



**General Teaching Council
for Northern Ireland**

Promoting Teacher Professionalism

**2020-21
Annual Report
and
Accounts**

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly
in accordance with paragraph 12 of Schedule 1
to the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
by the Department of Education

on

11th October 2022

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FOREWORD BY THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/REGISTRAR

This Annual Report focuses on the performance of the Council in 2020-21. The year will largely be remembered for the Covid 19 pandemic and its adverse effect across the education sector in Northern Ireland. During this period the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) endeavoured to maintain operations, continue to promote teacher professionalism and undertake statutory functions. It was against a challenging backdrop that GTCNI managed to achieve the following positive actions:

- A smooth transition to a model of remote working;
- Maintain an annual programme of teacher registration;
- Successfully complete the accreditation of Bachelor of Education programmes delivered by Higher Education Institutions in NI. The programmes were accredited for a further four years. Both teachers and stakeholders can have continued confidence in the quality of the programmes offered to student teachers in NI. We are grateful to the respective institutions for their co-operation and to the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) for their assistance in this programme;
- Progress significantly the development of new “leadership competences” in support of Learning Leaders, a policy aimed at improving teacher professional learning in NI;
- Undertake necessary repair and upgrading of key IT infrastructure; and
- Continue to work collaboratively with the teaching councils in Scotland, Wales and Republic of Ireland to the benefit of the teaching profession.

2020-21 proved a challenging one in the operation of the Council itself (i.e. the organisation’s Board). Problems that surfaced in 2019-20 continued in 2020-21 raising concern within the members, DE officials and members of the NI Assembly. Dysfunction within the Council had a detrimental impact not only on the effectiveness of the Council - 13 members resigned or withdrew from the Council in 2021 - but also on the day-to-day operation of the organisation as a whole.

An independent review into the effectiveness of the Council, announced by the Minister of Education in October 2020, completed in November 2021. Subsequently, in light of the findings, the Minister took the decision to stand the Council down with immediate effect and to initiate a consultation on the future undertaking of GTCNI’s functions. For the interim period, GTCNI will remain operational with governance and oversight provided by Department of Education officials.

GTCNI staff wish to thank all its stakeholders for their support, encouragement and cooperation through what has been a difficult period for everyone within the Education Sector in Northern Ireland.

During the period covered by this report, Sam Gallaher was GTCNI's Chief Executive Officer/Registrar. Sam left GTCNI on 31 May 2022 and I wish to thank him for his service.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Gallagher." The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Ian Gallagher

Interim Chief Executive Officer/Registrar

Date: 30 September 2022

PERFORMANCE REPORT – OVERVIEW

Background

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) was established to be the statutory, professional and regulatory body for the teaching profession in Northern Ireland, to enhance the status of teaching and to promote the highest standards of professional conduct and practice. GTCNI was established by the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

Purpose

GTCNI's purpose is to work in collaboration with the teaching profession and key stakeholders across the education sector in Northern Ireland as an independent and respected professional body representing teachers by:

- advocating the highest standards of professional conduct and practice;
- ensuring that everyone wishing to teach in Northern Ireland schools is appropriately qualified, registered and regulated;
- promoting career-long professional development;
- providing government and employing authorities with recommendations for enhancing teachers' career-long professional development; and
- being an authoritative voice on behalf of the profession.

Principal Objectives and Activities

GTCNI's responsibilities, are set out in the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Articles 34-41 as amended by the 2003 and 2006 Education (NI) Orders, and are as follows:

1. the establishment and maintenance of a register of teachers to support the registration of all teachers in grant-aided schools;
2. regulate the teaching profession;
3. the approval of qualifications for the purposes of registration; and
4. the provision of advice to the Department of Education and employing authorities on all matters relating to teaching including the standards of entry to the profession; the training, career development and performance management of teachers; standards of teaching and teachers' conduct.

The Corporate Plan setting out the strategic objectives and aspirations of GTCNI for the period 2020-23 was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 9 July 2020. Over the period of the Plan, GTCNI's objectives are to operate as the professional body for the teaching profession in Northern Ireland to:

- Fulfil all of its statutory legal functions and maintain a financially sustainable organisation, demonstrating effective stewardship and governance;
- Continue to promote professionalism amongst teachers through offering appropriate advice and guidance and work towards embedding competence based professional development across the education sector;
- Promote the interests of the profession through effective engagement and by working collaboratively with stakeholders across the education sector in Northern Ireland;
- Secure within the teaching profession a greater sense of ownership and recognition of GTCNI as its professional body; and

- Develop the organisation as appropriate, ensuring it continues to meet the professional needs of teachers in a manner consistent with our remit.

Organisation Performance

The 2020–21 financial year proved very challenging for GTCNI due specifically to the difficulties encountered as a result of the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic and lock-down restrictions and a deterioration in the operation of the organisation’s Board, i.e. the Council. GTCNI ended the year with a net surplus after taxation of £46,613. Whilst teacher registration fee income fell short of that expected by approximately £46,000, overall operating expenditure was also reduced due in part to the effects of Covid 19 pandemic on overall running costs. The reduction in registration fees is largely attributable to the cohort of registrants that tend not to be in regular school employment and who were affected by school closures that occurred during the period.

In March 2020 GTCNI rapidly made arrangements to transition its staff to a remote model of working (working from home) in response to the Covid 19 pandemic and Government and Public Health guidance. This transition proved effective and day to day operations were able to continue. Staff successfully completed most of the in-year registration programme without too much disruption along with other reporting processes. Staff continued to work from home throughout 2020-21.

Throughout 2020-21, the Council continued in a “special measures” regime with the Department of Education (DE). The CEO together with the Chair and Vice Chair of Council attended monthly oversight meetings with DE’s Permanent Secretary and other DE officials. These were in addition to the bi-annual Governance and Review meetings. The internal audit assurance position in 2020-21 remained as an overall “*Unacceptable*” assurance rating. During 2020-21 limited progress was made in addressing identified audit recommendations due to continued governance issues within the Council and the challenges posed by Covid 19 operating arrangements.

One of GTCNI’s core functions is maintaining a register of teachers and the registration of teachers seeking to work in Northern Ireland, ensuring that only those who are appropriately qualified can teach in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland. During 2020-21, GTCNI successfully completed the procurement of project management resource to oversee and manage the procurement and implementation of a new IT system to support its registration and regulatory functions. Whilst still in the procurement phase, this new systems project represents a significant capital investment for GTCNI to automate and streamline the teacher registration process and improve the registrant experience.

The organisation continued to work with both DE and the Departmental Solicitors’ Office to address the legislative weaknesses within GTCNI’s regulatory powers. This situation has prevented GTCNI from fulfilling a key statutory responsibility in being able to deliver professional regulation in an effective manner reflecting established standards in public and human rights law. At present GTCNI is conducting its regulatory processes as far as is possible under the present legal framework and exercises due diligence to minimise public risk and to safeguard children and young people. GTCNI continued to promote the importance of teachers’ professional learning through working collaboratively with DE and other stakeholders in the development of ‘Learning Leaders: A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning’. GTCNI’s established Leadership Competences Advisory Group developed the

‘Leadership Lens and Leadership Competences’ documents to underpin school leadership at all levels from initial teacher education to the professional learning of senior leaders and school principals. This work is being incorporated into a DE consultation process on Learning Leaders. GTCNI representatives continue to participate in other DE working groups taking forward other areas of work under the Learning Leaders Strategy and on the Learning Leaders Oversight Board.

Governance and Accountability

GTCNI is designated as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by DE. The designated Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive Officer, is required to ensure that effective systems of internal control are in place and adhered to, and that GTCNI complies with all relevant legislation and codes.

The Governance Statement on pages 16 – 26 addresses governance and assurance issues relating to the management of expenditure and the discharge of responsibilities during the 2020-21 financial year to support the achievement of the GTCNI’s objectives. This is in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to the Accounting Officer in ‘Managing Public Money (Northern Ireland)’ and the principles of ‘the Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments; Code of Good Practice 2013’, in so far as they relate to GTCNI. In his governance statement, the Chief Executive Officer has provided assurance to the Northern Ireland Assembly and to Northern Ireland’s teaching profession that the overall “Unacceptable” internal audit assurance rating of GTCNI’s systems, of governance and accountability remain a matter of grave concern.

Council’s Committee Structure

In 2020-21, the Council continued to operate a Committee structure though the Covid 19 situation placed limitations on its operation. Meetings of Council and Committees moved to being online from June 2020. The Council comprised representatives of the teaching profession and other stakeholders. The Council is meant to set the strategic direction for the organisation supported by an Executive Team. The Council was constituted to operate for a term of four years from 15 October 2019, comprising 33 members.

The Council through the operation of the Governance Framework, delegated some of its responsibilities to the following committees:

- Policy, Registration and Regulation Committee;
- Human Resources Committee;
- Finance and General Purposes Committee; and
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Key Issues & Risks

In October 2020, the Minister for Education initiated an independent review of the operation of the Council due to concern over the operation of the Council and its leadership. Consultants Baker, Tilly, Mooney & Moore were appointed with the review conducted in early 2021-22. Subsequently in light of the findings and recommendations from the review, ongoing dysfunction within the Council and a significant number of resignations, the Minister of Education took the decision in December 2021 to stand-down the Council with immediate effect.

In 2020-21, the Council continued to work with its Sponsor Department (DE) under “special measures” to address the following:

- Operation of GTCNI and functioning of its Governance Framework and delivery of its Corporate Plan;
- Development of a revised framework to enable GTCNI to undertake professional regulation;
- Addressing weaknesses in Information Management & Governance within GTCNI due to a number of breaches of confidentiality a significant data breach and the “*Unacceptable*” internal audit assurance opinion; and
- Advancing the procurement of a new replacement registration IT system.

