



Prison Service
Pay Review Body

Prison Service Pay Review Body

Eleventh Report on
Northern Ireland 2019

Chair: Jerry Cope



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on

Northern Ireland

2019

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Presented to the
Permanent Secretary, Department of Justice
July 2019



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Glossary of Terms

CPI	Consumer Prices Index
CPIH	Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs
CPO	Custody Prison Officer
DoF	Department of Finance (Northern Ireland)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
HoU	Head of Unit
ILO	International Labour Organization
MGO	Main Grade Officer
NCO	Night Custody Officer
NICEI	The Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
NITA	Police Service of Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance
OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
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
PPCO	Principal Prisoner Custody Officer

PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PSPRB	Prison Service Pay Review Body
SO	Senior Officer
SPCO	Senior Prisoner Custody Officer
SRA	Supplementary Risk Allowance

The Northern Ireland Prison Service and our remit group

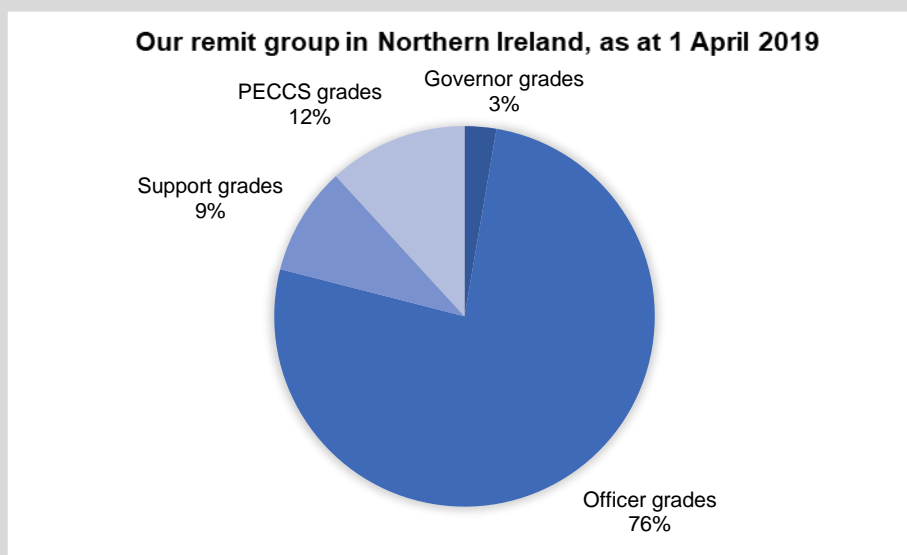
The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is responsible for the operation and delivery of services within the Northern Ireland prison system. Its main statutory duties are set out in the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953. It is an Executive Agency of the Department of Justice.

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 at 30 April 2019 was 1,486 (2.3% lower than a year earlier).

NIPS paybill costs relating to the remit group in 2018-19 were approximately £53.5 million (including social security and other pension costs).

At 1 April 2019 there were 1,261 staff (headcount) in our remit, up from 1,255 a year earlier. The composition is below.



	<i>Headcount</i>
Governor grades	34
Officer grades ¹	962
Support grades ²	116
Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service grades ³	149

Source: NIPS

Note:

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.

Executive Summary

Our recommendations for 2019 are:

Recommendation 1: We recommend that with effect from 1 September 2019 the rate for the Supplementary Risk Allowance is aligned with the Police Service of Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance for all eligible staff. We also recommend that the Supplementary Risk Allowance changes in line with the Police Service of Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance on 1 September in future years. We will review this position in light of significant or structural changes.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2019 all staff in the Senior Officer pre-2002, Senior Officer post-2002, Main Grade Officer pre-2002, Main Grade Officer post-2002, Custody Prison Officer, Operational Support Grade, Night Custody Officer, Principal Prisoner Custody Officer, Senior Prisoner Custody Officer and Prisoner Custody Officer grades receive a consolidated, pensionable increase of £500. The pay scales and spot rates for these grades to be adjusted as set out in Appendix E.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2019 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 E, delivering uplifts of 2.0% to all staff.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that from 1 April 2019 the governor on-call allowance rates are increased as set out in Appendix F.

Introduction

This report sets out our recommendations on pay and allowances for operational prison staff from 1 April 2019. We have made recommendations for our remit group based on the evidence we received. The objectives we have set out to address this year are:

- To align the Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA) to the Police Service of Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA), recognisingz this is a priority

for all the parties this year.

- To maintain the competitiveness of our remit group's pay scales in a tight labour market by providing all staff with a consolidated pay increase.
- To target pay at the lowest paid staff and recruitment grades to support the recruitment and retention of staff.
- To recognise the Northern Ireland Prison Service's (NIPS) affordability constraints.

We ask that the Government consider this year's recommendations and publish our report in good time to ensure staff receive their pay award without delay.

Role of the Prison Service Pay Review Body

The Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) was established under statute in 2001 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. It was set up by the Government as a compensatory mechanism for the removal of our remit group's right to take industrial action of any form. This was reinforced in the 336th report of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2005, in which the Government gave a clear and unequivocal commitment to depart from the PSPRB's recommendations only in "exceptional circumstances" and agreed that such recommendations would be complied with in practice. This commitment by the Government to the ILO remains.

Our remit and approach this year

In the absence of a Justice Minister in Northern Ireland, the Permanent Secretary wrote to our Chair on 4 March 2019 asking us to commence our work for pay effective 1 April 2019. The letter asked us, when formulating our recommendations, to be cognisant of the Northern Ireland public sector pay guidance, to ensure the award is affordable within the existing NIPS budget, and to make further progress on addressing relativities and lower paid staff through a targeted approach to pay.

NIPS subsequently entered into negotiations with the Prison Governors' Association

Northern Ireland (PGA(NI)) and the POA Northern Ireland (POA(NI))¹ in an attempt to reach an agreement on pay for 2019. NIPS and the PGA(NI) successfully concluded negotiations, agreeing in principle proposals on governor grade pay scales and revised rates for the governor on-call allowance. This agreement was set out in the NIPS evidence to us, as was the final offer put to the POA(NI). Regrettably, the POA(NI) continues to maintain its position of not engaging with us and declined our invitations to submit written evidence and to attend an oral evidence session.

2019 pay award

A key priority this year has been to align the SRA to the NITA, given the strength of feeling among staff, management and the unions about achieving parity. Operational staff working in NIPS face a threat when at work and also in their home life with their families. We are fully supportive of aligning the SRA to the NITA and concluded this is an appropriate way to target the money available this year. We believe that the best way to achieve parity is to align the SRA to the NITA from 1 September 2019, the pay settlement date of the NITA.

This year, we also wanted to recognise frontline staff at all grades who are continuing to carry out demanding roles in the face of difficult conditions. We have had to find a balance between achieving parity between the SRA and the NITA, and providing a reasonable and affordable consolidated award for staff. As part of the negotiations between NIPS and the POA(NI), the union requested that all uniformed grades be paid a flat rate consolidated increase, as opposed to a percentage increase. NIPS subsequently endorsed this in its proposals to us. We were persuaded by this approach as it delivers a fair award that benefits staff at all grades, while targeting pay at the lowest paid. We therefore recommend a consolidated increase of £500 for all uniformed grade pay scales and spot rates.

The joint proposals submitted by NIPS and the PGA(NI) this year ensure that all staff within the governor grades receive consolidated pay rises of two per cent and increases to the three governor on-call rates. We considered it was important to

¹ The professional trades union for prison, correctional and secure psychiatric workers.

acknowledge the agreement between the two parties and there was no compelling reason for us not to follow this agreement. We therefore endorse the NIPS and PGA(NI) joint agreement as presented to us in the NIPS written evidence.

In its evidence to us this year, NIPS presented a number of proposals to extend pay scales for some groups of staff in 2020. We were concerned at the lack of evidence, rationale and market justification for some of these proposed changes and do not agree with the introduction of longer and uneven pay scales. We have therefore not endorsed these changes and believe that no significant changes should be made to the pay scales this year in advance of the completion of the grading review in March 2020.

Cost of our recommendations

We were mindful to pay particular attention to the issue of affordability when determining our recommendations. NIPS informed us in its written evidence that its proposals (costed at 3.9% of paybill including progression) represented the absolute maximum of its budget and that it was confident that an award within this cost envelope was consistent with emerging pay guidelines and was affordable.

We have calculated that our recommendations will cost the same overall amount this year as the NIPS proposals and will therefore result in an overall cost of our recommendations of 3.9% of paybill including progression, or 2.4% when progression is excluded.

We are aware that NIPS faces financial pressures within its current resources, however we believe that there are strong value for money justifications for our recommendations. They strike a fair balance and represent an appropriate level of investment in operational prison staff for the contribution they have made over the past year, and will need to make going forward.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead to the next pay round, we have asked the parties to address several issues, including those covering motivation, morale, recruitment and retention, in evidence for our 2020 report so that we may consider them more fully.

We regret that our remit group will receive their pay award later than usual again this year. We therefore ask the parties to consider a change in pay settlement date or a longer pay award mandate to enable us to deliver future reports in time for a 1 April implementation date.

We are keen to see the completion of the grading review before the next financial year begins and ask that NIPS take account of the findings in its evidence to us for the next round.

Conclusion

The staff in our remit group are responsible for delivering a vital public service that carries an ongoing security threat, which affects the working and home lives of staff. Our overarching priority this year was to align the SRA to the NITA, and we anticipate this will be welcomed by all parties. We also consider that all staff should receive financial recognition for the difficult job they are doing in protecting prisoners in their care and the public. Our recommendations should contribute to improving the productivity and efficiency of the Service, assist with the recruitment and retention of staff, and thereby also support the Government's crime reduction and prisoner rehabilitation objectives.

Jerry Cope (*Chair*)

Mary Carter

Nicholas Caton

Luke Corkill

Professor Andrew Dickerson

Leslie Manasseh MBE

Paul West QPM

Chapter 1: Introduction

Our role

1.1 The Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) was established under statute² 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) 2012³. We have standing terms of reference (at Appendix A) which supplement our statutory remit.

1.2 The PSPRB was set up in 2001 as a compensatory mechanism for the removal of our remit group's right to take industrial action of any form. This was outlined in the 336th report⁴ in 2005 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), in which the Government gave a clear and unequivocal commitment to depart from the PSPRB's recommendations only in "exceptional circumstances" and agreed that such recommendations would be complied with in practice. This pledge by the Government to the ILO has not been rescinded. Therefore, this places a responsibility on us, that we take very seriously when formulating our recommendations. We consider that, if the Government does decide to reject any of our recommendations, the remit group should receive a full explanation of the "exceptional circumstances" that have led to that outcome.

