ANNUAL REPORT 2025–2026

The Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

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Foreword

It is my privilege to present the Annual Report for the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland for the year 2025 - 26.

This year, the Office continued to deliver independent, impartial and timely investigations into complaints and deaths in custody. In doing so, we aimed to support transparency, accountability and learning across the prison system. Our work contributes not only to individual resolution but also to systemic improvement in how custody is experienced in Northern Ireland.

Despite challenges, including leadership transitions and continued pressure on resources, we addressed all the objectives in our Business Plan. I extend my thanks to the dedicated staff of this Office, whose professionalism and commitment underpin the delivery of this report and the service we provide.

Our vision remains steadfast: to ensure every prisoner, visitor and member of staff is treated with fairness and respect and our investigations contribute meaningfully to a safer and just prison system.

DARRIN JONES
Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
July 2026

Who We Are

The Prisoner Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) is an 'Independent Statutory Office Holder,' appointed by the Minister of Justice under Section 2(2) of the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953, as extended by Section 2 of the Treatment of Offenders Act (Northern Ireland) 1968.

The Director of Operations supports the Ombudsman's work and has responsibility for corporate governance, process assurance, staff support and delivery of the Ombudsman's strategic objectives. The Director of Operations is also the budget manager and has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the office.

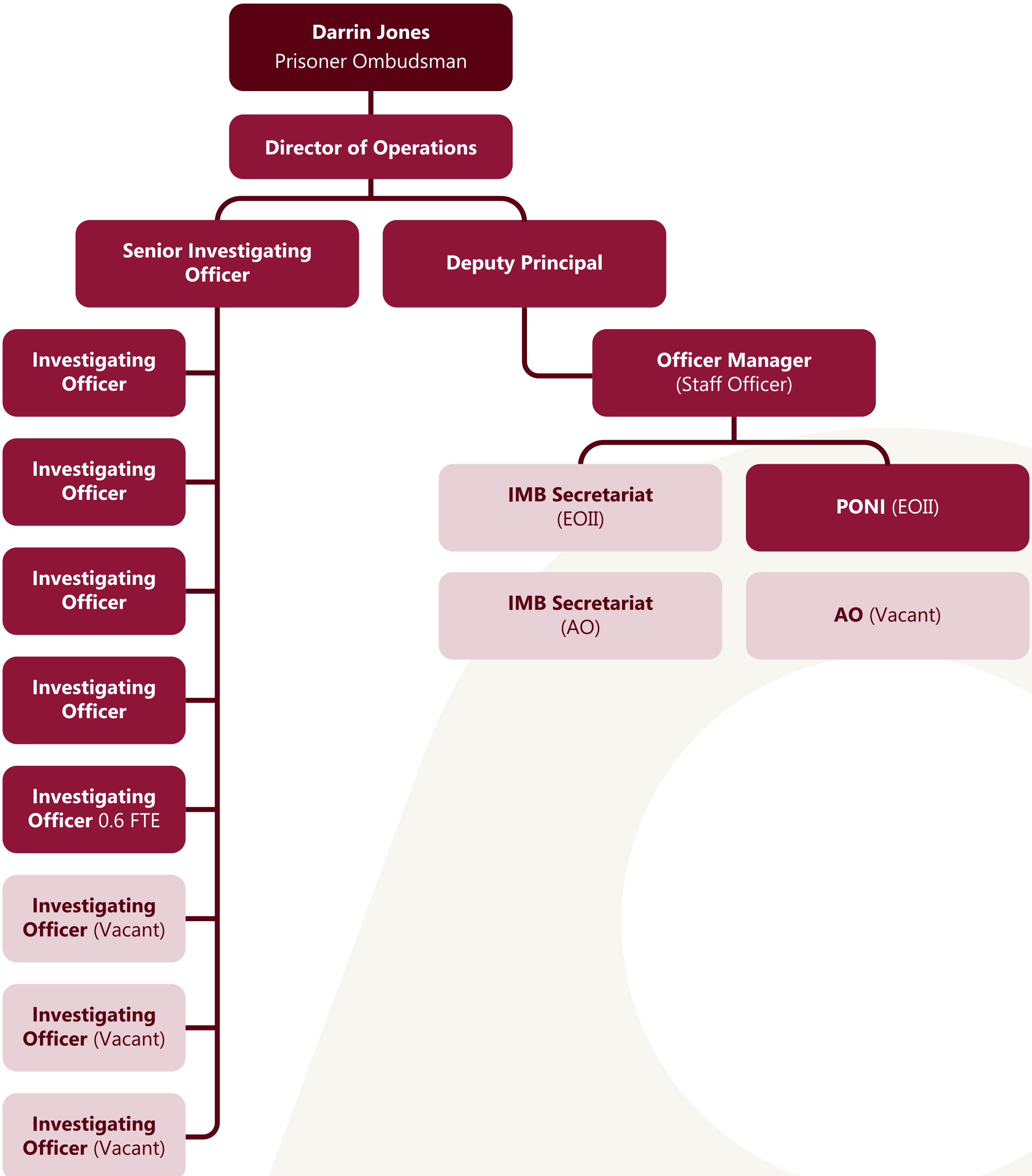
The staff within the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman (the Office) are Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) employees and therefore comply with the standards and principles laid down in the Civil Service Management Code, the NICS Standards and Conduct guidance and the NICS Code of Ethics. These set out in detail the rules governing confidentiality, data protection, acceptance of outside appointments and involvement in political activities.