Equality of Opportunity

GTCNI sought to meet its equality of opportunity obligations in line with its Equal Opportunities Policy and its Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.

Going concern

GTCNI believes that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. At the date of signing this Annual Report and Accounts, there is a reasonable expectation that GTCNI will continue in operational existence for at least the next 18 months. While DE is currently consulting on the future of GTCNI’s functions ahead of GTCNI’s dissolution, this process is expected to take between two and three years.

PERFORMANCE REPORT - PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Results for the Year

GTCNI had a net surplus after taxation of £46,613 for the year.

Corporation Tax

Income in respect of registration fees is regarded as non-trading income for taxation purposes. Corporation tax is chargeable on income from all other sources. GTCNI paid £1,141 in corporation tax in 2020-21.

Non-Current Assets

The movement of non-current assets is summarised in the notes to the accounts. GTCNI does not believe that there is any material difference between the market and historical book values of its non-current assets as at 31 March 2021. The non-current assets are stated at historical cost less depreciation and have not been re-valued during the year.

Reporting Performance

GTCNI operates in an environment where income is flat-lining and expenditure is managed within the approved budget allocation from DE.

GTCNI measured its performance against the objectives contained in the Corporate Plan 2020-23 and its annual Business Plan. Business Plan objectives are assessed and managed through regular review and updating of GTCNI's Corporate Risk Register. Overall accountability on progress in meeting objectives was provided through detailed Quarterly Monitoring reporting to both the Council and DE, supplemented by additional monthly oversight meetings with DE officials.

During the year GTCNI delivered the following corporate goals as set out in the 2020-21 Business Plan:

- GTCNI continued to promote the importance of teachers' professional learning and took forward work on behalf of DE in response to its; 'Learning Leaders: A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning'. GTCNI was tasked to develop leadership competences and, to this end, the Advisory Competences Group proposed a set of progressive, values based leadership competences for the whole teaching profession, from initial teacher education to senior school leaders including for aspiring and experienced school principals. This work is now with DE for further consideration and consultation;
- Officers participated in other DE working groups taking forward other areas of the Learning Leaders Strategy;
- GTCNI completed the accreditation process of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) B.Ed. degree programmes as delivered by Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These programmes were accredited for a further 4 years;
- GTCNI registered 25,665 teachers in 2020-21, generating income of £1,129,260;
- The Corporate Plan 2020-23 was adopted by Council in July 2020 and was subsequently submitted to DE for consideration and approval;
- The 2020-21 Pay Remit business case was prepared and approved by DE on 14 January 2021;
- The 2019-20 Annual Reports and Accounts were laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly in August 2021;

- The 2019-20 Annual Report and Accounts were prepared and audited by NIAO with no audit qualification;
- A sickness absence target of 6.0% for GTCNI staff in 2020-21 was achieved;
- Throughout 2020-21, 100% of all non-disputed invoices were paid within 10 working days;
- Throughout 2020-21, 100% of all non-disputed invoices were paid within 30 working days;
- Throughout 2020-21, GTCNI ensured full compliance with all required procedures in the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) and related governance guidance issued by DE; and
- Throughout 2020-21 GTCNI engaged with its Centre of Procurement Expertise - Central Procurement Directorate (CoPE CPD) to ensure that all procurements were in compliance with public procurement regulations.

Other goals that were partially or not delivered/deferred by GTCNI were:

- The professional regulation of teachers remains hindered by the limitations of the current legislation framework;
- GTCNI endeavoured to manage its expenditure in accordance with the DE resource budget allocation and under/over spending tolerance of +/- 1% for the year. In 2020-21, there was a budget under spend of £249k. The under spend equated to 21.3% of the DE approved budget. The Covid 19 situation had a significant impact on expenditure and operations;
- Some progress was made in implementing the recommendations of the 2019 HR Action Plan with a number of HR policies consulted on;
- A review (desktop research and supplementary engagement) of routes into teaching and qualifications presently recognised in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland was planned. Due to Covid 19 and resourcing this was not completed and has been deferred;
- An interim repair and necessary upgrading of the current registration IT system was commenced. This essential upgrade is required to ensure business continuity pending procurement of a new system;
- Progress was made in the necessary approvals and arrangements for a new teacher registration and regulation IT system. A new business case was developed, approved by Council and submitted to DE for approval. A project management resource was appointed to lead on the new registration system project; and
- A Project Initiation Document was drafted for a programme of work to improve Information Management and Governance. Resourcing for the project was progressed in 2021-22.

Sustainability

GTCNI is committed to making sustainable environmental improvements where possible. GTCNI continues to address sustainability through recycling activities, minimisation of paper and utilising electronic technology where possible to support its business operations. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, GTCNI, like other organisations across both the public and private sectors, facilitated and resourced staff to work remotely to ensure business continuity. This has had a positive knock-on impact on travel and the environment and will be considered in any future GTCNI policy development.

Anti-Fraud and Bribery

GTCNI operates a zero tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption. An Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy incorporating a Fraud Response Plan outlines in detail GTCNI's approach to these areas. There we no reported incidences of fraud or bribery in 2020-21.

Equality Obligations

GTCNI has an approved Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan and is committed to fulfilling its statutory obligations under the Scheme. Due to the Covid 19 situation and ongoing challenging circumstances within GTCNI, there was limited scope to progress the Equality Scheme Action Plan during 2020-21.

Covid 19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted GTCNI significantly in 2020-21 and the situation continued into 2021-22. The organisation transitioned reasonably successfully to home working with additional focus on supporting staff through weekly team "Zoom" calls and 1:1 calls.

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Corporate Governance Report

Report of Council

Council Members

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) is the professional registration and regulatory body for teachers in Northern Ireland. GTCNI's work is funded by teachers' annual registration fees.

In 2020-21, GTCNI was governed by a representative Council comprising 33 members (which included 3 vacancies and one member resigned during 2020-21). Fourteen members are elected in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Constitution Regulations and the Council's Scheme of Election and nineteen members are appointed by the bodies set out in paragraph 7 of the Constitution Regulations. The 2020-21 Council was constituted for a 4 year term on 14 October 2019.

Chairperson

The Chair elected by the Council is Mr. Brendan Morgan. The Vice Chair elected by the Council is Mrs. Siobhan McElhinney.

Senior Management Team

Mr. Sam Gallaher remained as Chief Executive Officer/Registrar during the year. The following staff were members of the Senior Management Team; Mr. Sam Gallaher (Chief Executive Officer/Registrar), Mr. Gerry Devlin (Senior Education Officer) and Mrs. Majella Matthews (Finance & Contracts Manager).

Register of Interests

A Register of Interests of all Council members and officers is maintained by GTCNI and is available on request.

Format of Accounts

The Annual Report and Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements and guidelines set out in the Government's Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance, which is in force for the financial year for which the accounts are being prepared, and under an Accounts Direction given by DE in accordance with paragraph 12 of Schedule 1 to the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context.

Prompt Payment

GTCNI is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the terms of contracts. It aims to pay invoices within 10 days and no later than 30 days. GTCNI complies with the British Standard for Achieving Good Payment Performance in Commercial Transactions (BS 7890), and with the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 as amended and supplemented by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002. During the year GTCNI paid 100% of its invoices within

10 days and 100% of all invoices non-disputed within 30 days, and as such no commercial debt interest was paid or due.

Auditors

GTCNI's financial statements are audited by the Comptroller & Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) in accordance with paragraph 12 of Schedule 1 to the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. The Northern Ireland Audit Office and its staff are wholly independent of GTCNI and DE. The Comptroller & Auditor General reports her findings to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

GTCNI incurred a notional audit fee of £11,500 in respect of the audit of the financial statements. The Northern Ireland Audit Office received no remuneration in respect of non-audit work during the year.

GTCNI confirms that:

- so far as its Interim Chief Executive Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which GTCNI's auditors are unaware; and
- the Interim Chief Executive Officer has taken all the steps to make himself aware of relevant audit information and to establish that GTCNI's auditors have been made aware of that information.

TABLE 1: Council membership during 2020-21

ELECTED MEMBERS		
Representation Provided for	Name of Representative	Representative from
Nursery School Representative	Ms Sonia McGowan	October 2019
Special School Representative	Ms Julian Morgan	October 2019
Primary School Representatives	Ms Ciara Duffy Ms Shaunagh Lambe Ms Lisa Magennis Ms Catriona Mullan Ms Catherine McBride	October 2019 October 2019 October 2019 April 2016 January 2020
Secondary School Representatives	Dr David Baxter Ms Siobhan McElhinney (Vice – Chair) Mr Brendan Morgan (Chair) Ms Susan Parlour Mr Keith Smith	October 2019 April 2016 April 2016 April 2016 October 2019
Primary School Principal	Dr Graham Gault	October 2019
Secondary School Principal	Ms Fiona Kane	October 2019 Resigned Dec 2020

APPOINTED MEMBERS		
Representation Provided for	Name of Representative	Representative from
Northern Ireland Teachers' Council	Mr John Kelly Mr Raymond Beggs Mr Gordon White Ms Emma Loughridge Ms Geri Cameron	October 2019 April 2016 March 2016 October 2019 January 2020
The Education Authority	Ms Aine Andrews Ms John Unsworth	October 2019 October 2019
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Mr Paul O'Doherty Ms Shirley McKenna	October 2015 October 2019
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Ms Maria Thomasson	October 2019
Governing Bodies Association	Ms Mary Lou Winchborne	October 2015
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Ms Cliodhna Scott-Wills	May 2015
Transferor Representatives' Council	Mr John Wilkinson	October 2019
Trustees of Catholic Maintained Schools	Mr Martin Cromie	October 2019
Universities Council for the Education of Teachers	Dr Martin Hagan	October 2015
Department of Education	Ms Maria Mullally 3 vacancies	March 2016

Complaints Procedure

GTCNI has a complaints process in place to ensure that complaints from both stakeholders and the public are dealt with in a timely, transparent and fair way and in line with public sector good practice. A copy of the Complaints Procedure is available on request from GTCNI.