Outcome of our 2018 report

1.3 In our 2018 Northern Ireland report⁵, we recommended that all staff should receive a consolidated increase of at least two per cent. We also made recommendations relating to changes in the number of pay points for some pay scales and a number of allowances.

² Legislationline, (2001). *The Prison Service (Pay Review Body) Regulations 2001* (SI 2001 No.1161). (online) Available at: <https://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/7249> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

³ Legislationline, (2012). *Prison Service (Pay Review Body) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012*. (online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2012/191/made> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

⁴ The International Labour Organization, (2005). *336th report of the Committee on Freedom of Association*. (online) Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09604/09604\(2005-88-series-B\).pdf](https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09604/09604(2005-88-series-B).pdf) [accessed on 29 July 2019].

⁵ Prison Service Pay Review Body, (2019). *PSPRB Tenth Report on Northern Ireland: 2018*. (online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/psprb-tenth-report-on-northern-ireland-2018> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

1.4 In response to our 2018 report, the Government partially rejected our recommendations, implementing a consolidated increase of 1.5% (rather than the 2.0% award recommended by us) for Senior Officer pre-2002, Main Grade Officer (MGO) pre-2002 and MGO post-2002 grades. All other recommendations were accepted. The Permanent Secretary for the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland, Peter May, wrote to us on 28 February 2019 outlining that Departmental planning assumptions were predicated on a 1.0% pay increase and that there was a need to ensure consistency of approach across the wider Northern Ireland public sector and with Her Majesty's Treasury pay guidance (providing awards in the range of 1.0% to 1.5%). The Permanent Secretary added that our proposed overall consolidated increase was outside the range of the wider public sector in Northern Ireland. A copy of this letter is at Appendix B.

1.5 Our Chair responded (see Appendix C), highlighting that our recommendations were constructed to require the same total paybill increase as the Northern Ireland Prison Service's (NIPS) proposals, which both the Permanent Secretary and NIPS management had informed us was affordable. We are therefore very disappointed at this outcome. In considering our 2019 and subsequent reports, we ask the Government to be mindful of both our role and its commitment to the ILO.

Our remit this year

1.6 In the absence of a Justice Minister in Northern Ireland, the Permanent Secretary wrote to our Chair on 4 March 2019 asking us to commence our work for pay effective 1 April 2019. The letter asked us, when formulating our recommendations, to be cognisant of the Northern Ireland public sector pay guidance, to ensure the award is affordable within the existing NIPS budget, and to make further progress on addressing relativities and lower paid staff through a targeted approach to pay. It contained no restrictions on our remit. A copy of the letter from the Permanent Secretary can be found at Appendix D.

Our evidence base

1.7 Following receipt of the activation letter, we undertook a full visit programme to Northern Ireland in April 2019. We visited staff at Maghaberry and Magilligan prisons, Hydebank Wood College, the Prison Service College and the

Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) based at Maghaberry prison. As in previous years, these visits gave us a valuable opportunity to meet remit group staff at all levels and hear their views and concerns. We place great importance on our visits as it provides us with an evidence base which complements and allows us to test the written and oral evidence from the parties. We know that arranging our visits requires considerable effort and we thank all of those involved for making this possible.

1.8 Our secretariat invited all the parties who represent our remit group to submit written evidence by 17 May 2019. NIPS subsequently informed us that it had entered into negotiations with the Prison Governors' Association Northern Ireland (PGA(NI)) and the POA Northern Ireland (POA(NI)) in an attempt to reach an agreement on pay for 2019. NIPS and the PGA(NI) successfully concluded negotiations, agreeing in principle proposals on governor grade pay scales and revised rates for the governor on-call allowance. This agreement was set out in NIPS's evidence to us. NIPS and the POA(NI) agreed in principle to increase the Supplementary Risk Allowance and future changes to the pay scales but were unable to reach a final agreement on the value of a consolidated pay increase for officer, support and PECCS staff. The final offer put to the POA(NI) by NIPS was reflected in the NIPS written evidence.

1.9 Regrettably the POA continues to maintain its position of not engaging with us, as mandated by the membership vote at its 2015 conference. 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.

1.10 We heard representations in oral evidence sessions from:

- NIPS officials, led by the Director General, Ronnie Armour; and
- The PGA(NI), led by Gary Alcock.

1.11 For the second year we also received written representations from the Community trade union.

Chapter 2: Context and evidence

Economic context⁶

Growth and inflation

2.1 The Northern Ireland economy has grown slowly but steadily over the past few years. The Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI)⁷ calculations show that economic activity grew at an annualised rate of 1.8%, 0.5% and 1.2% in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively⁸. Corresponding figures for UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) were 1.8%, 1.8% and 1.4%.

2.2 The year 2018 was the first year since records began (in 2006) that the NICEI grew in every quarter; with five consecutive quarters of growth, the period to Q4 2018 represents the joint longest period of continuous economic growth on record for Northern Ireland.

2.3 Between the second quarter of 2009 (which marked the most severe point of the UK recession) and the final quarter of 2018, the economy of Northern Ireland grew by a cumulative 1.9%; the equivalent figure for the UK, over the same period, was 19.5%.

2.4 In terms of future prospects, available only for the UK more widely, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expects GDP to grow at a rate of 1.2% in 2019, increasing to 1.4% in 2020 and then again to 1.6% in 2021⁹.

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), fell gradually over 2018 (measuring 3.0% in January and 2.1% in December). The Consumer Prices

⁶ We have used published data that were available at the time of reaching our decisions at the beginning of July 2019.

⁷ 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).

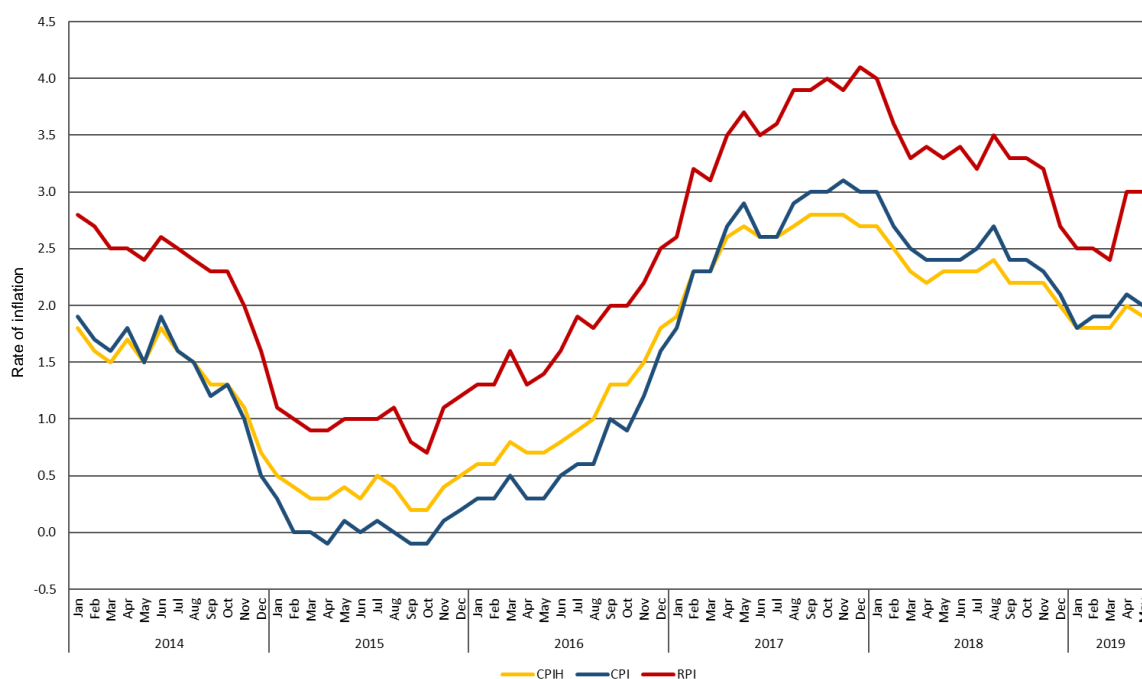
⁸ NISRA, (2019). *NICEI Publication and Tables Q4 2019*. (online) Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/nicei-publication-and-tables-q4-2018> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

⁹ OBR, (2019). *Economic and Fiscal Outlook March 2019*. (online) Available at: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2019/> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) was 2.0% in December 2018.

2.6 CPI inflation fell slightly in January 2019, down to 1.8%, before increasing again to 2.0% in May. CPIH inflation experienced a similar initial drop, down to 1.8% in January, and stands at 1.9% as of May 2019. The OBR expects CPI inflation to pick up to 2.2% in the second quarter of 2019, but it is then expected to fall back to 1.8% in Q1 and Q2 2020, before returning to its long-run target of 2.0% by 2021.

Figure 2.1: Inflation (CPIH, CPI and RPI) percentage change over 12 months, January 2014 to May 2019¹⁰



Labour market¹¹

2.7 The Northern Ireland seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period February to April 2019 was 3.1%, having fallen from 3.3% a year earlier.

¹⁰ ONS, (2019). *Inflation and Price Indices (Data series: RPI (CZBH), CPI (D7G7) and CPIH (L550))*. (online) Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

¹¹ NISRA, (2019). *Labour Force Survey*. (online) Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/labour-market-report-june-2019> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

The unemployment rate for the UK was 3.8% for February to April 2019, down from 4.2% a year ago.

2.8 The employment rate¹² in Northern Ireland for the February to April 2019 period was 71.3%, up from 69.8% in February to April 2018. The employment rate for the UK during the same months in 2019 was 76.1%, up from 75.6% in 2018.

2.9 Rates of economic inactivity¹³ in Northern Ireland were 26.4% between February and April 2019, down from 27.7% between February and April 2018. The inactivity rate for the UK was 20.8% during this period, down from 21.0% a year earlier. The rate of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland is the highest of the 12 UK regions, and has remained persistently higher than the UK average in recent years.

2.10 Although the proportion of those unemployed for one year or more has fallen substantially in Northern Ireland, from 49.4% of all unemployed individuals in February to April 2018 to 40.1% in February to April 2019, rates of long-term unemployment remain significantly above the UK average of 27.7%.

2.11 As of March 2019, the public sector made up 27 per cent of all employee jobs in Northern Ireland and 17 per cent of all employee jobs in the UK.