The team within the Office conduct themselves according to the agreed standards and methods of conducting investigations and administrative tasks to ensure all work is carried out efficiently and effectively.

Staffing at 1 April 2025

- Director of Operations (Grade 7),
- Senior Investigations Officer (Deputy Principal),
- Corporate Governance and Compliance Officer (Deputy Principal),
- Office Manager (Staff Officer)
- 4.6 Investigation Officers (Staff Officer), and
- 1 Executive Officer II.

The organisation chart below shows the staff complement at 1 April 2025.



What We Do

The Office was established in 2005 following the Steele Review of Prisons, which was commissioned due to concerns about the safety of staff and prisoners in Maghaberry Prison. Amongst other things, the Review suggested that the establishment of such an office would *"make a valuable contribution to defusing the tensions which are bound to arise in prisons in Northern Ireland."*

The Office contributes to ensuring safety and standards within prisons through two specific functions:

- investigating and reporting on Deaths in Custody (DiC) including Post Release Deaths (PRD) (normally occurring up to 14 days post release) and Serious Adverse Incidents (SAI).
- investigating and reporting on complaints from current or former prisoners and their visitors.

The Ombudsman has a Standing Commission from the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) to investigate Deaths in Custody.

Draft DiC investigation reports are shared with NIPS, the Trust and the deceased's family for factual accuracy. The final report is shared with the Coroners' Service NI (CSNI) and is published on our website. Our preference is to publish DiC reports in full to best serve the public interest. However, we balance publication against legal obligations in respect of data protection and privacy.

The Ombudsman's powers regarding investigation of complaints are currently set out in Rule 79 of the Prison and Young Offender Centre (NI) Rules 2009.

Draft complaint investigation reports are shared with NIPS and complainants to ensure factual accuracy. We also ask NIPS to share draft reports with any identifiable staff who are mentioned in the report. Complaint reports are not generally published but can be at the Ombudsman's discretion.

The Terms of Reference can be found on the Ombudsman's website:

- Complaints Terms of Reference or Death in Custody Terms of Reference.

The Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman does not currently hold statutory power.

Our Standards

Throughout the period of this Annual Report, the work of the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman was underpinned by a Mission Statement and subsequent Strategic Plan. The supporting principles of the mission statement relate to how we approach work and relationships, both inside the Office and with our partners and stakeholders. The Strategic Plan introduced our four pillars of work for the period 2025-28.

MISSION STATEMENT

To help ensure prisons are safe, purposeful places through the provision of independent, impartial and professional investigation into Complaints and Deaths in Custody.

Principle 1
INDEPENDENCE

To maintain and strengthen confidence in the independent and impartial approach of the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman.

Principle 2
PROFESSIONALISM

To continuously review and develop investigation processes for Complaints and Deaths in Custody, ensuring high standards of investigative practice, robustness, a proportionate approach and balanced reporting.

Principle 3
SERVICE-ORIENTATION

To provide an effective and courteous service to all stakeholders and positively influence the implementation of recommendations to assist the Northern Ireland Prison Service and South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to deliver a purposeful, rehabilitative and healthy regime.