A complaint was received during the period relating to a member of the public's request to attend a Council meeting, which was addressed following correspondence received from the Public Service Ombudsman Office. A complaint was also received from a stakeholder who queried the role and purpose of GTCNI and oversight of a request to attend a Council meeting, which was also satisfactorily resolved. A further complaint was received from a member of staff regarding personal data, which was again satisfactorily resolved.

Health and Safety

GTCNI is committed to adhering to Health and Safety legislation at work to ensure that staff and visitors enjoy the benefits of a safe environment.

All staff have access to an independent and confidential counselling, support and advice service. This counselling support is free to staff at the point of use and is totally external to the Office.

Following the Government Guidelines in relation to Covid 19 the GTCNI's offices were closed to visitors from 18 March 2020. Staff continued to work from home during 2020-21.

Charitable Donations

GTCNI made no charitable donations during the period.

Personal Data Related Incidents

A significant data breach occurred in March 2021 and reported to the Information Commissioner's Office and appropriate action taken to mitigate the associated risks. An investigation by NICS Internal Audit & Fraud Investigation Service (NICS IAFIS) was undertaken but proved inconclusive as to the source of the breach. Recommendations arising from this incident are being progressed and preventative actions taken. Controls over access to offices remain in place.

Disabled Persons

GTCNI has an Equality Commission approved Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan in place. GTCNI adopts an equal opportunities approach to the recruitment, development and promotion of staff. Full and fair consideration is given to applications for employment from all parties including those considered disabled.

Future Developments

GTCNI continues to work on a number of key initiatives, including:

- operationalising GTCNI's limited powers to regulate the teaching profession;
- a transformation programme based on the recommendations of an independent review carried out in September 2017;
- working with DE on the implementation of 'Learning Leaders - A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning'. This is a DE strategy spanning 10 years. GTCNI are currently leading on development of teacher leadership competencies; and

- the replacement of its core IT registration system.

Important Events Occurring after the Year End

There were 11 resignations or withdrawals from Council membership during 2021-22.

Two Employment Tribunal cases were settled.

The Minister for Education informed the Council in October 2020 that an independent review of the effectiveness of the Council would be undertaken. This review took place in early 2021-22 and members of the Council co-operated with it. In light of the findings and recommendations from the review, the Minister of Education took the decision in December 2021 to stand-down the Council with immediate effect.

Whilst GTCNI operationally continues to function, governance oversight is being provided by DE officials and the Permanent Secretary. The future of the organisation will be determined following the outcome of a consultation on the future form and purpose of the organisation.



Ian Gallagher

Interim Chief Executive Officer/Registrar

Date: 30 September 2022

STATEMENT OF THE GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S/INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under paragraph 12 of Schedule 1 to the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Department of Education (DE), with the approval of the Department of Finance, has directed the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI) to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the GTCNI and of its income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by DE, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the *Government Financial Reporting Manual* have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

DE has appointed the Interim Chief Executive Officer as Accounting Officer of GTCNI. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the GTCNI's assets, are set out in Managing Public Money NI, issued by the Department of Finance.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that GTCNI's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.



Ian Gallagher

Interim Chief Executive Officer/Registrar

Date: 30 September 2022

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Introduction

This Governance Statement sets out how in 2020-21 the Chief Executive Officer for the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland, discharged their responsibility to manage and control the resources of GTCNI, along with action to maintain and promote an effective system of governance and risk management in support of GTCNI achieving its aims and objectives.

The 2020-21 year proved to be another challenging one for the operation of Council, which remained under “special measures” with the Department of Education (DE). In October 2020 the Minister of Education initiated an independent review of the governance of the Council. This review took place in early 2021-22. Subsequently in light of the findings and recommendations - and ongoing dysfunction within the Council reflected in 13 member resignations/withdrawals from Council - the Minister of Education took the decision in December 2021 to stand-down the Council with immediate effect.

Whilst GTCNI operationally continues to function, governance oversight and direction is being provided by DE officials. The future of the organisation will be determined following the outcome of a consultation on the future form and purpose of the organisation.

The key challenges arising in GTCNI are summarised in this statement, but of particular concern was the operation and leadership of the Council (the Board of GTCNI) and the level of dysfunction experienced. In addition there were matters of information governance and confidentiality associated with Council business and the ongoing “*Unacceptable*” audit opinion that needed to be addressed.

Operationally the most significant challenge was maintaining operations (particularly teacher registration) in light of the Covid 19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions. GTCNI also sought to work with DE to secure the necessary legislative change to enable the GTCNI to fully discharge its statutory responsibilities in respect of professional regulation.

Responding to the Covid 19 Pandemic

Traditionally GTCNI is an office-based organisation operating out of Albany House in Belfast. However, during 2020-21 the organisation had to contend with the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic and adapt in response to UK Government and NI Executive guidance as necessary. The ongoing situation meant the organisation had to quickly transition to a model of remote working and the pandemic has had an adverse impact on day to day operations and the ability to progress a number of important work-streams. The management of GTCNI worked diligently to minimise the operational impacts of Covid 19 restrictions and to try and maintain “business as usual” as far as is possible.

GTCNI transitioned to remote working in March 2020, with the appropriate infrastructure put in place to maintain day-to-day operations and to enable Council meetings to take place “virtually” via video conferencing from July 2020. The commitment and flexibility shown by all staff in delivering this response is recognised and appreciated along with the support of our IT providers and Sponsor Team.

GTCNI's Governance Framework

The General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI) is the professional registration and regulatory body for the teaching profession in Northern Ireland, solely funded by the profession through the annual registration fee.

GTCNI is deemed a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and has a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) in place with DE. The Management Statement creates a broad framework within which GTCNI is required to operate. The Financial Memorandum defines the financial parameters and constraints with which GTCNI is obliged to comply.

The Council is constituted in accordance with the 'The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (Constitution) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001'. The year 2020-21 was the first full year of operation of the new Council (established October 2019), under the leadership of Mr Brendan Morgan as Chair. For most of the year the Council had a membership of thirty comprising representatives from the teaching profession and the wider education service in Northern Ireland. A further member resigned in December 2020.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible to the Council for the effective operational leadership and management of day-to-day operations of staff, and resources and for ensuring good governance. The Chief Executive Officer is also responsible to the Minister of Education, through the Permanent Secretary of DE for ensuring that effective systems of internal control are maintained and for continuing improvement.

Council and its Committees

In 2020-21, the Council (Board of GTCNI) had corporate responsibility for the overall strategic direction of GTCNI, its financial viability and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of resources and for operating within the MSFM framework. Its role is formalised through its statutory functions and Governance Framework which comprises the MSFM, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct for Council Members.

The Council operated to a Governance Framework adopted in 2017, and met six times during the year – two meetings were special meetings called by the Chair - and each of the four sub-committees met a minimum of four times, providing written minutes to Council. Special meetings of Council took place in September 2020 and March 2021.

In July 2020, the Council adopted a Corporate Plan for the period April 2020 - March 2023. This plan articulates GTCNI's key Corporate Strategic Objectives, providing a framework for the development and delivery of annual business plans.

The business plan for 2020-21 focused primarily on the ongoing annual work-streams as operations were restricted by working arrangements in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. This included the successful completion of the accreditation programme for the Bachelor of Education programmes delivered for teacher training in Northern Ireland. GTCNI approved the accreditation of the programmes offered by Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College Belfast for a further four years. This accreditation was undertaken with the support of ETI. GTCNI also endorsed the work undertaken by a multi-disciplinary working group led by GTCNI Council Member Martin Hagan to develop a new suite of leadership competences for the teaching profession in NI. This work forms part of the wider programme of work on Teacher Professional Learning under the DE Learning Leaders policy.

Of the 18 work-streams included in the 2020-21 business plan, 8 were achieved, 3 were substantially achieved, 2 are likely to be achieved but with delay and 5 were not achieved.

In terms of financial performance, total Council expenditure was £1,073k for the year which was an underspend of £56k on a revised budget adjusted in line with monitoring round returns. Income from registration fees was £1,129k, down by £51.8k on the previous year equating to 1,177k registrants. This relates mainly to the cohort of registrants that tend not to be in regular school employment and GTCNI believe the reduction to be as a result of school closures from the Covid 19 pandemic. Overall GTCNI recorded a net underspend of £249k against the initial allocated budget from DE which was the same budget as allocated in 2019-20.

Annual staff absence within GTCNI has for some time been higher than the target 6% absence rate placed on GTCNI by DE. In 2020-21 overall 74 days were lost to staff absence compared to 558 in the previous year (due to 4 members of staff on long-term sick absence). The absence rate in 2020-21 was 2.5% equivalent to an average of 6 days per employee.

