135
	68,900	69,835
	67,900	68,535
	66,900	
	65,900	
<b>Head of Function</b>	57,621	58,775
	56,300	57,890
	55,550	57,005
	54,800	56,120
	54,045	55,235
	53,300	54,350
<b>Head of Unit</b>	51,566	52,600
	50,550	51,830
	49,850	51,060
	49,160	50,290
	48,480	49,520
	47,810	48,750

## Current and recommended pay levels for officer and support grades

Grade	Current pay scale £ a year	Recommended pay scale from 1 April 2018 £ a year
<b>Senior Officer (pre-2002)</b>	41,651	42,485
<b>Senior Officer (post-2002)</b>	38,380	39,155
	37,460	38,270
	36,540	37,385
	35,620	36,500
	34,700	35,615
	34,050	34,730
<b>Main Grade Officer (pre-2002)</b>	38,116	38,880
	37,178	37,920
	36,809	37,545
	36,444	37,170
	36,083	36,800
<b>Main Grade Officer (post-2002)</b>	30,710	31,325
<b>Custody Prison Officer</b>	26,005	26,520
	25,300	25,600
	24,610	24,680
	23,785	23,760
	23,230	22,840
	22,260	
<i>Completion of Certificate of Competence</i>	21,500	21,920
	20,000	21,000
<b>Night Custody Officer</b>	22,299	23,695
		23,230
		22,765
		22,299
<b>Operational Support Grade</b>	20,500	21,000

Note:

All pay rates shown for officer and support grades are based on a 39 hour working week, except for Night Custody Officers that work a 44 hour week.

## Current and recommended pay levels for Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service grades

Grade	Current pay scale £ a year	Recommended pay scale from 1 April 2018 £ a year
<b>Principal Prisoner Custody Officer</b>	24,305	26,840
		26,160
		25,475
		24,790
<b>Senior Prisoner Custody Officer</b>	21,618	23,795
	21,299	22,995
	20,984	22,200
		21,405
<b>Prisoner Custody Officer</b>	19,711	21,540
	19,418	20,865
	19,126	20,190
		19,515

**Note:**

Pay rates shown for Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service grades are based on a 40 hour working week. Prisoner Custody Officer grades also work 35 hour and 20 hour contracts.

## **Appendix E: Current allowances and payments**

We make three recommendations on allowances: increases to the Supplementary Risk Allowance; Governor on-call allowance; and the introduction of a three tier daily allowance for driving cellular vehicles in the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service.

	Current level	Recommended from 1 April 2018
	£ a year	£ a year
<b>Supplementary Risk Allowance<sup>1</sup></b>	2,700	<b>2,950</b>
<i>Specialist allowances<sup>2</sup></i>		
Librarian	679	679
Dog Handler	723	723
Physical Education Instructor	723	723
Groundsman	723	723
Hospital Officer	814	814
Emergency Control Room Staff	852	852
Works Officer	949	949
Laundry Officer	1,062	1,062
Caterer	1,118	1,118
Weapons Officer	1,118	1,118
Fire Officer	1,132	1,132
Instructor	1,490	1,490
Firearms Officer	2,322	2,322
<i>Other allowances<sup>3</sup></i>		
Dog grooming allowance	4,526	4,526
Boot allowance	92.80	92.80
Clothing allowance	603.65	603.65
	Current level	Recommended from 1 April 2018
	£ a day	£ a day
Dirty Protest allowance		
For periods of up to 4 hours	8.00	8.00
For periods of 4 hours or more	16.00	16.00
<b>Governor grade on-call allowance</b>		
<b>Weekdays<sup>4</sup></b>	4.95	<b>11.65</b>
<b>Weekend and Privilege Holidays</b>	14.14	<b>18.65</b>
<b>Public and Bank Holidays</b>	17.91	<b>22.65</b>
<b>Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody</b>		
<b>Service drivers' allowance<sup>5</sup></b>		
<b>Tier 1: 1 to 4 cell vehicles</b>		<b>4.00</b>
<b>Tier 2: 6 and 8 cell vehicles</b>		<b>6.00</b>
<b>Tier 3: 12 cell vehicles</b>		<b>8.00</b>

Notes:

1. This allowance is paid to all officer and support grades, and Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service staff, except for pre-2002 Senior Officers and pre-2002 Main Grade Officers,

who already have a previous historical equivalent risk allowance consolidated into base pay. This allowance is non-pensionable.

2. Specialist allowances are not paid to new staff entering these specialisms. Those in receipt of allowances continue to receive them on a protected basis while they remain in their specialism. These allowances are pensionable.

3. Paid to all officer grade staff who meet the eligibility criteria for payment. These allowances are non-pensionable.

4. Paid for an on-call period, continuously from the end of one shift to the start of the next. This allowance is pensionable.

5. The Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service drivers' allowance is only payable when a period of driving has been undertaken on a specific day. This allowance is non-pensionable.