Pay

2.12 Analysis of the April 2018 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings shows that¹⁴:

- Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in Northern Ireland increased by 4.2%, from £500 to £521, between 2017 and 2018. This compares to an equivalent growth rate of 3.5% for the UK, which saw an increase from £550 to £569.
- Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees were 9.2% lower in Northern Ireland than in the UK in 2018. This pay lead has fallen

¹² Defined as the proportion of the working-age population (16-64) who are in work.

¹³ Defined as the proportion of the working-age population (16-64) who are unemployed and not actively seeking work.

¹⁴ NISRA, (2019). *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2018 Publication*. (online) Available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/ni-ashe-2018-publication> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

significantly since 2008, when it was 14.7%.

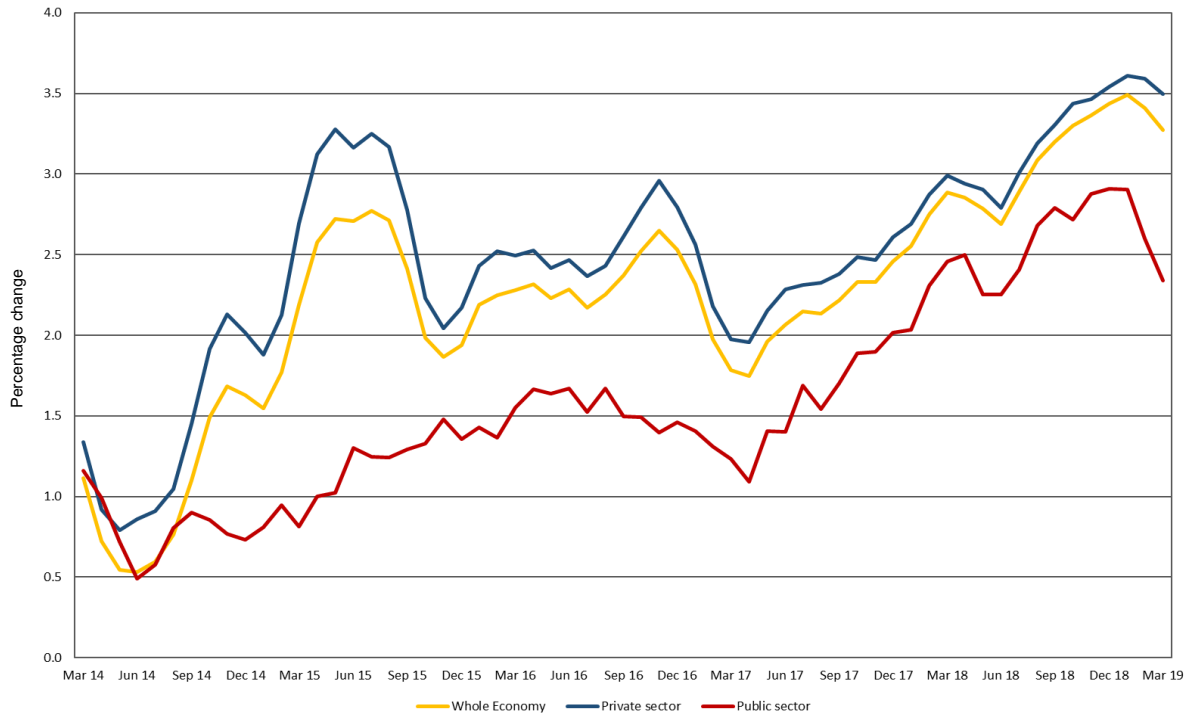
- In Northern Ireland, median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in the public sector were 33.7% higher than in the private sector, at £621 compared to £465.
- The equivalent differential between the public and the private sectors in the UK was 11.6%, where median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in each sector were £613 and £549, respectively.

2.13 As we noted in our 2018 report, 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.

2.14 Estimates show that average weekly earnings excluding bonuses for employees in the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) increased by 3.3% (in nominal terms) in the three months ending May 2019 compared with the corresponding period a year earlier; the growth rate for public sector employees was 2.3%¹⁵.

¹⁵ ONS, (2019). *Average Weekly Earnings ERN01*. (online) Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/averageweeklyearnings01/current> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

Figure 2.2: Growth in average weekly earnings, percentage change year on year, three-month average from March 2014-19, Great Britain¹⁶



2.15 For the whole of the UK, average earnings growth has been stronger in recent data than the OBR expected in October. The OBR assumes that some of this momentum in average earnings growth will be maintained, forecasting growth of 3.1% in 2019, followed by 3.0% in 2020 and 3.1% in 2021. Throughout the forecast, average earnings growth is expected to remain below the rates typical before the financial crisis¹⁷.

2.16 Median pay settlements were 2.5% over 2018 as a whole and are forecast to be at the same level in 2019. The final quarter of 2018, which is a quiet time for pay bargaining, saw a divergence in the measure of pay settlements, with the Labour Research Department recording a pick up to 3.0%, Incomes Data Research seeing awards maintain a 2.5% median, and XpertHR seeing a fall to 2.0% in the three months to December¹⁸.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ OBR, (2018). *Economic and Fiscal Outlook March 2019*. (online) Available at: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2019/> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

¹⁸ Office of Manpower Economics analysis of Incomes Data Research, XpertHR and Labour Research Department data.

Financial context

2.17 In January 2017, the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive was dissolved and has yet to be re-established. In the absence of a Finance Minister, the public sector pay policy can be agreed by the Department of Finance (DoF) as laid out in the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2019. However, at the time of writing our report, the DoF had not published the 2019-20 Northern Ireland public sector pay guidance.

2.18 In its written evidence, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) noted the pay guidance from Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) for 2018-19, requesting all Government departments to make average pay awards within the range of 1.0% to 1.5%. Although NIPS has not been able to seek pre-approval of its pay proposals, it stated in its evidence that there was a "working assumption" that pay awards would align with the 2018-19 pay guidance.

2.19 NIPS state its proposals this year aim to deliver a "fair and equitable" pay award. It has targeted its proposals at the lower paid staff and the recruitment grades (Custody Prison Officer (CPO), Night Custody Officer (NCO) and Prisoner Custody Officer (PCO)) to address an increase in turnover in recent years.

2.20 In the absence of both the pay guidance for 2019-20 and prior approval for its 2019 pay proposals, NIPS presented two options in its evidence this year:

- Option 1: consistent with the HMT pay guidance for 2018-19. NIPS propose a one per cent revalorisation for governor grades, a set consolidated increase of £250 for all uniformed grades and an increase of £100 to the Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA). NIPS costed option 1 at 2.49% of paybill (including progression).
- Option 2: this proposal covers the agreement reached in principle with the Prison Governors' Association Northern Ireland (PGA(NI)) and the final offer put to the POA Northern Ireland (POA(NI)) in negotiations. NIPS costed option 2 at 3.9% of paybill (including progression).

2.21 We do not consider progression within a pay scale to be part of the annual award as progression is an integral part of a fully functioning pay system, which

evens itself out over time through staff movements between grades and in and out of the Service. On that basis, we note that the actual cost of the pay award component of NIPS's proposals (including both changes to the scales and to allowances) under option 2 costs 2.4% of paybill.

2.22 During oral evidence this year, we questioned NIPS on the upper limit of what was affordable within current budgets. NIPS informed us that the total cost of its proposals under option 2 was affordable and it believed that a total award of under four per cent (including the cost of progression) for 2019-20 was consistent with emerging pay guidance and was affordable.

The grading review

2.23 In its written evidence this year, NIPS set out its commitment to the current grading review, noting that it has made good progress by interviewing 64 per cent of its sample to date. While the review is ongoing, NIPS asked us to avoid introducing additional complexities, particularly any increase in differentials between grades through a straight revalorisation of pay points. In oral evidence, NIPS stated that it expects the grading review to be completed by March 2020.

Evidence on the workforce

Staffing

2.24 We receive the latest available staffing data from NIPS on an annual basis and use these figures when formulating our recommendations. There were 1,261¹⁹ staff in our remit group as at 1 April 2019, an increase of 0.5% since 1 April 2018. Table 2.1 provides figures for the period 2013 to 2019. The key points are:

- Governor grade staff numbers continue to decrease.
- The total number of uniformed prison staff has continued to increase, due to the increase in the number of CPOs – a rise of nine per cent in the year to 1 April 2019. All other uniformed prison staff grades have decreased.
- Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Services (PECCS) numbers continue to decrease.

¹⁹ This is headcount.

**Table 2.1: Northern Ireland Prison Service staffing, 2013-19
(headcount at 1 April 2019)**

Grade / group	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Governor 1	2	1	1	2	1	} 12	12
Governor in Charge / Gov 2 and Gov 3	5	4	4	4	5		
Head of Function / Gov 4	10	6	8	10	9		
Head of Unit / Gov 5 and Principal officer	23	26	23	26	25	25	22
Governors	40	37	36	42	40	37	34
Senior officer	112	121	114	129	126	117	110
Main grade officer	606	485	443	358	341	308	287
Custody prison officer (new in 2012)	530	481	443	416	446	516	565
Officers	1,248	1,087	1,000	903	913	941	962
Night custody officer	107	100	96	101	102	110	107
Operational support grade	12	19	18	14	14	14	9
All uniformed prison staff	1,367	1,206	1,114	1,018	1,029	1,065	1078
PECCS (Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service)	78	174	168	160	160	153	149
Total	1,485	1,417	1,318	1,220	1,229	1,255	1,261

Prison population

2.25 At the end of April 2019, the prison population was 1,486. When compared with headcount staffing of 1,261, this equates to 1.2 prisoners per establishment remit group staff member. This is a decrease from 1.3 prisoners per establishment based remit group staff member in August 2018 and significantly lower compared with 2.6 prisoners per remit staff member in England and Wales (March 2018).

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons

2.26 By invitation of the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspected HMP Maghaberry in April 2018. In his 2018-19 Annual Report²⁰, the Chief Inspector of Prisons commented that outcomes for prisoners had improved in many areas at HMP Maghaberry. Although HMIP still had concerns about the care provided to vulnerable prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide, it had found that levels of violence had considerably decreased in many areas, living conditions were better and the regime was being delivered consistently with enhanced opportunities for prisoners. The Chief Inspector praised the hard work of staff working in prisons,

²⁰ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, (2019). *Annual Report 2018-19*. (online) Available at: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/annual-report-2018-19/> [accessed on 29 July 2019].

stating that their dedication, skill and patience is often remarkable.