Council Corporate Objectives



- Fulfill all our statutory legal functions and maintain a financially sustainable organization, demonstrating effective stewardship and governance.
- Continue to promote professionalism amongst teachers through offering appropriate advice and guidance and work towards embedding competence based professional development across the education sector.
- Promote the interests of the profession through effective engagement and by working collaboratively with stakeholders across the education sector in NI.

- Secure within the teaching profession a greater sense of ownership and recognition of GTCNI as its professional body.
- Develop GTCNI as appropriate, ensuring it continues to meet the professional needs of teachers in a manner consistent with our remit.

Sub committees comprise:

- Policy, Registration and Regulation Committee;
- Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- Human Resources Committee; and
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

TABLE 2: Council and Committee attendance at meetings during 2020-21

Member	Council Attendance (incl Special Meeting)	Sub-Committee Attendance (possible attendance shown in brackets)			
		Audit & Risk Assurance	Finance & General Purpose	Policy Registration & Regulation	Human Resources
B Morgan	5(6)		4(8)	4(4)	4(4)
S McElhinney	4(6)		5(8)	3(4)	3(4)
A Andrews	3(6)	3(4)			
D Baxter	6(6)	4(4)			
R Beggs	6(6)	4(4)			
G Cameron	5(6)	3(4)			
M Cromie	3(6)				1(4)
C Duffy	5(6)				4(4)
G Duffy*	3(6)				3(4)
G Gault	5(6)		3(8)		
M Hagan	4(6)			3(4)	
F Kane***	0(6)			0(4)	
J Kelly	6(6)				3(4)
S Lambe	6(6)		8(8)		
E Loughridge	3(6)		2(8)		
C McBride	4(6)		7(8)		
S McGowan	0(6)		0(8)		
S McKenna	Mat leave				
L Magennis	6(6)			4(4)	
J Morgan	6(6)			4(4)	
M Mullally	4(6)			3(4)	
C Mullan	6(6)				2(4)
P O'Doherty	6(6)	4(4)			
S Parlour	5(6)	4(4)			

Member	Council Attendance (incl Special Meeting)	Sub-Committee Attendance (possible attendance shown in brackets)			
		Audit & Risk Assurance	Finance & General Purpose	Policy Registration & Regulation	Human Resources
T Salmon **		4(4)			
C Scott-Wills	3(6)				2(4)
K Smith	6(6)		8(8)		
M Thomasson	3(6)			3(4)	
J Unsworth	3(6)				4(4)
G White	6(6)			3(4)	
J Wilkinson	4(6)	3(4)			
ML Winchborne	6(6)			3(4)	

* Sat on Council during S McKenna's maternity leave

** Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

*** Resigned from Council – 14th December 2020

Committee Highlights

Policy, Registration and Regulation Committee (PRRC)

A number of issues were brought to the Committee including oversight of the annual teacher registration process, the development of a leadership competency framework in support of the Learning Leaders Strategy, accreditation of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programmes delivered by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Northern Ireland for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the continuing development of GTCNI's approach to professional regulation of the teaching profession.

The Committee had oversight of processes for the registration of teachers' and the approval of qualifications to teach in Northern Ireland. Through the Committee, the Council exercised its responsibility to ensure that only suitable individuals with qualifications approved by GTCNI are able to teach in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland.

GTCNI played an active role in the implementation of 'Learning Leaders – A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning', through membership of the Oversight Group for Learning Leaders alongside leading on the development of a new leadership competency framework. The competency framework was agreed by the Committee to be considered further by the Learning Leaders Oversight Group.

During the year GTCNI engaged with Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North & South (SCoTENS) and with Universities Council for Education of Teachers NI.

In respect of Professional Regulation and pending revised legislation, GTCNI seeks to follow its guidance for professional regulation as far as is possible in present circumstances.

Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP)

The Committee had responsibility for financial and budget monitoring and audit recommendations relevant to its area of responsibility. The Committee oversaw approval of the 2018-19 Annual Report and Accounts and the preparation of the 2019-20 accounts in accordance with the DE Accounts Direction and Timetable.

The Committee approved a revised Reserves Policy for managing GTCNI's cash balances and oversaw progress in the repair of the current IT system to support teacher registration. The Committee monitored and approved a business case for investment in a new replacement IT system for registration/regulation. The business case was subsequently approved by Council at its meeting of 26 March 2021 and the investment approved by DE in June 2021. This project is now in the advanced stages of procurement.

Human Resources Committee (HRC)

This Committee was responsible for the performance of GTCNI in respect of organisation development and HR matters. A number of HR matters specific to the Committee were brought to them in 2020-21. These included:

- A programme of revision of HR policies and adoption of a new Staff Handbook;
- Addressing grievances – there were three Industrial Tribunal Complaints;
- Follow up to a NIPSA staff member survey; and
- Absence monitoring.

Staff absence in 2020-21 showed significant improvement over previous years due to staff on long-term absence leaving the organization and is within acceptable tolerance.

The Recognition and Procedural Agreement with NIPSA authorised in 2018 remained a matter of concern to the HRC with no engagement from NIPSA to take forward the implementation an agreement they had proposed.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

The ARAC has a role to provide assurance to the Council and guidance to the Chief Executive Officer on corporate governance, risk management and internal control. During 2020-21, Mr. Trevor Salmon continued as the Independent co-opted member of this Committee and we thank him for his contribution. Representatives from internal and external audit organisations attended all meetings of this Committee, as did two representatives from the DE as observers.

The Committee monitored the Corporate Risk Register, the accompanying action plan and the implementation of recommendations from internal audits. Throughout 2020-21 the functioning of the Committee proved problematic.

In 2020-21 the Internal Audit programme included Business Continuity, Project Management and Information Governance.

The ARAC considered the Annual Assurance Statement provided by Internal Audit and noted the GTCNI retained an '*Unacceptable*' assurance rating. It was accepted that urgent action was required to address the current challenges.

Throughout 2020-21 there were no reported instances of Fraud or Bribery or of Raising a Concern at Work (Whistleblowing) to the GTCNI ARAC. During the year, DE concluded addressing correspondence received on GTCNI in 2019-20 under its whistleblowing policy. Governance and the operation of Council remained a significant point of concern for the Department.

A significant data breach occurred in March 2021 which was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office. An investigation was undertaken by Group Internal Audit & Fraud Investigation Service. This investigation proved inconclusive as regards identifying the source of the breach. The Information Commissioner's Office subsequently informed GTCNI that it was taking no further action.

Board Effectiveness

Council members met regularly in 2020-21, in Council and Committees where issues were considered. The Council undertook a review of its performance and effectiveness through:

- Review and approval of its Governance Framework; and
- Review and approval of Board's Terms of Reference by each committee.

A number of concerns emerged in 2020-21 in the operation and effectiveness of the Council. This included dysfunction in Council, poor leadership, ineffective meetings and concern over breaches of confidentiality in respect of Council business. The level of correspondence to DE and outside bodies originating from Council remained a matter of concern. Matters of concern were raised with and echoed by the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The CEO/Registrar was asked to appear before the Committee in March 2021 (and again in May 2021) and the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council also were called to appear before this Committee. The Chair of Council and the CEO/Registrar continued to meet with DE officials in monthly monitoring meetings (MOM) and GTCNI remained in special measures during 2020-21 and up until the Council was formally stood down in December 2021.

A formal independent review of the effectiveness of the Council was commissioned by the Minister of Education in October 2020 and this took place in early 2021-22. In light of the subsequent findings and recommendations the Minister of Education took the decision in December 2021 to stand-down the Council with immediate effect.

GTCNI operationally continues to function with governance oversight and direction being provided by DE officials.

Governance and Accountability meetings

The GTCNI attended bi-annual Governance and Accountability Review (GAR) meetings with the DE. These are chaired by the Permanent Secretary, with Chair of Council and the Chief Executive Officer attending. Meetings took place in August 2020 and January 2021. The significant issues facing GTCNI were highlighted, including the difficulties surrounding professional regulation and amendment of the present legislative framework.

In addition to the bi-annual GAR meetings, both the Chair and the CEO/Registrar attend monthly monitoring meetings (MOM) with senior DE officials, the focus of which is on addressing the matters of concern.

Compliance with the Corporate Governance Code

The 'Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice in Northern Ireland 2013' seeks to promote good corporate governance. The focus of the Code is on ministerial departments, but as an NDPB GTCNI seeks to comply with the practices set out in the Code insofar as it relates to the work of GTCNI.

As GTCNI is classified as an NDPB GTCNI is accountable to DE (its sponsor department) for performance and the use of their resources. GTCNI has in place an agreed Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) with DE and this is an integral component of GTCNI's Governance Framework.

The Council operated under its Governance Framework of 2017, operating an oversight and governance function through its Committees, regular reporting and maintenance and review of a Corporate Risk Register.

Quality of Data used by Council

The Council relies on a range of data to inform its deliberations and decision making, including:

- Financial and operational information, including regular management reports which are subject to internal controls and review;
- Regular reports from internal audit activity and summarised in the Audit Annual Assurance Report;
- Statistical information from GTCNI's registration database which is refreshed and updated on a regular basis; and
- Policy advice derived from research and consultation with stakeholders.

The Council expressed confidence in the information and data received during 2020-21.

A pertinent issue relates to the current IT system used by GTCNI to support the administration of teacher registration. This system underpins the register of teachers and provides detailed information on the teaching profession. During 2020-21, a new business case was developed and approved for investment in a replacement system.

Ministerial Directions

During 2020-21 no Ministerial Directions were sought or given.

Data handling incidents

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland is required to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and, from May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in the handling and storage of personal data.