Principle 4
CLEAR COMMUNICATION

To maximise awareness of the role of the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman among key stakeholders and keep those to whom we provide a service fully informed about the content and progress of investigations in which they have an interest.

Principle 5
EFFICIENCY

To ensure the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman uses its resources efficiently and complies with relevant legislative and governance requirements.

Principle 6
FORWARD LOOKING

To develop the role of the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman to meet emerging needs.

Strategic Objectives

1. Improve investigative processes and timelines

- Develop a **robust delivery plan** ensuring consistency, quality assurance and clear report timelines to monitor progression of backlogs to no more than 3 months from date of receipt.
- Enhance **recording mechanisms** with clear tracking and transparent explanations for delays.
- Improve **workflow structures** to optimise efficiency.
- Digitalisation of office processes **(Year 1)**, followed by a new **Case Management System**
- **(Year 2)**, with full integration **(Year 3)**.

2. Reinforce independence

- Safeguard and strengthen independence through structured reviews.
- Conduct a service user survey to baseline perception of our service delivery.
- Implement formalised feedback mechanisms from service users and audits.
- Enhance staff skills through professional investigative training (e.g., statement-taking, evidence gathering and report drafting).

3. Improve visibility and accountability

- Benchmark against best practices.
- Expand stakeholder collaborations.
- Increase awareness through quarterly publications, monthly clinics and engagement initiatives.

4. Optimise resources for efficiency and effectiveness

- Implement IT improvements and enhance digital processes.
- Develop a modern Case Management System.
- Strengthen staff training, well-being and performance management.
- Staffing review in Years 2-3 to optimise structures.