Recruitment and retention

2.27 In its written evidence, NIPS states that the Service has not historically had a recruitment and retention problem and was currently operating at 90 to 95 per cent of target staffing levels. It noted that there was continuous small-scale recruitment for CPO and NCO grades, and it was looking to employ additional PECCS staff to cut down the utilisation of agency staff. During oral evidence, NIPS informed us that the employment environment in Northern Ireland had changed and the number of applications for jobs was reducing as the Northern Ireland labour market has started to tighten.

2.28 Table 2.2 shows the number of applicants and direct appointments following external recruitment in 2018. NIPS successfully appointed 62 new staff in 2018.

Table 2.2: Applicants and direct appointments in external recruitment competitions 2018²¹

Year	Competition	Applicants	Appointees
2018	CPO and NCO	957	36
2018	PCO 40 hour drivers	271	7
2018	PCO 20 / 35 hour contracts	403	19

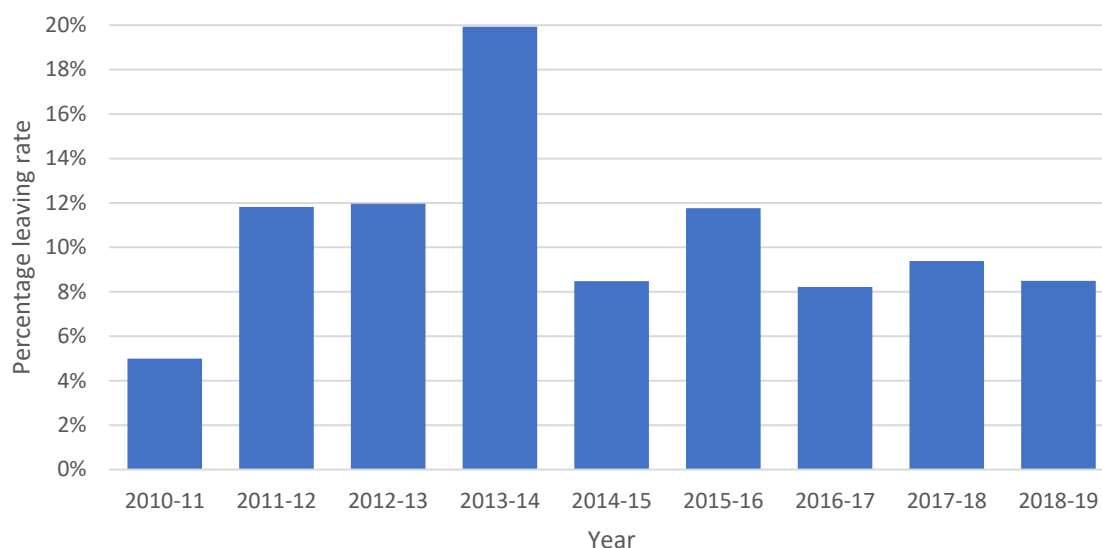
2.29 During oral evidence, the PGA(NI) said that there were no difficulties in recruiting to governor grades but noted that recruiting an additional six governor grades could make a significant improvement in reducing long working hours. The union expressed a concern that many CPO recruits were too inexperienced to deal with the complexities and pressures of the job, with NIPS needing to be more upfront about the dangers of the job and the security threat. It said that some staff used the job as a stepping stone to move to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

2.30 Figure 2.3 shows the percentage leaving rates for the nine years to March 2019. Between 31 March 2018 and 1 April 2019, the overall leaving rate for all

²¹ Data provided by NIPS.

grades across the Service decreased to 8.5%, down from 9.4% a year earlier. There were 50 members of staff (47 per cent of all leavers) who resigned, with a further 34 (32 per cent of all leavers) leaving through medical retirement.

Figure 2.3: Leaving rate of remit group staff (%), 2010-11 to 2018-19



2.31 During oral evidence NIPS informed us that it was not overly concerned at the number of staff who were leaving the Service. In our 2018 report, we raised a concern that NIPS does not conduct official exit interviews with staff who are leaving, and that such information is only collected anecdotally by governor grades. We were surprised at this because exit interviews can provide valuable data about why staff are leaving and can help indicate when and where resources should be best directed, reducing high recruitment costs. During oral evidence, NIPS informed us that if the number of staff leaving increased, then it would look to start holding exit interviews.

Temporary promotion

2.32 As of 1 April 2019, there were 54 members of staff²² (four per cent of the workforce) on temporary promotion. The number of staff on temporary promotion has been increasing each year and there are significant levels of temporary promotion at the following grades:

- Head of Unit (HoU): 32% of roles are filled on temporary promotion.
- Senior Officer (SO): 36% of roles are filled on temporary promotion.

²² This is headcount.

- Senior Prisoner Custody Officer: 45% of roles are filled on temporary promotion.

2.33 Data provided by NIPS showed that there were a number of staff who had been on temporary promoted for a significant period of time, including six individuals who had been temporarily promotion for three to four years.

2.34 During oral evidence NIPS informed us that the use of temporary promotion had increased due to a shortfall in SOs, but that it was running an SO promotion board in Autumn 2019 which would address this issue. NIPS further noted that the Service used temporary promotion as a means to test staff before substantive promotion was offered, particularly for the Future Leaders Scheme at HoU level.

2.35 The PGA(NI) stated during oral evidence that its membership was not overly concerned about the use of temporary promotion as it was a good way to see if staff were capable at governor grade level. The PGA(NI) noted that there were fewer jobs at governor grade level and that it was important to have appropriate people to fill these roles.

Motivation and morale

2.36 The evidence we received on motivation and morale took a variety of forms. We received updated information from the sources we regularly consider in this context: published statistics on staff assaults; Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) People Survey results; sickness absence data; union feedback; oral evidence; and information provided to us by staff on visits.

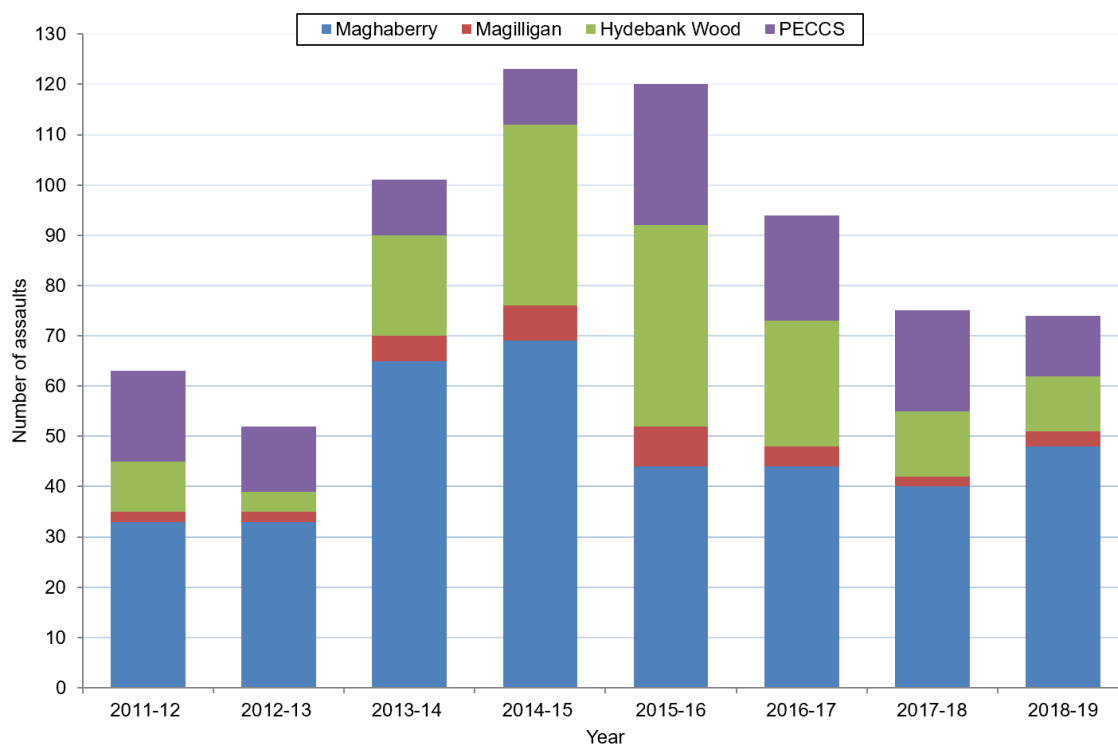
2.37 The overall picture from the range of evidence we received, aside from the NICS People Survey results, indicates that the level of motivation and morale is generally good in the Service. The 2018 pay award was well received by the majority of staff, apart from SOs pre-2002, Main Grade Officers (MGO) pre-2002 and MGOs post-2002 who received a lower award of 1.5%. On our visits, we heard from MGOs and SOs who felt that they had been treated unfairly in regard to pay and their experience was not valued.

2.38 NIPS did not include a separate section in its written evidence on motivation and morale but informed us in oral evidence that overall levels of motivation and morale were the best it had seen within the Service for some time. We return to this matter in Chapter 4.

Assaults on staff

2.39 As demonstrated in Figure 2.4, the number of recorded assaults on prison staff has decreased each year since 2014-15. However, there was a negligible change from 2017-18 in the overall number of assaults. As we noted in our 2018 report, NIPS has not experienced the same impact from psychoactive substances that has affected the Prison Service in England and Wales in recent years and has therefore had somewhat fewer issues with drugs and violence.

Figure 2.4: Assaults on prison staff by prisoners 2011-12 to 2018-19



2.40 The figures on assaults on staff in particular showed:

- The number of assaults on staff working at HMP Maghaberry increased by 20 per cent in the year 2018-19.
- The number of assaults on staff working in PECCS decreased by 40 per cent in the year to 2018-19.

The security risk in Northern Ireland

2.41 This year, we heard evidence from both staff on visits and the parties that staff still faced very real threats from dissident movements as a result of the jobs they undertake. Staff on visits told us that this impacted on both their work and home lives.

2.42 There was a strong feeling from all the parties, including NIPS, that the SRA should now be set at the same level as the police equivalent – the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA). Both the POA(NI) and the Community union also considered that the SRA should be made pensionable this year. We heard from staff on our visits that they were concerned that the SRA could one day be removed, and this risk could be negated by consolidating the allowance into base pay. NIPS told us in its written evidence that it could not afford to make the SRA pensionable and highlighted that the NITA was not pensionable.