A full review and overhaul of GTCNI's approach to Information Management and Governance is required following an initial audit by the CEO and a review undertaken by the DE. Progressing a formal project to undertake this in 2020-21 was hampered by the Covid 19 pandemic. All staff underwent Information Handling training in 2020-21 as part of a programme of work to improve information management and governance. The focus of this training was on individual staff responsibilities and the classification and handling of official and sensitive information.

A significant data breach occurred in March 2021 and reported to the Information Commissioner's Office and appropriate action taken to mitigate the associated risks. An investigation by NICS Internal Audit & Fraud Investigation Service (NICS IAFIS) was undertaken but proved inconclusive as to the source of the breach. Recommendations arising from this incident are being progressed and preventative actions taken. Controls over access to offices remain in place.

Risk Management

Risk management is the process through which we seek to control the level of risk facing GTCNI and to reduce its effects.

The GTCNI Risk Management Framework is based on the principles that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) assumes responsibility for risk management across GTCNI as a whole and that the Council, through its ARAC takes an open and receptive approach to discussing and addressing risks across GTCNI; that there is a recognition and disclosure of the financial and non-financial implications of risks and that monitoring key risks is a priority for the management team.

The Corporate Risk Register is subject to regular review and update as appropriate and was a standing agenda item for the ARAC. The following ten key corporate level risks and challenges were identified:

1. Ineffective governance and accountability framework for the organisation leads to difficulties in day to day operation, ineffective operation of the Council and failure to fulfil its statutory functions;
2. Failure to comply with agreed governance framework, policies and procedures in day to day operations resulting in failure of organisation to deliver on statutory requirements and corporate objectives;
3. Ineffective arrangements for ensuring business continuity due to systems failure, untoward incidents or emergencies;
4. Ineffective Information Management & Governance compromises organisation operations and effectiveness;
5. That the current legal and administrative frameworks do not provide sufficient protection from legal challenge;
6. Risk to organisation effectiveness and financial sustainability arising from flat-lining income, increasing costs and the move to full professional regulation;
7. Failure to progress recommendation from review of GTCNI impacts adversely on organisational performance and effectiveness;
8. The risk to business continuity due to aging technology and unsupported elements of GTCNI's main IT system - teacher registration database;
9. Continuing delay and failure to procure a new Registration, Regulation Support System results in no registration IT system being available to GTCNI with operations significantly impaired; and
10. Ongoing HR issues adversely impact the ability to deliver day to day operations.

Significant Issues

Professional Regulation

In the case of the teaching profession in Northern Ireland, the legislation that established GTCNI and the GTCNI Regulations 2015 provided the legal basis for professional regulation. GTCNI continues to work with DE towards a position where full professional regulation can be undertaken. In the interim GTCNI is processing regulatory referrals as far as is possible and to mitigate any associated risk to the safeguarding of children and young people and the wider population.

HR Management

Work to address the HR issues covered in the action plan adopted by the Council was taken forward by the CEO and the HR Committee. All staff were made aware of the Corporate Plan and Strategic Objectives to 2023 and a weekly staff team call has been in place in light of the move to remote working. This provides an opportunity to maintain contact with all work colleagues and to discuss any matter staff may wish to raise in this forum.

GTCNI has addressed three Industrial Tribunal Complaints, two of which resulted in settlement payments totalling £70k. A further complaint was addressed and resolved during 2020-21. These matters necessitated significant input from the CEO/Registrar and demand of their time.

Some important HR issues being handled by the HR Committee remained outstanding, which included the temporary (10 day) suspension of the CEO/Registrar by the Chair in March 2020 “pending possible investigation”. This investigation did not proceed as it was not deemed appropriate or necessary by DE.

Council Effectiveness

Elements of the Governance Framework required strengthening in order to maintain proper governance, conduct and effectiveness at Board level. In 2020-21 the Council decided to continue to operate under its 2017 Governance Framework. Concerns continued to arise over the dysfunction of Council meetings and in the general operation of the Council as it remained under “special measures” during 2020-21. Of concern was further resignations from the Council and the views expressed by some members over the functioning of Council.

Specific points of concern relating to the Council were:

- The Department concluded that there were significant areas of concern around governance, leadership, effectiveness and strategic direction within the Council arising from complaints about the leadership and strategic direction of the Council, a perceived ineffectiveness within the Council and its Committees, attempts to restrict communications between individual Council members and a lack of transparency in ongoing decision making;
- Failure to address grievances in a timely fashion including the suspension (in March 2020) of the CEO/Registrar and the manner in which this was handled;
- The operation of ARAC in its meetings and accusations pertaining to breaching of the Nolan Principles;
- The issue of confidentiality surrounding aspects of Council business, its documentation and the recording of meetings as raised in correspondence from the

ICO. The issue of confidentiality was raised by the Permanent Secretary to the Chair of Council for addressing;

- Industrial Tribunals;
- The nature of a data breach that occurred in March 2021 and subsequently investigated;
- Progress in revision of the legislative framework necessary to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory function in respect of professional regulation. This aspect is largely outside of the control of Council; and
- That the overall Internal Audit opinion for the organisation remained as “*Unacceptable*”.

As a result of the above, an independent Effectiveness Review of the Council was undertaken, which found "systemic failures and a breakdown of working relationships". Education Minister Michelle McIlveen subsequently announced on 13 December 2021 a decision to dissolve the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), advising the NI Assembly that she will bring forward the necessary legislation as soon as possible after deciding to stand down the current GTCNI Council and its Committees with immediate effect.

The Department of Education is progressing a public consultation exercise to identify which of GTCNI's functions are critical to the wider education system and must be preserved. In addition, the consultation will seek views from the public, the teaching profession and key educational stakeholders on how these can be delivered efficiently and effectively. This consultation will inform the drafting of the legislation needed to dissolve GTCNI while putting in place alternative mechanisms to protect those key functions.

Financial Sustainability

While GTCNI is classified as an NDPB, it receives no direct annual funding from DE or any other Government source. GTCNI is funded from the fee income charged to teachers for registration, presently circa £1.2m per annum. GTCNI remains financially viable.

Internal Audit Assurance

GTCNI utilised DE's Internal Audit function for its internal audit services. During 2020-21 consideration was given to:

- Information Governance;
- Project Management;
- Business Continuity Planning; and
- Previous recommendations.

In addition, an investigation into a data breach was undertaken.

An overall “*Unacceptable*” opinion remains for GTCNI with the key factors that informed this opinion being:

- Investigation work carried out within GTCNI identified important control weaknesses in relation to Corporate Governance and ongoing Information Management issues;
- Business Continuity processes in place but not fully tested which means that GTCNI business operations may be vulnerable;

- Failure to fully deliver on all statutory functions. Regulation is one of GTCNI core functions and is not fully operational; and
- Project Management fieldwork still ongoing but important weaknesses identified.

ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S ASSURANCE STATEMENT

It is acknowledged that this report does not present the Council and GTCNI in general in a good light and that the organisation is challenged in a number of ways. It is the aim of the Interim CEO/Registrar to work with DE officials to address the challenges and manage the organisation through a further transitional phase.

It is a legal requirement that all places of work have a health and safety policy, which staff should be made aware of and adhere to. I am satisfied that a fit-for-purpose health and safety policy is in place and is reviewed regularly. This policy will receive further scrutiny and remote working continues and may become, to some extent, an ongoing feature of the organisation. I am satisfied that the organisation has complied with all of its duties under health and safety legislation.

In conclusion, I can assure the profession, our stakeholders and DE that this statement is complete and accurately reflects the latest assessment of governance within GTCNI.



Ian Gallagher
Interim Chief Executive Officer/Registrar
Date: 30 September 2022

REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT

Remuneration Report (Audited Information)

The information on pages 28 to 35 is covered by the audit opinion.

Remuneration Policy

The remuneration of GTCNI staff, with the exception of the Chief Executive Officer, is determined by the National Joint Council for local authorities and other authorities of equivalent status. The National Joint Council's principal role is to reach agreement, based on shared values, on a national scheme of pay and conditions for local application throughout the UK.

The remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer, as approved by the Department of Education and Department of Finance, is set in the range of £69,309 - £84,313. The remuneration policy for the Chief Executive Officer provides for annual reviews (including revalorisation and performance related pay) which are restricted within public sector pay limits. The Chief Executive Officer does not receive bonus payments.

Terms and Conditions of Service

Staff appointments are made on merit, in accordance with GTCNI's Appointments and Promotions Procedure, on the basis of fair and open competition. Staff terms and conditions of employment including salary progression, payment of allowances, leave entitlement and notice periods as outlined in the National Joint Council's Green Book on Pay and Conditions of Service.

Member Emoluments

No remuneration was paid to members of the General Teaching Council during the year.

Chairman's Emoluments

Payments totaling £933.33 were made to Mr. Brendan Morgan for the 12 months ended 31 March 2021.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT REMUNERATION (Audited Information)

	2020-21					2019-20				
	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (to nearest £'000)	Total £'000	Salary £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (to nearest £'000)	Total £'000
Officials										
S. Gallaher Chief Executive Officer/Registrar	80-85	-	100	27	105-110	80-85	-	100	27	105-110
G. Devlin Senior Education Officer	55-60	-	100	16	70-75	55-60	-	100	26	80-85
M .Matthews Finance & Contracts Manager	45-50	-	100	18	60-65	45-50	-	100	17	60-65

* The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights. This figure has been calculated and provided by NILGOSC.

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary, performance pay, bonuses and any allowances, all of which are subject to UK taxation. This report is based on payments made by GTCNI and thus recorded in these accounts.

Benefits in Kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HMRC as a taxable emolument.