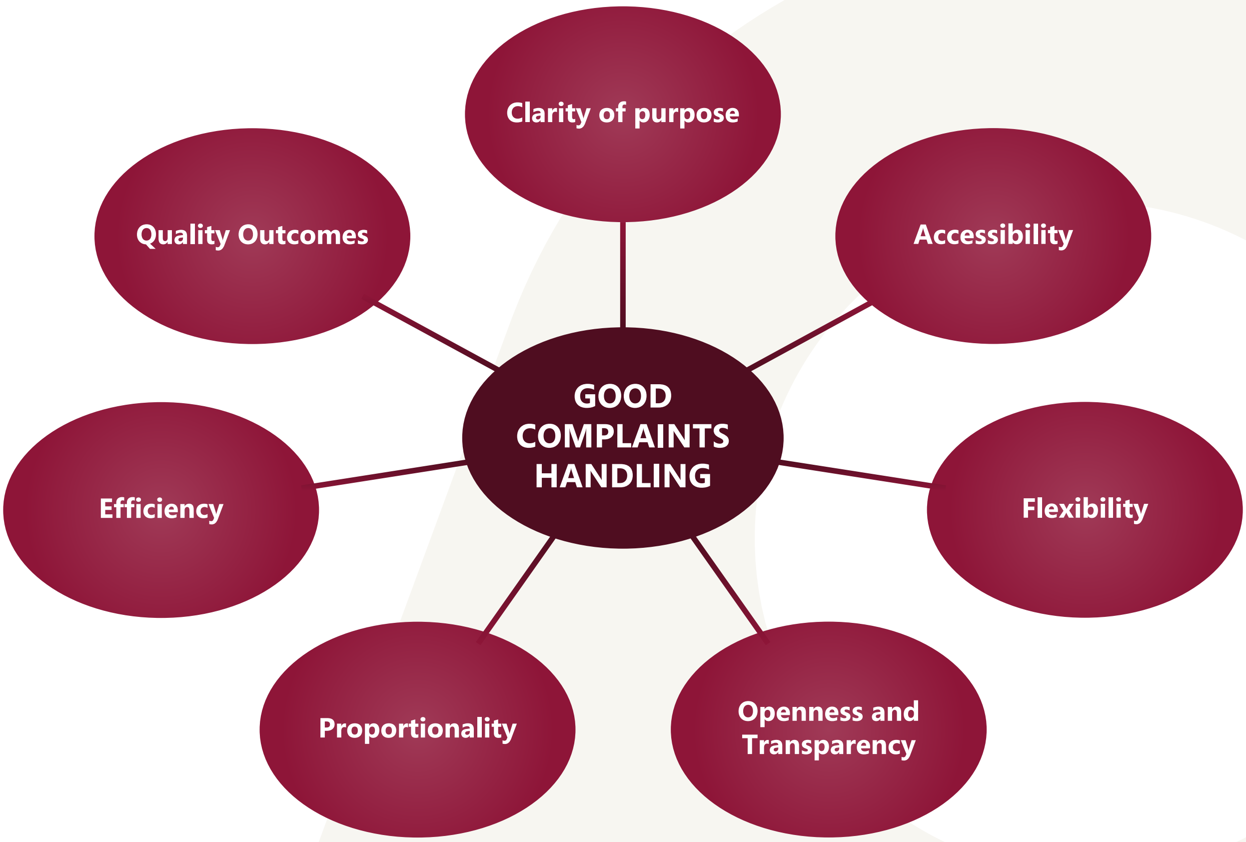
Support for Staff

All staff within the Office complete the Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigative Practice awarded by the International Compliance Association, the leading professional body for global regulatory compliance community, in association with Alliance Manchester Business School, one of the most prestigious post-graduate institutions in the world.

All staff have also attained a bespoke qualification on PEACE Interview Training which was designed and delivered by the PSNI to enhance interview skills and confidence within the team.

Detailed handbooks are available to guide staff through their investigations. These are updated as necessary and are supported by a variety of standardised templates and guidance to ensure impartiality and thoroughness.

All staff adhere to the internal Good Complaints Handling guidance which promotes the principles below.



Performance Overview

1. Deaths in Custody

The Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman investigations into Deaths in Custody fulfil the duty, required by Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights to inform the Coroner's Inquest. The Prisoner Ombudsman is notified when a death occurs after which an Investigator will attend the scene within four hours. The specific aims of Death in Custody investigations are to:

- establish the circumstances surrounding the death,
- examine the care provided to the deceased by NIPS and the Trust,
- recommend improvements to NIPS and/or Trust policies/procedures that may help prevent a similar death in the future,
- ensure the bereaved family have an opportunity to raise concerns, and
- assist the Coroner's inquest.

April 2025 started with an existing case load of thirty-three cases to be investigated with the oldest cases being from 2021.

Table 1 - Cases requiring investigation at the beginning of April 2025.

Calendar year	Incident	Maghaberry	Magilligan	Hydebank
2025	DiC	4	1	
	PRD	2		2
2024	DiC	7		
	PRD	1		
2023	DiC	2		
	PRD	1		
	SAI	1		1
2022	DiC	4	1	
	PRD	1		
	SAI	1		
2021	DiC	2	1	
	SAI			1

During 2025-26, a further eight death notifications were received; four of which were Deaths in Custody and four were Post Release Deaths. No Serious Adverse Incidents were reported in this period.

Of the total 33 cases, twelve were investigated to conclusion which resulted in eleven reports being published and six cases closed following initial investigation.

Going forward into 2026-27, the office has 25 investigations outstanding.

Disclosure Bundles

Information obtained in the process of each Death in Custody investigation is shared with the Coroners Service NI under disclosure. During 2025-26, 12 disclosure bundles were provided.

2. Complaint investigations and responses to complainants

NIPS operates an Internal Complaints Process (ICP) and the prisoner's right to lodge a complaint to NIPS underpins this process. An effective ICP is the first stage in a process designed to increase the confidence of prisoners in making a complaint about matters affecting them including their welfare and safety.

Complaints can only be escalated to this Office once Stage 1 and 2 of the NIPS ICP have been completed unless they are closed by NIPS under Prison Rule 79B[1]. When complaints are made to this Office, Investigators review all the available material and make an unbiased and independent response to the complainant.

Complaints during 2025-2026.

During 2025-26, across the four prison establishments, the average population was 2,095 (compared to 1,911 the previous year). Complaints totaling 7,790 were made to NIPS during this time, an increase from 6,700 (>16.27%) from the previous year. Of these 7,790 complaints, this Office received 239 escalated complaints in addition to the 234 to be actioned from previous years. This represents 3.07% of the 7,790 complaints initiated through the NIPS internal complaints process.

Throughout 2025-26, 298 complaints were investigated to conclusion.

1 Prison Rule 79B allows for complaints not to be answered where they are deemed to be vexatious, repetitive, frivolous, raising no substantial issue or either on their own or taken together with other complains, intended to hamper the proper operation of the complaint's procedure.