## Appendix F: Historical pay and allowance rates from 2013 to 2017

Pay and allowance rates from 1 April 2013 to 1 April 2017 for all staff in the Northern Ireland Prison Service Pay Review Body remit.

Grade		From 1 April 2013		From 1 April 2014		From 1 April 2015		From 1 April 2016		From 1 April 2017
		£ a year		£ a year		£ a year		£ a year		£ a year
<b>Governor 1</b>	Maximum	80,550	Maximum	81,356						
	Minimum	74,747	Minimum	74,747						
					<i>Replaced by Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) pay scale</i>					
<b>Governor in Charge (Maghaberry)</b>						82,170		82,170		82,170
						80,550		80,550		80,550
						79,750		79,750		79,750
						78,960		78,960		78,960
						78,177		78,177		78,177
						77,401		77,401		77,401
						76,633		76,633		76,633
						75,873		75,873		75,873
						75,120		75,120		75,120
<b>Governor 2</b>	Maximum	72,183								
	Minimum	67,983								
					<i>Replaced by Governor in Charge (other posts) pay scale</i>					
<b>Governor 3</b>	Maximum	62,766								
	Minimum	58,824								
<b>Governor in Charge (other posts)</b>				72,900		73,629		73,629		73,629
				72,200		72,200		72,200		72,200
				70,900		70,900		70,900		70,900
				69,900		69,900		69,900		69,900
				68,900		68,900		68,900		68,900
				67,900		67,900		67,900		67,900
				66,900		66,900		66,900		66,900
				65,900		65,900		65,900		65,900
				64,900		64,900		64,900		64,900

Grade		From 1 April 2013 £ a year	From 1 April 2014 £ a year	From 1 April 2015 £ a year	From 1 April 2016 £ a year	From 1 April 2017 £ a year
<b>Governor 4</b>	Maximum	55,407				
	Minimum	51,156				
			<i>Replaced by Head of Function pay scale</i>			
<b>Head of Function</b>			57,050	57,621	57,621	57,621
			56,300	56,300	56,300	56,300
	<i>Formerly governor 4 pay range</i>		55,550	55,550	55,550	55,550
			54,800	54,800	54,800	54,800
			54,045	54,045	54,045	54,045
			53,300	53,300	53,300	53,300
<b>Governor 5</b>	Maximum	50,396				
	Minimum	44,934				
	Trainee rate	37,551				
			<i>Replaced by Head of Unit pay scale</i>			
<b>Head of Unit</b>			51,055	51,566	51,566	51,566
			50,550	50,550	50,550	50,550
	<i>Formerly governor 5 pay range, pre-2002 and post-2002 principal officer spot rates</i>		49,850	49,850	49,850	49,850
			49,160	49,160	49,160	49,160
			48,480	48,480	48,480	48,480
			47,810	47,810	47,810	47,810
			47,150	47,150	47,150	47,150
<b>Principal Officer (pre-2002)</b>		45,110				
			<i>Replaced by Head of Unit pay scale</i>			
<b>Principal Officer (post-2002)</b>		34,964				

Grade	From 1 April 2013 £ a year	From 1 April 2014 £ a year	From 1 April 2015 £ a year	From 1 April 2016 £ a year	From 1 April 2017 £ a year
<b>Senior Officer (pre-2002)</b>	40,831	41,239	41,651	41,651	41,651
<b>Senior Officer (post-2002)</b>	32,442	38,000 37,300 36,650 36,000 35,350 34,700 34,050 33,400 32,770	38,380 37,300 36,650 36,000 35,350 34,700 34,050 33,400	38,380 37,300 36,650 36,000 35,350 34,700 34,050 33,400	38,380 37,460 36,540 35,620 34,700 34,050
<b>Main Grade Officer (pre-2002)</b>	Maximum 37,364 Minimum 35,724	Maximum 37,739 Minimum 36,083	38,116 37,178 36,809 36,444 36,083	38,116 37,178 36,809 36,444 36,083	38,116 37,178 36,809 36,444 36,083
<b>Main Grade Officer (post-2002)</b>	30,105 29,212 28,239 26,291 25,318 24,344 22,397	30,406	30,710	30,710	30,710

Grade		From 1 April 2013 £ a year	From 1 April 2014 £ a year	From 1 April 2015 £ a year	From 1 April 2016 £ a year	From 1 April 2017 £ a year
<b>Prison Officer Offender Supervisor</b>		27,000				
		26,500				
		26,000				
		25,500				
		25,000				
		24,745				
<b>Custody Prison Officer (regrade)</b>	Training complete	23,000	Training complete	23,230		
	Opt in	22,078	Opt in	22,299		
					<i>Subsumed into Custody Prison Officer scale</i>	
<b>Custody Prison Officer</b>				26,005	26,005	26,005
				25,300	25,300	25,300
				24,610	24,610	24,610
				23,785	23,785	23,785
		23,000	23,230	23,230	23,230	23,230
		22,500	22,725	22,725	22,725	22,260
		22,000	22,220	22,220	22,220	
		21,500	21,715	21,715	21,715	
<i>Training complete / certificate of competence</i>		21,000	21,210	21,210	21,210	21,500
		18,180	18,725	20,000	20,000	20,000
				18,925	18,925	
<b>Night Custody Officer</b>		21,859	22,078	22,299	22,299	22,299
<b>Operational Support Grade</b>		20,096	20,297	20,500	20,500	20,500