Bonuses

There were no performance related payments paid or due in respect of 2020-21 (2019-20: nil).

Pay Multiples (Audited Information)

GTCNI is required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid employee and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce. The remuneration of the highest paid employee in 2020-21 was £80k-£85k (2019-20: £80k-£85k). This was 2.71 (2019-20: 2.96) times the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £30,465 (2019-20: £27,905). The median remuneration increased by 9.2% in the period due to the net effect of staff leavers (including a VES) and payment of honoraria for undertaking additional responsibilities. The range of staff remuneration (between highest and lowest paid employees) was £59,873, from £22,627 to £82,500 (2019-20: £60,911, from £21,589 to £82,500).

The total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance related pay and benefits in kind. It does not include employer pension contributions or the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

	2020-21	2019-20
Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Remuneration	£80-85k	£80-85k
Median Total Remuneration	£30,465	£27,905
Ratio	2.71	2.96

Pensions of Senior Management (Audited Information):

Officials	Accrued Pension at age 60 as at 31/03/2021 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension & lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31/03/2021 £'000	CETV at 31/03/2020 £'000	Real Increase/(Decrease) in CETV £'000
S. Gallaher Chief Executive Officer/Registrar	0-5 plus a lump sum of nil	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of nil	76	46	23
G. Devlin Senior Education Officer	30-35 plus a lump sum of 65-70	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of nil	8	692	(688)
M. Matthews Finance & Contracts Manager	5-10 plus a lump sum of nil	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of nil	96	76	16

Senior management are members of the NILGOSC pension scheme.

G. Devlin – partially retired in the 2020-21 financial year. CETV as at 31/03/2021 is only for sums accrued but not taken, therefore there was a significant decrease since the previous year due to partial retirement

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme.

A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 and do not take account of any actual or potential benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period. However, the real increase calculation uses common actuarial factors at the start and end of the period so that it disregards the effect of any changes in factors and focuses only on the increase that is funded by the employer.

Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee Scheme (NILGOSC)

GTCNI participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS (NI)) administered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC). The LGPS (NI) is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme. The assets allocated to the employer in the Fund are notional and are assumed to be invested in line with the investments of the Fund for the purpose of calculating the return to be applied to those notional assets over the accounting period. The LGPS (NI) is a funded defined benefit plan with benefits earned up to 31 March 2015 being linked to final salary. Benefits from 1 April 2015 are based on a Career Average Revalued Earnings scheme. The Scheme is funded by contributions made by both employees and employers who have been admitted to the Scheme. Employee contribution rates depend on their pensionable remuneration and are set between 5.5% and 10.5% for 2020-21. The employer's contribution rate to the NILGOSC scheme is 19.5%.

Compensation for loss of office (Audited Information)

There were no compensation payments for loss of office in 2020-21.

Staff Report

Total Staff Costs (Audited Information):

	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2019-20
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Salaries & Wages	387,806	46,656	434,462	608,910
Social Security Costs	40,169	4,017	44,186	59,067
Pension Costs	143,717	7,389	151,106	232,408
Total	571,692	58,062	629,754	900,385

One permanent member of staff exited under the Department of Education's 2019-20 Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES). The exit was delayed due to an ongoing dispute regarding time in service calculations (due to a Career Break), which was not satisfactorily resolved until December 2020.

The associated cost totalling £10,284 is included in total staff costs detailed above. The cost has been fully recovered from DE in 2020-21.

Average Number of Persons Employed (Audited Information):

The average number of whole-time equivalent persons (including senior management) employed during the year was as follows:

	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2019-20
	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
	No	No	No	No
Directly employed	10	1	11	15
Total	10	1	11	15

Staff Composition

The composition of staff based on head-count is as follows:

	2020-21	2019-20
Male	2	4
Female	10	14
Total	12	18

Senior Management Staff Composition by Gender

The number of employees of each sex who occupied senior management roles was as follows:

	2020-21	2019-20
Male	2	2
Female	1	1
Total	3	3

Staff Turnover Ratios

Staff turnover (based on whole-time equivalents) in 2020-21 was 13.8% (2019-20: 21.4%).

Staff Absence

GTCNI sickness levels, excluding long term sickness, averaged 1.12 days in 2020-21 (6.43 days in 2019-20). Sickness levels, including long term sickness, averaged 5.92 days in 2020-21 (33.12 days in 2019-20). The significant reduction was due to staff on long-term sick absence leaving the organisation.

Staff Engagement

Weekly staff call was initiated from mid-March 2020 with the result of moving to a model of remote working due to the Covid 19 pandemic. In addition regular 1:1 calls with staff by line managers took place.

A NIPSA Staff Survey was conducted during 2020-21 and considered by the HR Committee.

Expenditure on Consultancy

GTCNI incurred no expenditure on consultancy in 2020-21 (2019-20: £1,020).

Off Payroll Engagements

GTCNI had no off payroll engagements in 2020-21.

Exit Packages (Audited Information)

DE operated a Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) in 2019-20, funded from the Government Restructuring and Reform Initiative (RRI) budget. As a Non-Departmental Public Body, GTCNI was offered the option to participate in this scheme with the aim for any exit approved under the scheme to take place by 31 March 2020. Four permanent members of staff applied to avail of the VES. Three left GTCNI on 31 March 2020 and the final applicant left in December 2020.

The cost of the VES to GTCNI in 2020-21 is contained in the following table. All VES costs have been recovered from the DE. (2019-20: £53,962)

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages
<£10,000	-	-	-
£10,000-£25,000	-	1	1
£25,000-£50,000	-	-	-
£50,000-£100,000	-	-	-
£100,000-£150,000	-	-	-

£150,000-£200,000	-	-	-
Total number of exit packages	-	1	1
Total resource cost/£	-	£10,284	£10,284

£10,284 exit costs were paid in 2020-21, the year of departure (2019-20 £53,962).

**ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT REPORT
(Audited Information)**

Losses and Special Payments

There were no losses or special payments over £250,000 in 2020-21.

GTCNI addressed two Industrial Tribunal Complaints, which resulted in settlement payments totalling £70k.

Gifts

A contribution of £56 was made towards a collective small gift to the CEO of GTC Scotland on his retirement.

Fees and Charges

There were no fees or charges for services provided by GTCNI in 2020-21.

Remote Contingent Liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of IAS 37, GTCNI also reports liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability. GTCNI has no such liabilities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Ian Gallagher

Interim Chief Executive Officer/Registrar

Date: 30 September 2022

GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

THE CERTIFICATE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

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

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's net income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and Department of Education directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis of opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate.

My staff and I are independent of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

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

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in the report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland and the Accounting Officer are responsible for the other information included in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

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

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Education directions made under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Responsibilities of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland and Accounting Officer/Chief Executive Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland and the Accounting Officer's/Chief Executive Officer's Responsibilities, the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland and the Accounting Officer/Chief Executive Officer are responsible for:

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

My objectives are to obtain evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

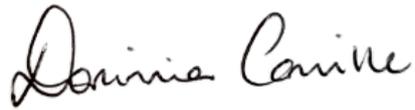
- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate;
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
 - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
 - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
 - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
 - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes

intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

My report on the delay in finalisation of the 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts and its subsequent audit is included on pages 64 to 65.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorinnia Carville". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Dorinnia Carville
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

4 October 2022

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Income			
Registration Income		1,129,260	1,181,029
Other Income	4	6,194	17,847
Total operating income		1,135,454	1,198,876
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	3	629,754	900,385
Depreciation	5	651	650
Amortisation	6	10,488	2,623
Other Expenditure	3	432,307	450,259
Total operating expenditure		1,073,200	1,353,917
Net operating income/(expenditure)		62,254	(155,041)
Finance Expenditure			
Net Return on Pension Finance	2	(26,000)	(9,000)
Credit in respect of notional costs	3	11,500	11,500
Net income/(expenditure) for the year before taxation		47,754	(152,541)
Taxation for the year		(1,141)	(3,785)
Net income/(expenditure) for the year after taxation		46,613	(156,326)
Other comprehensive expenditure			
Actuarial (loss)/gain in respect of pension liability		(91,000)	(605,000)
Comprehensive net income/(expenditure) for the year		(44,387)	(761,326)

The notes on pages 46 to 63 form part of these financial statements and should be read in conjunction therewith.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2021

	Notes	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment	5	650	1,301
Intangible assets	6	50,091	28,847
Total non-current assets		50,741	30,148
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	8	12,592	31,376
Cash and cash equivalents	9	2,122,381	1,920,963
Total current assets		2,134,973	1,952,339
Total assets		2,185,714	1,982,487
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	(140,778)	(145,643)
Total current liabilities		(140,778)	(145,643)
Total assets less current liabilities		2,044,936	1,836,844
Non-current liabilities			
Retirement Benefit Obligations	2	(1,375,000)	(1,185,000)
Total non-current liabilities		(1,375,000)	(1,185,000)
Total assets less total liabilities		669,936	651,844
Taxpayer's equity and other reserves			
General reserve		669,936	651,844
Total equity		669,936	651,844

The notes on pages 46 to 63 form part of these financial statements and should be read in conjunction therewith.