Maghaberry General Prison Population

The general prison population within Maghaberry Prison lodged 160 complaints, 68% of all complaints received.

Maghaberry Separated Prisoners

Prisoners on separated landings at Maghaberry Prison lodged 68 individual complaints in the reporting period, 28% of the total number of complaints received which is comparable to last year.

Magilligan Prison

Five complaints were lodged from prisoners in Magilligan, which shows a decrease to the previous year.

Hydebank Wood Secure College and Women's Prison

The small number of complaints from young men and women in Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison remains comparable to previous years.

Analysis of these statistics should consider the different types of prison environment and the specific needs of the prisoners in their respective care. The Office continues to promote prisoner awareness and understanding of how to make a complaint to the Office.

Table 2 - Number of individual complaints received by the Ombudsman's Office during 2025-26

Prison	Average Prison Population	Number of Individual complaints	% of all complaints received (including ineligible complaints)
Maghaberry Prison General prison population	1401	160	68
Maghaberry Prison Roe 3 and 4 Separated Prisoners	15	67	28
Maghaberry Prison Bush House 1 and 2 Separated Prisoners	8	1	0
Magilligan Prison	500	5	2
Hydebank Wood Secure College (Young Men)	55	2	1
Hydebank Wood Secure College Ash House (Female)	116	3	1
Former Prisoner	0	1	0
Visitors – not in custody	0	0	0
Overall Total	**2,095**	**239**	**100**

Withdrawn Complaints

No complaints were withdrawn ahead of investigation.

Range and nature of complaints

Table 3 - Range and nature of complaints from prisoners across the Northern Ireland Prison Estate.

Complaints Topic	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24
Accommodation	15	20	2
Adjudications	5	5	8
Adverse reports	6	29	30
Another inmate	4		
Association	3		
Complaint Procedure	16	48	5
Disability	2		
Discrimination	2	5	8
Drugs	1		
Education	23	2	19
Excess noise	4		
Food	2	1	2
Health and Safety Wellbeing	5	7	9
Mail/legal	21	15	27
Miscellaneous	10	3	
Pre-release	5	5	9
Programmes	10		
Property & Cash	16	44	1
Regime	6	10	7
Searching/Full body search/scanners	2	20	33
Telephone	2	2	5
Treatment by Officers	67	7	30
Tuckshop	4	5	10
Visits	7	2	4

Themes of Complaints

The Office noted concern about the lack of improvement or increase in number of complaints in previously identified categories, such as:

- Education complaints rose from 2 complaints in 2024-25 to 23 in 2025-26
- Treatment by Officers rose from 7 complaints in 2024-25 to 67 in 2025-26
- NIPS pre-release procedure remained constant with 5 complaints in 2024-25 and 5 complaints in 2025-26.

Areas of Reduction in Complaints

The Office noted the reduction in complaints regarding:

- Adverse Reports reduced from 29 in 2024-25 to 6 in 2025-26
- Full Body Scanning (FBS) complaints continue to decrease, 20 complaints in 2024-25 reduced to 2 in 2025-26.

Outcomes of Complaints

Prisoner Ombudsman Investigators scrutinise complaints against the policies and procedures under which NIPS operate. Where a breach of policy or procedure is identified the complaint will be deemed to be ‘upheld’ or ‘partially upheld’. A complaint will be ‘not upheld’ where no breach of policy or procedure has been identified. An outcome of Prison Rule 79N is awarded if the complaint has been deemed to be vexatious, frivolous, repetitive, raised no substantial issue or is intended to hamper the proper operation of the complaints procedure.

Table 4 - Outcomes of the 298 complaints concluded in 2024-25.

Outcome of eligible complaints	Number of each outcome	% of overall eligible complaints
Upheld	13	4
Partially Upheld	25	8
Not Upheld	179	61
79N & 79K	78	26
Ineligible	3	1

Recommendations

Of the 298 complaint investigations concluded, 76 had recommendations (25.5% of overall complaints received in this Office) for improvement, most of which were accepted by NIPS.

There were a number of recommendations made in relation to specific individual cases. However, there were also a number of recommendations made around reoccurring themes such:

1. **Internal Complaint Procedure (NIPS):-** "NIPS should print the response to a complaint on the date it is physically given to the prisoner in order to prevent any discrepancy between the 'Returned to Inmate' date and the actual date the prisoner receives the response."