2.43 We acknowledge that not all of the staff in our remit group receive the SRA. Governor grades, alongside some of the not-recruited-to officer grades, previously had an allowance consolidated into their base pay (for pre-2002 officer grades this occurred between 1994 and 1997, and for Governors 1 to 5 this occurred in 2006). Despite its members not receiving the SRA, the PGA(NI) said during oral evidence that it was supportive of the SRA being aligned to the NITA.

People Survey

2.44 NIPS carried out the annual NICS People Survey at the end of 2018 and its results were published in January 2019. Of the nine business areas within the Department of Justice, NIPS scored the lowest response rate at 20 per cent. Within NIPS, the grade with the lowest response rate was prison grades at 16 per cent. Due to the very low completion rates, it is important to treat results from this survey with considerable caution.

2.45 There are three questions on pay and remuneration as part of the Civil Service People Survey which we note each year:

- 16 per cent of respondents considered their pay was reasonable when compared to others doing similar jobs in other organisations;

- 24 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their total benefits package; and
- 16 per cent of respondents felt that their pay adequately reflected their performance.

2.46 During oral evidence, NIPS stated that the People Survey was a generic NICS survey and prison staff therefore thought it was not relevant to them. NIPS said it was working with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency to see if the Service could adapt the survey and it was important to recognise that the Service was in a better place than the results suggested. It highlighted the work that the Service was doing as part of the Prisons 2020 strategy under the 'People' strand, for example, the new Prisons WELL employee wellbeing programme which would increase levels of motivation and morale.

Sickness absence

2.47 It is important that we consider sickness absence in our report as it can significantly affect staffing levels. High levels of sickness absence are also often an indicator of low motivation and morale.

2.48 At the time of writing our report we did not have the figures for 2018-19. During oral evidence we shared our concern with the parties that the overall average figure of 20.9 days lost for prison grade staff in 2017-18 was more than double that of the average working days lost in the Prison Service in England and Wales. NIPS informed us that the current NICS policy for managing sickness absence can be too rigid, but it was focused on getting the process to work better for staff. It outlined the positive changes that had been made in the last year, such as better access to mental health support. NIPS stated that the annual target for sickness absence was set by NICS at 12 per cent to 13 per cent but it was a long way off this, in large part due to legacy cases of stress-related illnesses. It noted that there is a continual focus to reduce the number of days lost through sickness absence.

Internal promotion in the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service

2.49 In our 2018 report, we commented on an emerging issue within PECCS that staff are currently not allowed to apply internally for other NIPS roles. This

was affecting staff motivation and morale, particularly within the PCO grade, some of them had been told when joining the Service that they could move into a CPO role. Although the NIPS promotions policy is outside our remit, we were pleased to hear in oral evidence that NIPS has given a commitment to resolve this issue. NIPS informed us that it hoped to address this issue by the end of the year, when staffing levels in PECCS were stable.

Evidence from the trade unions on motivation

2.50 We did not receive any written evidence from the POA(NI) or separately from the PGA(NI) this year. During oral evidence, the PGA(NI) said that staff were motivated because they were well led and felt supported. The PGA(NI) believed that the joint proposals it had agreed with NIPS would further improve levels of motivation and morale.

Performance management

2.51 One way of rewarding performance and motivating staff is through having a pay system that links pay to the performance management system. However, for there to be any element of performance-related pay, this system must be evidentially robust, credible and fair.

2.52 In its written evidence to us this year, NIPS did not include any proposals for performance-related pay or performance awards. In oral evidence, NIPS acknowledged that the current system was not entirely satisfactory and that it had limited control over the NICS-wide system. It said that it had a completion rate target of 90 per cent by 31 May set by NICS but NIPS acknowledged this target was rarely achieved.

2.53 Similarly, the PGA(NI) informed us in oral evidence that the current system was not fit for an operational service and the targets that were set were not relatable to the business. The union highlighted that the PSNI, who are not part of NICS, did not have a generic system like NIPS.

Equality and diversity

2.54 We monitor the diversity of our remit group using the data available. The most recently available figures (1 April 2019) demonstrate that around 31 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 (18 per cent) continues to increase.

2.55 At 1 April 2019, 20 of 34 staff in the governor grades (59 per cent) were aged over 50. Although this is a slight decrease from the previous year (62 per cent at 1 April 2018), the PGA(NI) expressed concern during oral evidence about the number of governor grades approaching retirement age. NIPS noted it has recently launched the Future Leaders Scheme to bring SOs through to HoU.

2.56 We note that at 1 April 2019, 75 per cent of the remit group defined themselves as coming from a Protestant community background, compared to 15 per cent who 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 42 per cent of those identifying themselves from a Catholic background identifying as female. These figures remain stable compared to recent years.

2.57 A key theme of NIPS's proposals this year was addressing relativities through additional restructuring of pay scales. NIPS stated in its evidence that its proposals would address the following:

- The Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) exceeding the Senior Civil Service Grade 5 maximum. NIPS proposed to restrict the increases to the maximum of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) pay scale to 0.2% and point 5 of the pay scale to 1.1%. The PGA(NI) agreed to these proposals, although noted that no member of staff currently occupied these two pay points.
- The SO post-2002 (a management grade) starting salary being lower than the MGO pre-2002 maximum. NIPS's proposals would mean that, although the pensionable pay for MGOs pre-2002 on the maximum would still be higher than the pensionable base pay of the SO post-2002 scale, total pay would be higher for the SO post-2002 scale when the SRA is included.
- The current differential between the SO post-2002 pay scale maximum and the pre-2002 spot rate. The pensionable pay for pre-2002 SOs would

still be higher than the pensionable pay for SOs post-2002 on the maximum, but under NIPS's proposals total pay would be higher for the post-2002 scale when the SRA is included.

- Maintaining the alignment between the maximum of the Operational Support Grade, PCO and NCO grades (when adjusted for different working hours). This alignment allows for redeployment between the three grades to cover staff shortages.

Evidence from visits

2.58 In April 2019, we visited HMP Maghaberry, HMP Magilligan, Hydebank Wood College, the Prison Service College 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.

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

- There was unhappiness among the SO pre-2002 and the MGO pre-2002 and post-2002 grades that our 2018 recommendations for those grades had been rejected.
- PECCS grades overall were pleased with the pay award and changes made to those pay scales.
- The removal of pay points to shorten scales was generally seen as positive.
- The increase to the recruitment point of the CPO scale was received positively, although some felt it was still too low when compared to the PSNI.
- Future pay awards should be consolidated and, while views differed on the actual level, the minimum should be at least above inflation.
- There was still a real security risk faced by staff in NIPS, which impacted on work and home lives.
- The increase to the SRA and the commitment to equalise with the NITA was welcome, but the SRA should have been set at the level of the NITA already.
- Some staff said they were concerned that NIPS would one day remove the SRA and therefore it should be consolidated into base pay so that it could not be removed at a later date.

- The increase to the governor on-call allowance rates had been received positively, although most governor grades felt this was a good starting point but was not the end point, wanting future increases.
- PECCS staff were positive about the introduction of the drivers' allowance. However, staff said it should be paid for all driving duties and not just court escorting duties.
- Staff expressed more firmly this year that they wanted overtime to be paid at an enhanced rate. They repeated that they wanted additional compensation through pay for working public holidays.

2.60 The main recruitment and retention issues raised were:

- The number of applicants for CPO and PECCS roles was decreasing. There was a concern from governor grades that CPO recruitment was becoming more difficult. Many stated that some candidates were now not turning up for interviews which was previously unheard of.
- New recruits came from a diverse range of backgrounds and had various job histories and experiences. They had joined the Service for a new career and challenge.
- Staff said CPOs were leaving the Service to join the PSNI when recruitment campaigns were run.
- PECCS said it had a significant number of PCO vacancies and there were retention issues at this grade. PECCS had a number of CPOs covering PCO vacancies.
- It was reported that there were a number of staff on temporary promotion, particularly to the governor and SO grades.

2.61 The main motivation and morale issues raised were:

- The decision to reject part of our 2018 recommendations had done little for morale of the affected staff. These staff said it felt as though the Service did not value their experience and that they were not being treated fairly.
- PECCS staff said morale had continued to improve.

2.62 Other issues raised on our visits were:

- Officer grades repeatedly stated that work had been pushed down a grade or two with no financial compensation and to fewer staff.
- It was noted by some staff that Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service had reintroduced the Principal Officer rank (now Band 5 Custodial Manager) and NIPS should do the same.
- Promotion in PECCS was difficult as vacancies were few in number. The senior ranks stated that there were no promotion routes once staff were promoted to Principal Prisoner Custody Officer (PPCO) and felt they should be able to apply for other NIPS roles.

The parties' proposals

2.63 As we 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 key points in NIPS's evidence (under option 2) are summarised below:

- A percentage increase of two per cent to all governor grades pay scales (except point 5 and the maximum of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) pay scale);
- A set consolidated increase of £381 for all uniformed grades;
- Further addressing of relativities by restructuring pay scales;
- An increase in the SRA to match the NITA. Given any changes to the NITA each year are implemented on 1 September, NIPS proposed an annual rate from 1 April 2019 for the SRA calculated by taking five months of the 2018 NITA rate and seven months at the estimated 2019 NITA rate; and
- An increase in the rates of on-call for specific rostered commitments for governor grades.

2.64 NIPS further proposed a number of new 2020 pay scales for some grades. We comment on these scales in Chapter 3.

2.65 We also received two written submissions from the Community union. The union does not currently have recognition rights for collective bargaining with

NIPS. It made the following proposals in its written submission:

- A five per cent consolidated pay uplift to all grades and pay points;
- All previous non-consolidated pay awards from 2012 to 2018 should be consolidated retrospectively into pay;
- The PECCS PCO pay scale should mirror that of the CPO pay scale;
- The CPO pay scale be reduced to a maximum of four equally spaced pay points and staff should enter the new scale based on the length of their experience in that grade;
- The NCO pay scale should mirror that of the CPO pay scale and should also include an unsocial hours element;
- The PECCS drivers' allowance should be pensionable and extended to all driving duties;
- Two new PECCS allowances should be introduced – a long day allowance and a Managing and Minimising Physical Restraint allowance; and
- The SRA should be pensionable and increased to the level of the NITA.

2.66 Community also asked for a number of terms and conditions changes which are not within our remit, for example, a move from a 39 to 37 hour working week.