The financial statements were approved on 30 September 2022 on behalf of GTCNI by:



Ian Gallagher
Interim Chief Executive Officer/Registrar
Date: 30 September 2022

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net Operating Income/(Expenditure)		47,754	(156,326)
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables		18,785	(847)
(Decrease)/Increase in trade and other payables		(4,865)	86,570
Depreciation charges	5	651	650
Amortisation charges	6	10,488	2,623
Actuarial (loss)/gain on pension scheme	2	(91,000)	(605,000)
Pension scheme movement		190,000	722,000
Interest payable		(1,141)	(3,783)
Taxation payable		(6,183)	(17,847)
Net cash inflow from operating activities		164,488	31,823
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(31,732)	-
Purchase of intangible asset		-	(31,470)
Interest income		6,183	17,847
Net cash inflow from investing activities		(25,549)	(13,623)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Grant to cover VES costs		62,479	-
Net cash inflow from financing activities		62,479	-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the period	9	201,418	18,200
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	9	1,920,963	1,902,763
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	9	2,122,381	1,920,963

The notes on pages 46 to 63 form part of these financial statements and should be read in conjunction therewith.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers Equity for the year ended 31 March 2021

	NET EXPENDITURE RESERVES £	TOTAL RESERVES £
Balance at 31 March 2019	1,413,170	1,413,170
Changes in Taxpayers Equity 2019-20		
Actuarial (loss) on the pension scheme	(605,000)	(605,000)
Net Expenditure for 2019-20	(156,326)	(156,326)
Balance at 31 March 2020	651,844	651,844
Changes in Taxpayers Equity 2020-21		
Actuarial (loss) on the pension scheme	(91,000)	(91,000)
Net Income for 2020-21	46,613	46,613
Grant to cover VES costs	62,479	62,479
Balance at 31 March 2021	669,936	669,936

The notes on pages 46 to 63 form part of these financial statements and should be read in conjunction therewith.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance (DoF). The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context.

Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by GTCNI are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

1.1 Accounting Convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. These accounts have been prepared in pounds sterling and are rounded to the nearest pound.

1.2 Registration Fee Income

The annual registration year runs from 1 April to the following 31 March, with the fee becoming due on 1 April every year or during the year at time of registration by new applicant. The fee is required to be paid in full regardless of the date on which a teacher actually registers with GTCNI. There is no reduction for part year registration.

1.3 Pensions

The following disclosures relate to the funded liabilities within the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund (the "Fund") which is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (the "LGPS (NI)").

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit plan with benefits earned up to 31 March 2015 being linked to final salary. Benefits after 31 March 2015 are based on a Career Average Revalued Earnings scheme. Details of the benefits earned over the period covered by this disclosure are set out in the 'LGPS Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (as amended) and the LGPS, 'The Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (as amended).

The funded nature of the LGPS requires participating employers and its employees to pay contributions into the Fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets. Information on the framework for calculating contributions to be paid is set out in 'The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014' and the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement. The last actuarial valuation was as 31 March 2019 and the contributions to be paid until 31 March 2023 resulting from that valuation are set out in the Fund's Rates and Adjustment Certificate. The Northern Ireland Local Government Officer' Superannuation Committee is responsible for the governance of the Fund.

The assets allocated to the employer in the Fund are notional and are assumed to be invested in line with the investments of the Fund for the purposes of calculating the return over the accounting period. The Fund is large and holds a significant proportion of its assets in liquid

investments. As a consequence there will be no significant restriction on realising assets if a large payment is required to be paid from the Fund in relation to an employer's liabilities. The assets are invested in a diversified spread of investments and the approximate split of the assets for the Fund as a whole (based on data supplied by the Committee) is shown in the disclosures.

The Committee may invest a small proportion of the Fund's investments in the assets of some of the employers participating in the Fund if it forms part of their balanced strategy.

1.4 Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment is defined as any single piece of equipment costing more than £1,000 (inclusive of VAT) that has an estimated economic / operational life of more than one year. Where it is more usual to treat individual components as a group, these are treated as assets so long as their collective value exceeds the capitalisation threshold. Property, plant and equipment have been valued at historic cost at the year-end as, in the opinion of GTCNI, any revaluation adjustments are not material.

1.5 Depreciation

Non-current assets are depreciated on a straight line basis in order to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life at the following rates:

Office Equipment	20% per annum
Furniture and Fittings	20% per annum
Computer Equipment	33.33% per annum

1.6 Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise software and software licences. Intangible assets are non-financial non-current assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled by GTCNI through custody or legal rights. An intangible is capitalised if:

- it is held for use in delivering services or for administrative purposes;
- it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the organisation;
- it is expected to be used for more than one financial year;
- the cost of the item can be measured reliably; and
- the item has a cost of at least £1,000.

On initial recognition, intangible assets are measured at cost. Subsequently, they are carried at fair value which is estimated by restating the value annually by reference to appropriate indices.

1.7 Amortisation

Amortisation is provided for all intangible non-current assets with a finite useful life, by allocating the cost (or revalued amount) less estimated residual value of the assets as fairly as possible to the periods expected to benefit from their use. Useful lives are estimated on a realistic basis, reviewed annually and adjusted over the revised remaining economic life where appropriate.

The following useful economic lives should, where necessary, be used as approximations to the levels estimated annually:

Intangible Assets – Software and Software Licences: 3 years.

1.8 Inventory

GTCNI holds an inventory of publications. These have no net realisable value and as a result all related expenditure during the year is charged to the Net Expenditure Reserve.

1.9 Leasing

Rentals payable on leases of property under operating leases are charged to the Net Expenditure Reserve on the basis of costs incurred in the year. Operating lease rentals of equipment are charged to the Net Expenditure Reserve in equal amounts over the term of the lease.

IFRS 16 *Leases* replaces IAS17 *Leases* and is effective with EU adoption from 1 January 2019. In line with the requirements of the FReM, IFRS 16 will be implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector, with effect from 1 April 2022.

1.10 Provisions

GTCNI recognises a provision if it is probable that an outflow of cash or other economic resources will be required to settle the obligation and the amount can be estimated reliably.

1.11 Value added tax

GTCNI is not registered for VAT. All expenditure and capital purchases in the accounts is stated inclusive of VAT.

1.12 Corporation Tax

HM Revenue & Customs has determined that income in respect of registration fees is regarded as non-trading and thus exempt from Corporate Tax. However, Corporation Tax is chargeable on income from all other sources.

1.13 Staff costs

In accordance with IAS 19: Employee Benefits, staff costs (including leave and flexi time accrued) are recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them.

1.14 Accounting estimates

No material accounting estimates or judgments were made by GTCNI in preparing these accounts.

1.15 Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised on GTCNI's statement of financial position when GTCNI becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instruments on a trade basis. In particular:

- Cash and cash equivalents: Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand;
- Trade and other receivables: Trade receivables do not carry any interest and are recognised at the lower of their original invoiced value and recoverable amount.

Provision is made when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired. Balances are written off when the probability of recovery is assessed as being remote; and

- Trade and other payables: Trade payables are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

1.16 Operating segments

GTCNI operates as one unit in making decisions. Therefore segmental reporting is not required for the year.

1.17 IFRS 15 Income from service revenue

There is none for the year.

1.18 Impact of new accounting standards

Management have reviewed new accounting standards that have been issued but are not yet effective. IFRS 16 has been issued but the Department of Finance has advised that implementation has been deferred until 1 April 2022, due to the continuing effects of the Covid 19 pandemic.

2. Retirement Benefit Obligations

2.1 Retirement Benefit Obligations

As explained in the accounting policies, GTCNI participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee Scheme (NILGOSC). NILGOSC is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme in which it is possible for an employer to identify its share of the assets and liabilities on a consistent basis. The NILGOSC scheme is a funded defined benefit plan with benefits earned up to 31 March 2015 being linked to final salary. Benefits after 31 March 2015 are based on a Career Average Revalued Earnings scheme.

Medical retirement is possible in the event of serious ill-health. In this case pensions are brought into payment immediately without actuarial reduction and with service enhanced as for widow(er) pensions.

The Scheme is funded by contributions made by both employees and employers who have been admitted to the Scheme. Employee contribution rates depend on their pensionable remuneration and are set between 5.5% and 10.5% for 2020-21. The employer's contribution rate to the NILGOSC scheme is 19.5%.

Salaries include gross salaries and performance pay. In accordance with IAS19, the Council accounts for employer pension contributions as a defined benefit scheme. Under IAS19 the Council is required to account for its share of the assets and liabilities in the scheme.

The Council has included a pension charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE) for 2020-21 totaling £181,000.

These results show the latest formal valuation of the fund for the purpose of setting employer's actual contributions as at 31 March 2019. A valuation was carried out by a qualified independent actuary for the purposes of meeting the requirements of IAS19 for these accounts.

Allowance for the McCloud Judgement and GMP Indexation / Equalisation

Note 2 includes an estimated allowance for additional liabilities that are now probable arising from the McCloud Judgement and GMP Indexation and Equalisation cases outlined below.

McCloud/Sargeant Judgement

In December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled in the 'McCloud/Sargeant' judgement that the transitional protection arrangements put in place when the Firefighters' and Judges' pension schemes were reformed were age discriminatory. The Government applied to the Supreme Court for permission to appeal this judgement, however the Supreme Court rejected the request on 27 June 2019. The next stage is for the case to be referred to the Employment Tribunal to agree the remedy, following appropriate consultation.

While the judgement was not in relation to members with Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) benefits it was considered reasonable to assume that the Government would seek remedy for all public sector schemes, including Local Government Pension Scheme (NI).

Figures produced by AON in 2019-20 included a McCloud “underpin” liability within the current service cost, together with an allowance within the balance sheet reflecting service since the scheme reforms (2015 in Northern Ireland). The additional liability in 2019-20 was calculated to be 3.2% of the GTCNI’s active liabilities using a salary increase assumption of 1.5% above CPI inflation. For accounting periods ending in 2021, the same approach has been adopted using a roll-forward method based on the 2019-20 results. AON have advised that there is no expectation of any further McCloud re-measurements in 2020-21 for those employers who adopted the standard approach in 2019-20.