2. **Staff:-** "NIPS should re-issue the current policy on Body Worn Camera."

3. **Education:-** "NIPS should ensure that prisoners receive regular and meaningful updates where requests for education or training programmes cannot be progressed within standard timescales. This should include advising when a matter remains under consideration and providing realistic indicative timeframes where possible."

Progress Against Business Plan 2025-26

The Prisoner Ombudsman's Strategic Plan for 2025-28 sets out the strategic priorities the Ombudsman aims to achieve. The Plan was approved on 19 December 2025.

The four strategic priorities and achievement to date are detailed below:

Strategic Priority 1: Improve Investigative Processes and Timelines

A robust delivery plan ensuring consistency, quality assurance and clear report timelines to monitor progression of complaints backlogs to no more than 3 months from date of receipt is operational. Progress against the target of a backlog of not more than three months is nearing fruition.

Enhanced recording mechanisms with clear tracking and transparent explanations for delays are being developed. Scoping of a Case Management System will be progressed in the 2026/27 year.

Workflow structures have been improved with efficiency evidenced.

Some work on digitalisation of office processes has been delivered. A scoping exercise for the purchase of a Case Management System will be undertaken in the 2026/27 year to allow full integration in 2027/28.

Strategic Priority 2: Reinforce Independence

Surveys of our Service Users to baseline perception of our service delivery have commenced with users in Magilligan and Maghaberry Prisons. It is hoped to expand upon this and include users in Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison early in 2026/27.

Formalised feedback mechanisms from service users and audits will be initiated in the 2026/27 year.

The majority of staff have enhanced their investigation skills with the completion of PEACE investigative training delivered by PSNI. Going forward all new investigative staff will complete both the Bond Solon 'Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigative Practice' and the PSNI 'PEACE Investigative Training'. All staff will attend annual refresher training with the PSNI.

Strategic Priority 3: Improve Visibility and Accessibility

Unfortunately, arrangements to benchmark best practice against the Probation and Prisoner Ombudsman for England and Wales was postponed until early in 2026/27. Preparatory work was undertaken on processes and procedures which will inform discussions at future engagement.

The Office collaborated with a range of Stakeholders through monthly knowledge exchange meetings. These sessions proved invaluable learning for both our team and attending stakeholders as we learnt about each others value to the justice system and how we can support each other.

Engagement initiatives including awareness sessions for NIPS Staff and Prisoners have been delivered with follow up monthly clinics now operational.

Strategic Priority 4: Optimise Resources for Efficiency and Effectiveness

All staff undertook training in conflict management, distressed caller and trauma & resilience supporting both their well-being and the well-being of those we are in contact with. This enables all staff to provide a more efficient and effective service to our customers and stakeholders, ensuring all staff are cross-deployable in delivery of our service.

Corporate Governance

Strong governance practices were maintained throughout the reporting year. We continued to engage effectively with the Department of Justice Policing Policy & Strategy Division, ensuring alignment with departmental priorities and expectations.

All governance documents, including the Risk Register, were reviewed and updated to ensure they remained current and reflective of the organisation's risk environment. We successfully completed an Internal Audit Review and responded to all Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests within required timeframes, in line with DoJ policy. More detailed information regarding governance is included in the paragraph below.

Corporate governance is delivered through quarterly formal meetings between senior office staff, DoJ Policing Policy & Strategy Division and Financial Services Division, at which key corporate documents, processes and progress is reviewed. The Ombudsman does not attend these meetings.

In February 2025, NICS Internal Audit Services commenced an audit review of Prisoner Ombudsman Administrative Support System. The Internal Audit Report was completed in April 2026 with a satisfactory rating obtained.

The Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring the Prisoner Ombudsman's policies and actions comply with DoJ rules and processes and for managing the resources allocated to the Office efficiently, effectively and economically.

Finance and Accountability

The Office receives programme funding as part of the Safer Communities Core Directorate budget allocations and as such, any expenditure incurred by the Office is recorded as part of the DoJ Departmental expenditure. This means that the Office does not produce its own set of accounts nor lay its finances before the Northern Ireland Assembly separately from the DoJ.

The Office's accounting information is incorporated into the DoJ's published Annual Report and Accounts which is audited by the Comptroller General of the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The Annual Report is published after the end of each financial year.