	From 1 April 2013	From 1 April 2014	From 1 April 2015	From 1 April 2016	From 1 April 2017
Grade	£ a year	£ a year	£ a year	£ a year	£ a year
<b>Principal Prisoner Custody Officer</b>	23,230	23,462	24,305	24,305	24,305
	£ per hour	£ per hour	£ per hour	£ per hour	£ a year
<b>Senior Prisoner Custody Officer</b>	9.85	9.95	10.05	10.05	21,618 21,299 20,984
<b>Prisoner Custody Officer</b>	8.98	9.07	9.16	9.16	19,711 19,418 19,126
	From 1 January 2014	From 1 April 2014	From 1 April 2015	From 1 April 2016	From 1 April 2017
Allowance	£ a year	£ a year	£ a year	£ a year	£ a year
<b>Supplementary risk allowance</b>	1,320	2,000	2,000	2,460	2,700

Note:  
All other allowances were frozen during this period at 1 April 2013 levels.

## **Appendix G: Details of pay awards from 2014 to 2017**

Details of negotiated and imposed pay awards from 2014 to 2017

<b>Pay year from 1 April</b>	<b>Officer, support grade and PECCS pay awards</b>	<b>Governor grade pay awards</b>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-2002 Senior Officer (SO) spot rate increased by 1%.</li> <li>• Post-2002 SO nine point pay scale introduced.</li> <li>• All maxima and spot rates for Main Grade Officers (MGOs) pre- and post-2002, Night Custody Officer (NCO) and Operational Support Grade (OSG) increased by 1%.</li> <li>• Custody Prison Officer (CPO) pay points to increase by 1% with a 3% increase on the minimum.</li> <li>• Principal Prisoner Custody Officer (PPCO) spot rate, Senior Prisoner Custody Officer (SPCO) and Prisoner Custody Officer (PCO) hourly rates increased by 1%.</li> <li>• One pay point contractual progression for staff below the maxima.</li> <li>• Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA) increased to £2,000 a year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor 1 pay scale maximum increased by 1%.</li> <li>• Governor 2 and 3 pay scales replaced by a new Governor in Charge (other posts) pay scale.</li> <li>• Governor 4 pay scale replaced by a new Head of Function pay scale.</li> <li>• Governor 5 pay scale and the pre- and post-2002 Principal Officer spot rates replaced by Head of Unit pay scale.</li> <li>• One pay point contractual progression for staff below the maxima.</li> </ul>
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-2002 SO spot rate and post-2002 scale maximum increased by 1%.</li> <li>• All maxima and spot rates for MGOs pre- and post-2002, NCO and OSG increased by 1%.</li> <li>• Unoccupied Prisoner Officer Offender Supervisor pay scale abolished.</li> <li>• CPO pay scale repositioned from a 6 to an 11 point pay scale.</li> <li>• PPCO spot rate, SPCO and PCO hourly rates increased by 1%.</li> <li>• One pay point contractual progression for staff below the maxima.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor 1 pay scale replaced by a new Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) pay scale.</li> <li>• All other governor grade pay scale maxima increased by 1%.</li> <li>• One pay point contractual progression for staff below the maxima.</li> </ul>
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% non-consolidated payment for all staff on pay maxima, spot rates and hourly rates of pay.</li> <li>• One pay point contractual progression for staff below the maxima.</li> <li>• SRA increased to £2,460 a year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% non-consolidated payment for all staff on pay scale maxima.</li> <li>• One pay point contractual progression for staff below the maxima.</li> </ul>

<b>Pay year from 1 April</b>	<b>Officer, support grade and PECCS pay awards</b>	<b>Governor grade pay awards</b>
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% non-consolidated payment for all staff on pay maxima and spot rates.</li> <li>• Post-2002 SO pay scale shortened and pay points repositioned.</li> <li>• Number of CPO pay points reduced and scale repositioned.</li> <li>• SPCO and PCO hourly rates of pay replaced by three point pay scales.</li> <li>• One pay point contractual progression for staff below the maxima.</li> <li>• SRA increased to £2,700 a year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% non-consolidated payment for all staff on pay scale maxima.</li> <li>• Governor in Charge and Head of Unit pay scale minima removed.</li> <li>• One pay point contractual progression for staff below the maxima.</li> <li>• Introduction of a three tier on-call allowance for governor grades.</li> </ul>