2.67 We regret that we did not receive evidence from the POA(NI). However, the union confirmed that they had agreed to the following from the overall NIPS package:

- To align the SRA to the NITA;
- To introduce a new three point pay scale for the PCO grade with a more beneficial band minimum;
- To add one new point to the Senior Prisoner Custody Officer pay scale to provide for future progression;
- To add two new points to the PPCO pay scale to provide for future progression;
- To add two new points to the CPO pay scale to provide for future progression and to reduce the relativities with the MGO post-2002 spot rate.

- To add one new point to the SO post-2002 pay scale to provide for future progression and to reduce the relativities with the SO pre-2002 spot rate.

2.68 The POA(NI) did not agree to NIPS's proposal of a set consolidated increase of £381 for all uniformed grades. The union's pay claim to NIPS asked for a set consolidated increase of £650 for all uniformed grades.

Chapter 3: Our recommendations on pay for 2019

3.1 This chapter summarises our analysis of the evidence and sets out our recommendations. The objectives we have set out to address this year are:

- To align the Supplementary Risk Allowance (SRA) to the Police Service of Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA), recognising this is a priority for all the parties this year.
- To maintain the competitiveness of our remit group's pay scales in a tight labour market by providing all staff with a consolidated pay increase.
- To target pay at the lowest paid staff and recruitment grades to support the recruitment and retention of staff.
- To recognise the Northern Ireland Prison Service's (NIPS) affordability constraints.

3.2 Our terms of reference require us to consider several factors, including the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified staff. We have therefore considered the following factors when determining the pay award for all staff:

- The ongoing security threat for staff at all grades and the strength of feeling among staff and management about aligning the SRA to the NITA.
- Key economic benchmarks available in July 2019²³.
- The tightening of the labour market in Northern Ireland and the parties' associated concern about the fall in job applications.
- NIPS's aspiration to address differentials within the pay structure in a targeted manner in advance of the ongoing grading review.
- Generally good levels of motivation and morale, despite high levels of sickness absence.
- The agreement made in principle with the Prison Governors' Association Northern Ireland (PGA(NI)) and the overall approach written in NIPS's proposals agreed with the POA Northern Ireland (POA(NI)).
- The unique position of the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB), having been explicitly created as a compensatory mechanism for the

²³ We have used published data that were available at the time of reaching our decisions at the beginning of July 2019.

removal of the remit group's right to take industrial action of any form.

3.3 We are aware that we are submitting this 2019 report after the pay award date of 1 April 2019. This was a consequence of not receiving an activation letter until March 2019, itself a result of the late running 2018 pay round. We regret that this will result in our remit group again receiving their pay award later than they should.

Analysis

3.4 As described in Chapter 2, the Northern Ireland economy has grown slowly but steadily over the past few years. The UK Consumer Prices Index including owner occupier's housing costs 12 month rate was 1.9% in May 2019 but was expected to rise to 2.2% in the second quarter of 2019. The Northern Ireland seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the period February to April 2019 was 3.1%. We have limited economic evidence on average weekly earnings for Northern Ireland but, in April 2018, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings indicated that median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in Northern Ireland had increased by 4.2% over the year to £521 and median earnings of public sector employees were 33.7% higher than the private sector.

3.5 The Chief Inspector of Prisons, in his 2018-19 annual report, noted improvements in outcomes for prisoners at HMP Maghaberry in areas such as living conditions, consistent regimes and enhanced opportunities. Both the inspection report for HMP Maghaberry in April 2018 and the report published for HMP Magilligan at the end of December 2018, commend the significant progress and positive work undertaken at both prisons. The Service launched its Prisons 2020 strategy in 2018, which sets out a comprehensive three year strategy and annual delivery plans so it is held to account against each deliverable.

3.6 NIPS has not seen the same increase in the levels of violence experienced this year across the prison estate in England and Wales. However, the security threat to staff working in the Service and the impact this has on their lives in and outside work remains a serious issue and this was reflected in the strength of feeling from all the parties this year about aligning the SRA with the NITA.

3.7 NIPS is currently operating close to its total staffing levels and has successfully appointed 62 new members of staff in 2018, despite raising a concern to us about the fall in applications and the tightening of the labour market in Northern Ireland. The leaving rate decreased this year from 9.4% to 8.5% as at 1 April 2019.

3.8 Levels of motivation and morale remain generally good and the pay award in 2018 was largely well received, particularly by the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) grades. We commented in our 2018 report that low levels of motivation and morale were an issue for PECCS grades and they felt like the “forgotten service”. We were pleased to hear on our visits this year that the increases to the PECCS pay scales and the introduction of a PECCS drivers’ allowance had had a significant impact on the levels of motivation and morale in that group. We expect this to improve further next year when NIPS address the issue of internal promotions for PECCS grades.

3.9 One factor that has depressed morale for the not-recruited-to grades was the rejection of last year’s recommendations for these grades. Evidence from our visits indicated that this had not gone unnoticed, and staff felt particularly devalued as a result. Independent recommendations from the Review Body, which Government has pledged to reject only in “exceptional circumstances”, had been regarded as one of the safeguards for prison staff being treated fairly, recognising that they have no right to take industrial action of any form.

3.10 We remain concerned at the high level of sickness absence among operational staff within NIPS and how this impacts on day-to-day operational staffing levels. Although this is a key indicator of motivation and morale, we note that it is being driven by a number of long-term sickness absence cases. We continue to encourage NIPS proactively to address the level of sickness absence.

3.11 We were pleased to hear that the parties worked together this year to try to reach joint proposals. Although NIPS and the POA(NI) were not ultimately able to reach a final agreement in principle on the pay award, we welcome the NIPS and PGA(NI) joint proposals covering governor grades. We were persuaded by the overarching principle of the joint proposals – that all governor grades would

receive a “fair and equitable” consolidated pay increase of two per cent.

3.12 We did, however, have concerns over the NIPS proposals to extend pay scales for some groups of staff in 2020. In our 2018 report, we stated our agreement with NIPS’s overall aspiration to reduce the length of pay scales to assist with quicker progression up the pay scale and NIPS’s proposals for 2020 run counter to this. We return to this matter later in this Chapter.

Affordability

3.13 We were mindful this year to pay particular attention to the issue of affordability when determining our recommendations in the absence of the 2019 pay guidance.

3.14 NIPS costed its proposals under option 1 at £1,369,871 (2.5% of paybill including progression) and under option 2 at £2,135,285 (3.9% of paybill including progression). NIPS informed us that option 2 represented the absolute maximum of its budget and any amendments to these proposals should be done on an offsetting basis. It also expressed the strong view that any such amendments should not increase absolute differentials nor change the elements of the award agreed with the PGA(NI).

3.15 During oral evidence, NIPS informed us that it was confident that its proposals were consistent with the emerging pay guidance and were affordable. It stated that any alternative proposals we might recommend should be made within the same cost envelope. We return to the costing of the award at the end of this Chapter.

Supplementary Risk Allowance

3.16 As highlighted in Chapter 2, the security threat to staff working for NIPS is still a real and significant issue. We have kept this at the front of our minds when reviewing the evidence from the parties this year.

3.17 There was an acceptance from all parties this year, including NIPS, that the SRA should be aligned to the NITA. In the negotiations between NIPS and the POA(NI), the union requested that the SRA be set at the equivalent level to

the NITA and that it was consolidated into pay to make it pensionable. The written evidence from the Community union proposed the same. NIPS stated in its written evidence that it had agreed with the POA(NI) to set the SRA at the same rate as the NITA. NIPS informed us during oral evidence that it was the right time to do this and that it was a priority for the staff who receive the allowance. NIPS estimated the cost of aligning the SRA to the NITA at £446,483 (0.81% of paybill).

3.18 We concluded that, given the strength of feeling among staff, management and the unions, our overarching priority this year should be achieving parity with the NITA, notwithstanding that this would reduce the money available for the rest of the pay award. We are fully supportive of aligning the SRA to the NITA and agree that this would be an appropriate way to target the money available this year.

3.19 We then had to consider how alignment should best be achieved. The NITA is increased each year on the PSNI's pay settlement date, 1 September. In order to calculate a like for like comparison, NIPS suggested in its written evidence that we take five months of the 2018 NITA rate (£3,291 a year) and seven months at the estimated 2019 NITA rate (£3,357 a year assuming a two per cent increase) to produce a comparable annual rate. We had concerns about the complexity of this approach and the fact that it would not produce an SRA rate that was fully aligned to the NITA. We therefore concluded that the most appropriate way forward was to align the SRA to the NITA amount from 1 September 2019 and annually thereafter.

3.20 We therefore endorse NIPS's proposal to align the SRA to the NITA but recommend that this takes effect from 1 September 2019, the date on which the NITA will change. From 1 April 2019 until 31 August 2019 it should remain at its current rate. We further recommend that the SRA continues to increase or decrease in line with the NITA on 1 September in future years. However, we reserve our position to review the level of the SRA in future reports, particularly if there is any significant change to the security threat for staff working in NIPS or any structural change to the NITA.

Recommendation 1: We recommend that with effect from 1 September 2019 the rate for the Supplementary Risk Allowance is aligned with the Police Service of Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance for all eligible staff. We also recommend that the Supplementary Risk Allowance changes in line with the Police Service of Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance on 1 September in future years. We will review this position in light of significant or structural changes.

3.21 In its written evidence, NIPS stated that it has not agreed to make the SRA pensionable. During oral evidence, NIPS told us this was for affordability reasons but also that it would also give rise to a discrepancy because the NITA was not currently pensionable. We concluded that there was insufficient evidence to endorse the proposals to make the SRA pensionable and that it would not be appropriate given that the NITA is also not pensionable.

Uniformed grades pay award

3.22 As part of the negotiations between NIPS and the POA(NI), the union requested that all uniformed grades receive a set amount of consolidated pay, as opposed to a percentage increase. NIPS agreed with the principle of such an award but the two parties were unable to reach an agreement on the amount. In its evidence, NIPS proposed a figure of £381, stating that this was the absolute maximum within its budget. The POA(NI) did not agree to this value, asking for a set consolidated increase of £650 instead.

3.23 We saw a need for a broadly consistent approach to pay awards for all staff as we wanted to recognise frontline staff at all grades who are continuing to carry out demanding roles in the face of difficult conditions. In determining the amount of uplift appropriate this year, we took account of NIPS's affordability position. We also considered NIPS's written evidence to us in which it asked us to deliver a "fair and equitable" pay award that is targeted to the lowest paid. Unfortunately, we did not receive evidence from the POA(NI) on its reasoning and merits for a set consolidated increase of £650.