Budget Allocation

PONI's final Non-Ringfenced Resource DEL budget for 2025-26 was £948k, we received £3k in the June Monitoring Round towards Employer NIC increase pressures. The final closing Non-Ringfenced Resource DEL budget for 2025-26 was £951k. There was no Capital DEL allocation in 2025-26.

The Office complies with the Department of Finance's Managing Public Money NI guidance and with the principles governing relationships between Departments and their Arms' Length Bodies. To this end, a Framework Document sets out the relationship with the DoJ and places particular emphasis on the:

- Prisoner Ombudsman's overall aims, objectives and targets in support of the Department's wider strategic aims, outcomes and targets contained in its current Public Service Agreement,
- conditions under which any public funds are paid to the Office, and,
- how the Prisoner Ombudsman's Office accounts for its performance.

The current Framework Document was agreed in 2012. An updated document has been shared with DOJ Policing, Policy and Strategy Division, it is presently awaiting approval. Procurement and contract management processes comply with all regulations to ensure full and fair competition between prospective suppliers. They are managed in line with the Department of Finance Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) guidelines and approval processes. The Director of Operations reviewed the management of supplier performance to ensure, for the duration of contracts, delivery quality and service standards and evaluations are conducted.

Information Security

The Director of Operations manages information security and ensures alignment with the DoJ Security Policy Framework. All staff received appropriate training and complied with all NICS security policies and guidance.

Risk Management and Internal Control

The Risk Register is an important method of identifying key risks and the means to manage and mitigate them. The Senior Management Team reviewed the Risk Register regularly and internal controls provided proportionate and reasonable assurance of effectiveness in line with identified risks.

Shared Services

Corporate shared services include:

- NICSHR and HRConnect services have provided Payroll and Human Resources support since April 2010,
- Finance transactional support functions have been provided through the Account NI shared service system since July 2012, and,
- DoJ Financial Services Division provide retained finance functions.

The Director of Operations validated expenditure requests ensuring compliance with delegated limits and segregation of duties and adherence to the Financial Procedures Manual. Throughout the year, the Office checked its controls and processes operated effectively, with manual checking of data integrity and accuracy where necessary, specifically around travel and subsistence monitoring and other approvals which lie with the Director of Operations.

Conclusion

The 2025–26 reporting year has been a period of both consolidation and preparation in which the Office continued to deliver on its operational commitments with professionalism, independence and integrity.

Investigations into complaints and deaths in custody have provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of prisoners and highlighted opportunities for systemic improvement. Through reports and recommendations, my office contributed to greater accountability and transparency within the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

The successful delivery of objectives in the Business Plan is a testament to the hard work and dedication of my team and their commitment to provide a quality service which is underpinned by principles of fairness, respect, and impartiality which remain central to the credibility and impact of the work of the office and my Strategic Plan.

Looking ahead, the objectives identified in the Strategic Plan (2025–28) will guide the work of the office building on the strong foundations laid this year and responding to the evolving challenges and expectations placed upon the Office.

We remain committed to ensuring every investigation, whether into a complaint or a death, makes a meaningful contribution to justice, dignity and safety within Northern Ireland's Prisons.