3.24 As set out above, our priority this year has been to align the SRA to the NITA and we have therefore had to strike a balance between delivering this and

providing a reasonable consolidated award for staff within the envelope of money available. We concluded that a flat rate consolidated increase for uniformed staff delivered a fair award that benefits staff at all grades, while targeting money at the lowest paid. We believe this will maintain recruitment, retention and morale and thereby assist NIPS to deliver productivity savings to enable the award to be sustainable in terms of affordability.

3.25 We therefore recommend a consolidated increase of £500 for all uniformed grade pay scales and spot rates as set out in Appendix E. Our calculations indicate that this is affordable within the cost envelope of NIPS's proposals (assuming the same level of increase in the NITA as in NIPS's costings); the cost of the greater cash increases this year are offset by the reduction in the cost of the SRA that results from applying the increase from 1 September. We recognise that some of our recommendations will result in a slightly higher starting paybill position for the next pay round than the corresponding NIPS's proposals.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2019 all staff in the Senior Officer pre-2002, Senior Officer post-2002, Main Grade Officer pre-2002, Main Grade Officer post-2002, Custody Prison Officer, Operational Support Grade, Night Custody Officer, Principal Prisoner Custody Officer, Senior Prisoner Custody Officer and Prisoner Custody Officer grades receive a consolidated, pensionable increase of £500. The pay scales and spot rates for these grades to be adjusted as set out in Appendix E.

Governor grades pay award

3.26 The joint proposals submitted by NIPS and the PGA(NI) ensure that all staff within the governor grades receive consolidated pay rises of two per cent through increases to the band minimum and maximum and to intermediate points. Although no member of staff currently occupies either of the two top pay points of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) pay scale, the joint proposals also include applying smaller percentage awards to these two points.

3.27 We concluded, as we did in our 2018 report, that it is important to

recognise the agreement between NIPS and the PGA(NI). We felt that there was no compelling reason for us not to follow this agreement. We consider that the proposals deliver a fair pay award to the staff in these grades that is consistent with the current rate of inflation.

3.28 We therefore recommend a consolidated increase for all governor grades in line with the joint agreement between NIPS and the PGA(NI). The new scales are set out in Appendix E.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that with effect from 1 April 2019 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 E, delivering uplifts of 2.0% to all staff.

3.29 In our 2018 report, we raised a concern about the agreement between NIPS and the PGA(NI) to restrict the maximum of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry) pay scale. We noted that, 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 necessary as the roles are fundamentally different. However, we are conscious that this formed part of the joint agreement and we do not think it is appropriate to unpick this aspect from the rest of the proposals, not least because no staff currently occupy the relevant part of the pay scale. We will continue to keep this issue under review and urge NIPS to find a solution to this which does not hold back the pay scale of the Governor in Charge (Maghaberry).

3.30 One of our objectives this year has been to maintain the competitiveness of the pay scales in a tight labour market in order for NIPS to recruit and retain suitably able and qualified staff. We consider it important that governor grade pay scales are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are paid at an appropriate level. We assume that this work will be undertaken by NIPS as part of the grading review.

Governor on-call allowance

3.31 This year, NIPS and the PGA(NI) agreed a joint proposal to increase the governor on-call allowance as follows:

- Weekday: increase the allowance from £11.65 to £15.00.
- Weekend and Privilege Holiday: increase the allowance from £18.65 to £20.00.
- Bank and Public Holiday: increase the allowance from £22.65 to £40.00.

3.32 During oral evidence, the PGA(NI) informed us that this was the top priority of its membership. It highlighted that the weekday rate in particular was not considered to be at the final level the union would like it to be. We note however, that this rate now aligns to the equivalent on-call allowance for the Police Service of Northern Ireland. NIPS informed us during oral evidence that this proposal was in line with the funds available.

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

Recommendation 4: We recommend that from 1 April 2019 the governor on-call allowance rates are increased as set out in Appendix F.

Other allowances and payments

3.34 Our remit covers a range of different allowances for operational grades. A full list of the allowances we make recommendations on is at Appendix F. In its evidence this year, NIPS did not propose any changes to any other allowance and the POA(NI) requested in its pay claim to NIPS that no further allowances were increased so more funds could be allocated to the pay award for staff.

3.35 The Community union proposed that we introduce two new allowances, as set out in Chapter 2, and that we extend the PECCS drivers' allowance to all driving duties. NIPS informed us during oral evidence that the drivers' allowance had been restricted to PECCS grades undertaking court driving duties because the allowance compensated for the long and unpredictable days in court. We

understand this reasoning but will keep this issue under review for future reports. We ask all parties to submit evidence to us in time for our next report if they believe staff are being disadvantaged by this approach.

3.36 In regard to introducing new allowances, we have concluded that the money available this year would be better used to align the SRA to the NITA, give all staff a consolidated pay award and to increase the governor on-call allowance rates. We therefore make no recommendations this year for other allowances, which should remain at existing levels as set out in Appendix F.

2020 pay scales

3.37 In its written evidence this year, NIPS presented a number of proposals to extend pay scales for some groups of staff in 2020. In oral evidence, NIPS stated that these changes would help address relativities in the pay structure in advance of the outcome of the grading review. Although we acknowledge that these changes have been agreed with the POA(NI), we do not agree with the introduction of longer and uneven pay scales. We note that these proposals are inconsistent with previous evidence from NIPS, which argued for reducing the number of pay points in scales. We were concerned at the lack of evidence, rationale and market justification for some of these proposed changes, particularly for the Custody Prison Officer pay scale, and felt that they would add costs that should be more appropriately informed by the outcome of the grading review.

3.38 We therefore do not endorse these changes and believe that no significant changes should be made to the pay scales this year in advance of the completion of the grading review which we understand is expected to be completed in March 2020 and will inform any changes to the pay structure.

Cost of our recommendations

3.39 We have calculated that our recommendations will cost the same overall amount as the NIPS proposals and, when combined with progression increases, will result in an overall increase in paybill of 3.9% this year which NIPS told us was consistent with emerging pay guidance and was affordable. As we have set out in previous reports, we do not consider that the costs of progression should

be included when presenting the cost of an annual pay award. On that basis, we estimate the cost of our recommendations at 2.4% of paybill in 2019-20 (again in line with NIPS's costings).

3.40 We are aware that NIPS faces financial pressures within its current resources however, we believe that there are strong value for money justifications for our recommendations. They strike a fair balance and represent an appropriate level of investment in operational prison staff for the contribution they have made over the past year and will need to make in the future. Our recommendations should contribute to improving the productivity and efficiency of the Service, assist with the recruitment and retention of staff, and thereby also support the Government's objectives for crime reduction and prisoner rehabilitation.

Chapter 4: Looking ahead

4.1 This chapter offers our thoughts and comments on a range of issues and highlights several points that should be addressed for our next report.

The timetable

4.2 We are aware that we are submitting this report after the pay effective date of 1 April. We regret that this will, once again, result in our remit group receiving their pay award later than usual. We are mindful of the current political situation in Northern Ireland but ask that NIPS submit its evidence to us on time next year, so that we can deliver our 2020 report in time for a 1 April implementation date. We also ask the parties to consider a change in the pay settlement date, potentially moving in line with the 1 September date on which the NITA will increase, or a longer pay award mandate to address this issue.

The grading review

4.3 In its written evidence, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) set out its commitment to the current grading review and noted that this will remain an important focus in the coming months. Some of the parties raised concerns to us about the length of the time the grading review has taken and whether it will be completed by March 2020. We wish to stress the importance of bringing the grading review to a conclusion and ask that no further adjustments to pay scales are made until this time. We request that NIPS take account of the key findings in its evidence to us next year.

Motivation and morale

4.4 As we note in Chapter 2, the information we received this year on motivation and morale was largely anecdotal. Monitoring levels of motivation and morale within our remit group is an important part of our terms of reference. We therefore ask that the parties submit detailed evidence to us next year on the issues that are affecting motivation and morale and the measures in place to tackle these.

People Survey

4.5 We were disappointed to see the low response rate and scores from the

Northern Ireland Civil Service People Survey that NIPS staff have completed for the first time this year. We support NIPS's argument that the current survey is not fit-for-purpose for an operational service. We believe that such a low response rate provides no evidence of weight and the survey therefore does not provide value for money for the Service. We note that NIPS is working with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency to see if the survey can be improved and we look forward to seeing the results of these discussions. It is important that we receive specific evidence from our remit group about levels of motivation and morale in the Service.

Sickness absence

4.6 As we have previously noted, we are concerned about the high level of sickness absence among operational staff within NIPS. Although NIPS assured us this is largely due to a number of long-term legacy cases and that it is proactively managing sickness absence, we were concerned that the levels of sickness absence have been rising since 2016-17, despite generally good levels of motivation and morale, and a trend in most establishments of decreasing violence against staff. We therefore ask that NIPS present to us in evidence for our next report, a clear plan of how they are managing the high levels of sickness absence and what steps they are taking to bring this down. We also ask all the parties to present evidence to us on how this issue is affecting levels of staffing and motivation and morale.

Recruitment and retention

Temporary promotion

4.7 The use of temporary promotion has significantly increased this year, with the number of staff on temporary promotion rising from 22 on 1 April 2018 to 54 on 1 April 2019. We note that NIPS has plans to bring this number down through the Future Leaders Scheme and by running promotion boards for Senior Officers towards the end of 2019. Although the operation of the promotions policy is not directly within our remit, we are concerned about the extent of temporary promotion within some grades and the length of time for which some staff have been on temporary promotion. The pay structure needs to be able to incentivise staff to apply for substantive promotion. We hope to see the number of staff on temporary promotion decrease this year and would welcome up to date data on

this in time for our 2020 report. We would further welcome evidence on whether there are any pay barriers or disincentives to applying for substantive promotion.

Exit interviews and labour market data

4.8 In our 2018 report, we encouraged NIPS to consider introducing formal exit interviews for all staff who leave the Service as this can provide valuable data about why staff are leaving and to where. This can help indicate trends and when and where resources should be best directed. We again encourage NIPS to introduce exit interviews for at least the Custody Prison Officer and Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service grades where there are potential retention issues. It is important for us to understand in a structured way what jobs these staff are leaving for so we can fully consider whether there is the need to make any targeted awards at particular grades. We therefore ask NIPS to provide us with labour market data and market comparators in its written evidence for our next report.

Competitiveness of the pay scales

4.9 One of our key objectives this year has been to maintain the competitiveness of the pay scales in a tight labour market in order for NIPS to recruit and retain suitably able and qualified staff across uniformed and governor grades. We hope to see this addressed as part of the grading review and ask the parties to present further analysis to us in evidence in time for our next report.

Equality data

4.10 We monitor the diversity of our remit group using the data available to us. We would welcome data on all aspects of diversity, particularly information on black, Asian and minority ethnic staff from the parties for future reports, as well as plans to make the remit group as reflective as possible of the community as a whole.

Industrial relations

4.11 We were pleased to see that both the Prison Governors' Association Northern Ireland (PGA(NI)) and the POA Northern Ireland (POA(NI)) entered into negotiations this year, and that these resulted in joint proposals between NIPS and the PGA(NI) that will benefit all governor grades. Good communications and

relations with, and between, the parties are important to us and this will continue to be the case.

4.12 We acknowledge that the POA(NI) and NIPS did not manage to reach a final agreement on all proposals, and we were disappointed to receive no evidence from the POA(NI). We believe this is a missed opportunity as our recommendations directly affect POA(NI) members and there is a mutual advantage in dialogue between ourselves and the union as part of the process of collecting evidence and making our recommendations.

Conclusion

4.13 The staff in our remit group are responsible for delivering a vital public service that carries an ongoing security threat, which affects the working and home lives of staff. Our overarching priority this year was that the SRA was aligned to the NITA which we anticipate will be welcomed by all parties. We have also recommended that all staff should receive financial recognition in the form of an affordable consolidated award for the difficult job they are doing in protecting prisoners in their care and the public. We believe that our recommendations strike a fair balance and offer sound value for money.

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 Service.²⁴

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.

²⁴ The International Labour Office 336th 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: Letter from the Permanent Secretary regarding the 2018 recommendation rejection

FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
Peter May



Rm B5.10, Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST BT4 3SG
Tel: 028 9052 2992
email: peter.may@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk

via email: Elizabeth.Waterfall@beis.gov.uk

Mr Jerry Cope
Chair
Prison Service Pay Review Body
Office of Manpower Economics
Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury Square
LONDON EC4Y 8JX

28 February 2019

Dear Mr Cope

PRISON GRADES PAY SETTLEMENT 2018

Thank you for your letter dated 20 December 2018 in relation to the pay settlement for prison grades in Northern Ireland for 2018. I am writing to thank you and your colleagues for your approach to this pay round and your recommendations on addressing emerging issues with recruitment and retention, and morale and motivation.

NIPS submitted the pay remit to the Department of Finance and subsequently met Sue Gray, the Permanent Secretary and her officials to discuss your recommendations. DoF were mindful that Departmental planning assumptions were predicated on a 1% pay increase, Treasury pay guidance provided for an award in the range of 1% - 1.5%, and there was a need to ensure consistency of approach across the wider NI public sector.

Both NIPS and DoF officials ~~were in agreement~~ on a number of principles in respect of 2018 pay including affordability, the need to address recruitment and retention difficulties, targeted revalorisation to address relativities, a focus on the lowest paid staff, and an increase in the Supplementary Risk Allowance.

However, the proposed overall consolidated increase was outside the range of the wider public sector and NIPS was asked to put forward an alternative costing. Both Departments wished to retain as much of the PSPRB recommendations as possible, and agreed upon an option which brought closest alignment to public sector pay guidance, and the above principles. As a result, the following grades will receive a consolidated increase of 1.5% (rather than the 2% proposed by the PSPRB): Senior Officer pre 2002, Main Grade Officer pre 2002, and Main Grade Officer post 2002. All other Prison Service Pay Review Body recommendations for 2018 will be implemented.

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On this basis, the Department of Finance approved the revised pay remit on 28 February 2019.

NIPS colleagues will liaise with your Secretariat on the timing of the publication of the report on the Prison Service Pay Review Body website. NIPS will action the pay changes and pay arrears, as appropriate, in salaries at the end of March, and lay a copy of the PSPRB report in the Assembly library.

Yours sincerely



PETER MAY

Appendix C: Reply from the PSPRB Chair regarding the 2018 recommendation rejection



Office of Manpower
Economics

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

Direct Telephone Line 020 7211 8257
E-mail elizabeth.waterfall@beis.gov.uk

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

Peter May
Permanent Secretary for the
Department of Justice, Northern Ireland
Rm B5.10, Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SG

1 March 2019

BY EMAIL

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 February, regarding the Department's decision in relation to the recommendations made by the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB).

The PSPRB reached its recommendations based on the evidence that you and the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) presented to us, alongside that from workforce representatives and staff on our visits. As explained in our report, we sought to retain the key elements of NIPS' proposals but placed greater emphasis on NIPS' priority of delivering fair and equitable consolidated increases for all staff, in line with the increases seen elsewhere in the UK public sector.

Our recommendations were constructed to require the same total paybill increase as the NIPS' proposals, which both yourself and NIPS management informed us was affordable. Although we understand that it is ultimately your choice how you respond to our recommendations, we are disappointed with this outcome, given the assurances we received during the oral evidence sessions that this cost envelope was affordable.

Looking ahead to the next round, I would welcome your assurance that we will receive the remit letter soon to avoid further delays in staff receiving their 2019 pay award. I



would further ask that greater clarity is provided by both the Department of Finance and NIPS in regard to affordability in your 2019 evidence.

Your Sincerely
Jerry Cope

Jerry Cope
Chair, Prison Service Pay Review Body

Appendix D: Permanent Secretary's 2019 activation letter



FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
Peter May

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

via email:

Mr Jerry Cope
Chair, Prison Service Pay Review Body
Office of Manpower Economics
8th Floor, Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury Square
LONDON
EC4Y 8JX

4 March 2019

Dear Jerry

THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE 2019/20 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 2019 pay for operational staff in the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Ronnie Armour, Director General of the NI Prison Service, and I were very pleased with the approach taken to the 2018 pay round and the work that has begun to address relativities and low pay. Your 2018 recommendations were within the same cost envelope as NIPS proposals, but the Department of Finance has a responsibility to ensure there is consistency of pay awards across the public sector in Northern Ireland.

In addition to taking this responsibility into account in making recommendations for 2019, I would also ask the Pay Review Body to:

- be cognisant of Northern Ireland Public Sector Pay guidance;
- ensure that the award is affordable within the existing NIPS budget; and
- make further progress on addressing relativities and lower paid staff through a targeted approach to pay.

This activation letter is being issued now as it would be our intention to finalise the pay settlement earlier, subject to timescales for evidence, reporting, and the issuing of public sector pay guidance. Finally, I would ask you to note that this letter is issued subject to the views of an incoming Minister of Justice. Departmental officials will continue to liaise with the Secretariat in respect of local political developments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter May".

PETER MAY

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Appendix E: 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 2019 £ a year
Governor in Charge (Maghaberry)	82,375	82,575
	81,075	81,972
	79,775	81,370
	78,475	80,045
	77,175	78,720
	75,875	77,395
Governor in Charge (other posts)	75,035	76,555
	73,735	75,225
	72,435	73,895
	71,135	72,565
	69,835	71,235
	68,535	69,905
Head of Function	58,775	59,965
	57,890	59,060
	57,005	58,155
	56,120	57,250
	55,235	56,345
	54,350	55,440
Head of Unit	52,600	53,650
	51,830	52,865
	51,060	52,080
	50,290	51,295
	49,520	50,510
	48,750	49,725

Current and recommended pay levels for officer and support grades

Grade	Current pay scale	Recommended pay scale from 1 April 2019
	£ a year	£ a year
Senior Officer (pre-2002)	42,276	42,776
Senior Officer (post-2002)	39,155	39,655
	38,270	38,770
	37,385	37,885
	36,500	37,000
	35,615	36,115
	34,730	35,230
Main Grade Officer (pre-2002)	38,688	39,188
	37,920	38,420
	37,545	38,045
	37,170	37,670
	36,800	37,300
Main Grade Officer (post-2002)	31,171	31,671
Custody Prison Officer	26,520	27,020
	25,600	26,100
	24,680	25,180
	23,760	24,260
	22,840	23,340
<i>Completion of Certificate of Competence</i>	21,920	22,420
	21,000	21,500
Night Custody Officer	23,695	24,195
	23,230	23,730
	22,765	23,265
	22,299	22,799
Operational Support Grade	21,000	21,500

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 2019 £ a year
Principal Prisoner Custody Officer	26,840	27,340
	26,160	26,660
	25,475	25,975
	24,790	25,290
Senior Prisoner Custody Officer	23,795	24,295
	22,995	23,495
	22,200	22,700
	21,405	21,905
Prisoner Custody Officer	21,540	22,040
	20,865	21,365
	20,190	20,690
	19,515	20,015

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 F: Current and recommended allowances and payments

We make two recommendations (in bold) on allowances: increases to the Supplementary Risk Allowance and the governor on-call allowance rates.

	Current level	Recommended from 1 September 2019
	£ a year	£ a year
Supplementary risk allowance¹	2,950	NITA rate²
	Current level	Recommended from 1 April 2019
	£ a year	£ a year
Specialist allowances ³		
<i>Librarian</i>	679	679
Dog handler	723	723
Physical education instructor	723	723
<i>Groundsman</i>	723	723
<i>Hospital officer</i>	814	814
<i>Emergency control room staff</i>	852	852
Works officer	949	949
Laundry officer	1,062	1,062
<i>Caterer</i>	1,118	1,118
<i>Weapons officer</i>	1,118	1,118
<i>Fire officer</i>	1,132	1,132
Instructor	1,490	1,490
<i>Firearms officer</i>	2,322	2,322
Other allowances ⁴		
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 2019
	£ 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
Governor grade on-call allowances		
Weekdays⁵	11.65	15.00
Weekends and Privilege Holidays	18.65	20.00
Public and Bank Holidays	22.65	40.00
Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody		
Service drivers' allowance ⁶		
Tier 1: 1 to 4 cell vehicles	4.00	4.00
Tier 2: 6 and 8 cell vehicles	6.00	6.00
Tier 3: 12 cell vehicles	8.00	8.00

Notes:

1. This allowance is paid to all officer and support grades, and Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody

Service (PECCS) staff, except for Senior Officer pre-2002 and Main Grade Officer pre-2002, who already had a previous historical equivalent risk allowance consolidated into base pay. This allowance is non-pensionable.

2. This will be the level of the Police Service of Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) as at 1 September 2019.

3. 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. Those allowances in italics are now obsolete and will be removed from future PSPRB reports.

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

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

6. The PECCS drivers' allowance is only payable when a period of driving has been undertaken on that day. This allowance is non-pensionable.