Appendix 1- Business Plan Objectives 2025-26

Strategic Aim – Safer Communities We will work to ensure we have a safe community where we respect the law and each other.					
Obj 1		**Priorities**	**Measure of success**	**RAG Status**	**Owner**
Improve investigative processes and service delivery					
Delivery Plan	1.1	Develop a robust delivery plan ensuring consistency, quality assurance and clear report timelines to monitor progression of backlogs and future workloads.	Between 8 - 12 Death in Custody investigation reports published. Backlog of complaints cleared to within 3 months of receipt by Office of the Ombudsman.	**31 Mar 2026**	Senior Investigating Officer
Recording Mechanisms	1.2	Enhance recording mechanisms with clear tracking and transparent explanations of case handling.	Complete IT migration of casework to database to enable tracking and trending. Publish quality data on trends and categories for cases handled in Annual Report 2025-26.	**31 Dec 25**	Governance & Compliance DP
Work Flow Structures	1.3	Review and test workflow structures to optimise efficiency.	All investigative staff working to set processes with no internal delay points.	**30 Sep 25**	Senior Investigating Officer
Case Management System	1.4	Prepare to digitalise processes within the Office.	Management information readily available to allow for progression of new work and monitoring progress on backlog of cases.	**30 Sep 25**	Governance & Compliance DP
Obj 2		**Priorities**	**Measure of success**	**RAG Status**	**Owner**
Strengthen Independence	2.1	Safeguard and strengthen independence through focused engagement with stakeholders and service users.	Set up monthly information sharing 'guest speakers' from external organisations with first guest speaker to attend May 2025 to develop staff understanding of the Standard Operating Models within stakeholder organisations.	**Ongoing**	Governance & Compliance DP
Formalised feedback mechanisms	2.2	Implement formalised feedback mechanisms from and to stakeholders.	Have established a baseline benchmark through results of a survey issued to all stakeholders and service users.	**31 December 2025**	Governance & Compliance DP
Professional, Investigative and Administrative Training	2.3	Enhance staff skills through professional investigative training.	All staff complete at least one development course annually. All staff have completed training as per PDP's in line with Training needs.	**31 March 2026**	Director of Operations
Obj 3		**Priorities**	**Measure of success**	**RAG Status**	**Owner**
Best practice	3.1	Benchmark against similar organisations to ascertain best practice.	Identify/implement best practices.	**31 March 2026**	Director of Operations
Engagement	3.2	Expand and continue to strengthen stakeholder engagement with Department of Justice, Northern Ireland Prison Service, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, Coroner's Office, Independent Monitoring Board and other partners with detention oversight.	All Memorandum's of Understanding established and updated/ agreed to facilitate effective working relationships needed. Engagement with stakeholder bodies as agreed in Memorandum of Understanding etc at all levels.	**30 September 2025**	Governance & Compliance DP

Strategic Aim – Safer Communities We will work to ensure we have a safe community where we respect the law and each other.					
Promotion material and events	3.3	Increase awareness through publications, surgeries and engagement initiatives with stakeholders, Service Users and their advocates.	Plan for regular prisoner surgeries in place and functional. Draft Communication Plan.	**31 March 2026**	Governance & Compliance DP
Obj 4		**Priorities**	**Measure of success**	**RAG Status**	**Owner**
Staff Well Being	4.3	Strengthen staff well-being procedures related to controllable risks to staff well-being.	Initiatives identified, available, accessible and used by staff to support their well-being.	**30 September 2025**	Director of Operations
Performance Framework	4.4	Monitor performance, effectiveness and efficiency.	Benchmark performance to enable effective working.	**31 March 2026**	Governance & Compliance DP
Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)	4.5	IMB receives effective Secretariat support from within the Office.	Effective working relationship with and service delivery for IMB Executive Committee and members.	**31 March 2026**	Director of Operations and Secretariat Staff
Obj 5		**Priorities**	**Measure of success**	**RAG Status**	**Owner**
Budget	5.1	Demonstrate financial probity.	The outturn expenditure will remain within budget with no over spends.	**31 March 2026**	Governance & Compliance DP
Governance	5.2	Effective Sponsor relationships and compliance with Department of Justice governance requirements.	Track the implementation of Ombudsman Recommendations. Attend quarterly governance meetings with the Sponsor Team.	**30 September 2025** **31 March 2026**	Governance & Compliance DP

Appendix 2 - Overview of the Prison Estate

Maghaberry Prison

A high security prison, housing adult male long-term sentenced and remand prisoners in both separated and integrated conditions.

- **Separated prisoners**
  The Steele Review, published in September 2003 recommended that republican and loyalist prisoners with paramilitary affiliations should be accommodated separately from each other, and the rest of the prison population, on a voluntary basis. As a result of the recommendations, prisoners can apply to be housed in separated accommodation. Separated male republican prisoners are housed on two landings in Roe House within Maghaberry Prison. Separated loyalist prisoners are housed on two landings in Bush House, also within Maghaberry Prison. Separated female prisoners are housed in the Separated Unit of Hydebank House.

Magilligan Prison

A medium security prison, housing shorter-term adult male prisoners. It also has low security accommodation (Foyleview) for selected prisoners nearing the end of their sentence.

Hydebank Wood Secure College and Women's Prison

The college is a medium security Prison located on the outskirts of South Belfast. It accommodates young male prisoners (18-24 years) and all female prisoners in Northern Ireland.

Ash House and Beech House

Women prisoners have been held in Ash House since 2004 and Beech House since 2022, both standalone residential units within the Hydebank Wood campus.