GMP Indexation and Equalisation

Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) is a portion of pension that is payable to members who were contracted out of the State Second Pension and accrued benefits in the scheme between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 1997. The LGPS (NI) was contracted out.

The GMP was intended to approximately replace the State Pension which members were giving up, however the payment terms of GMP are different between men and women, which was a consequence of the state pension itself being unequal at that time.

On 26 October 2018, the High Court ruled in the Lloyds Bank case that equalisation for the effect of unequal GMPs is required.

The estimated liability has been based on a typical Local Government pension fund to quantify the value of fully indexing GMPs in line with CPI inflation for those reaching Second State Pension age after 5 December 2018. This was calculated to be 0.3% of the liabilities / defined benefit obligation.

In October 2020, a second ruling in the Lloyds Bank case clarified that compensation would be required to members who transferred benefits out since May 1990. Government has not yet acknowledged a liability in public service schemes nor indicated an approach to rectifying this. Therefore there is no allowance for a potential liability resulting from this ruling in the accounting figures for 2020-21.

Goodwin Ruling

In June 2020 an Employment Tribunal ruled, in relation to the Teachers’ Pension Scheme, that provisions for survivor’s benefits of a female member in an opposite sex marriage are less favourable than for a female in a same sex marriage or civil partnership, and that treatment amounts to direct discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced in a written ministerial statement on 20 July 2020 that he believed that changes would be required to other public service pension schemes with similar arrangements.

It has been advised that the Goodwin judgement will add around 0.2% - 0.5% to the defined benefit obligation for a typical employer, the impact varying dependent on the membership profile. Those changes are yet to be reflected in the LGPS Regulations. For the purposes of the 2020-21 report, this has not been allowed for on the grounds of materiality.

The major assumptions used by the actuary were:

	31 March 2021 % p.a.	31 March 2020 %p.a.	31 March 2019 % p.a.
Rate of increase in salaries	4.20	3.50	3.70
Rate of increase in pensions	2.70	2.00	2.20
Discount rate	2.10	2.30	2.40
Pension accounts revaluation rate	2.70	2.00	2.20

GTCNI's share of the assets of the Scheme was:

	Assets at 31 March 2021 £'000	Assets at 31 March 2020 £'000
Equities	2,371	1,766
Property	456	415
Corporate Bonds	620	522
Government Bonds	1,209	1,082
Cash	271	195
Other	195	166
Fair Value of Assets	5,122	4,146

Statement of Financial Position	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Fair value of assets	5,122	4,146
Present Value of funded defined benefit obligation	(6,497)	(5,331)
Pension (liability) recognised in the Statement of Financial Position	(1,375)	(1,185)

Changes to the Present Value of Defined Benefit:

Obligation during the Accounting Period	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Opening defined benefit obligation	5,331	5,859
Current Service Cost	145	224
Interest expense of defined benefit obligation	121	139
Contributions by participants	26	37
Actuarial losses/(gains) due to changes in financial assumptions	1,053	(122)
Actuarial (gains)/losses due to demographic assumption	0	(209)
Actuarial (gains)/losses due to liability experience	(48)	(457)
Net benefits paid out	(141)	(140)
Past Service costs	10	-
Closing Defined Benefit Obligation	6,497	5,331

Changes to the fair value of assets during the accounting period	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Opening Fair Value of Assets	4,146	5,396
Interest income on assets	95	130
Re-measurement gains/(losses) on assets	914	(1,393)
Contributions by the employer	82	116
Contributions by participants	26	37
Net benefits paid out of the fund	(141)	(140)
Closing Fair Value of Employers Assets	5,122	4,146

Charges to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE):

	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Amounts included in Staff Costs		
Operating Charge: Current Service Cost	145	224
Past Service Cost	10	0
Other Finance Costs: Interest on net defined liability	26	9
Pension expense recognised in SoCNE	181	233

Amounts recognised in Other Comprehensive Expenditure (OCE):

	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Return on plan assets (in excess of)/below net interest	(914)	1,393
Actuarial losses/ (gains) due to changes in financial assumptions	1,053	(122)
Actuarial (gains) due to demographic assumptions	0	(209)
Actuarial (gains)/ losses due to liability experience	(48)	(457)
Total losses/(gains) recognised in OCE	91	605

Amounts for the current and previous accounting periods:

	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Fair value of employer assets	5,122	4,146	5,396
Present value of funded defined benefit obligation	6,497	5,331	5,859
(Liability) recognised on the Statement of Financial Position	(1,375)	(1,185)	(463)
Experience gains/(losses) on assets	914	(1,393)	225
Experience (gains)/losses on liabilities	(48)	(457)	7
Actuarial losses/(gains) on assets	(962)	1,393	(225)
Actuarial (gains)/ losses on liabilities	1,053	(788)	84
Actuarial losses/(gains) recognised in OCE	91	605	(141)

Sensitivity Analysis

IAS19 valuation results depend critically on the principal assumptions used in the calculations. Each factor is considered in isolation i.e. the “impact on liability” assumes all other factors are constant.

Asset Volatility: The liabilities used for accounting purposes are calculated using a discount rate with reference to corporate yield bonds at the accounting date. If assets underperform this yield, this will create a deficit in the accounts. The Fund holds a significant proportion of growth assets which, while expected to outperform corporate bonds in the long term, creates volatility and risk in the short term in relation to the accounting figures.

Changes in Bond Yield: A decrease in corporate bond yields will increase the value placed on the liabilities for accounting purposes although this will be marginally offset by the increase in the assets as a result (to the extent the Fund invests in corporate bonds).

Inflation Risk: the majority of the pension liabilities are linked to either pay or price inflation. Higher inflation expectations will lead to higher liability value. The assets are not perfectly correlated with inflation meaning that an increase in inflation will increase the deficit.

Life Expectancy: The majority of the Fund’s obligations are to provide benefits for the life of the members following retirement, so increases in life expectancy will result in an increase in liabilities.

Exiting employers: Employers which leave the Fund (or their guarantor) may have to make an exit payment to meet any shortfall in assets against their pension liabilities. If the Employer (or guarantor) is not able to meet this exit payment the liability may in certain circumstances

fall on other employers in the Fund. Further the assets on exit in respect of “orphan liabilities” may in retrospect, not be sufficient to meet the liabilities. This risk may fall on other employers. “Orphan liabilities” are currently a small proportion of the overall liabilities in the Fund.

Sensitivity Analysis:

The approximate impact of changing the key assumptions on the present value of the funded defined benefit obligation as at 31 March 2021 and the projected service cost for the period ending 31 March 2022 is set out below:

Discount rate assumption

Adjustment to discount rate	+0.1% p.a.	-0.1% p.a.
Present value of total obligation (£M)	6,380	6,620
% change in present value of total obligation	-1.8%	1.9%
Projected service cost (£M)	0.191	0.203
Approximate % change in projected service cost	-2.8%	2.9%

Rate of general increase in salaries

Adjustment to salary increase rate	+0.1% p.a.	-0.1% p.a.
Present value of total obligation (£M)	6,516	6,478
% change in present value of total obligation	0.3%	-0.3%
Projected service cost (£M)	0.197	0.197
Approximate % change in projected service cost	0.0%	0.0%

Rate of increase to pensions in payment and rate of revaluation of pension accounts

Adjustment to pensions increase rate	+0.1% p.a.	-0.1% p.a.
Present value of total obligation (£m)	6,594	6,400
% change in present value of total obligation	1.5%	-1.5%
Projected service cost (£m)	0.203	0.191
Approximate % change in projected service cost	2.9%	-2.8%

Post retirement mortality assumption

Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption*	-1 year	+1 year
Present value of total obligation (£m)	6,731	6,263
% change in present value of total obligation	3.6%	-3.6%
Projected service cost (£m)	0.205	0.189
Approximate % change in projected service cost	4.1%	-4.1%

*A rating of +1 year means that members are assumed to follow the mortality pattern of the base table for an individual that is 1 year older than them.

Comment on Mortality assumptions:

The mortality assumptions at the accounting date are based on actual mortality experience of members within the Fund based on analysis carried out as part of 2019 Actuarial Valuation, and allow for expected future mortality improvements. Sample life expectancies at age 65 in normal health resulting from these mortality assumptions are shown below.

	Males	Females
Pensioner member aged 65 at accounting date	21.9	25.1
Active member aged 45 at accounting date	23.3	26.5

The expected employer contributions in 2020-21 is £76,000.

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligations is 18.4 years.

3. Expenditure

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Staff Costs:		
Wages and Salaries	434,462	608,910
Social Security costs	44,186	59,067
Pension costs	151,106	232,408
	629,754	900,385
Other Operating Costs:		
Rent and rates	86,180	97,758
Computer costs	66,044	52,964
Legal fees and Settlements	125,110	48,636
Service charge and utilities	47,766	45,347
Professional & Consultancy costs	33,253	53,743
Database support and maintenance	23,461	18,168
Amortisation & Depreciation	11,139	3,273
Substitution costs	8,250	16,005
Printing and stationery	7,624	6,592
Maintenance services	5,970	12,381
Database Licences	5,451	6,458
Miscellaneous expenses	3,190	3,833
Fee collection charges	2,586	4,039
Subscriptions	2,195	2,198
Training and development	1,320	2,711
Postage	874	8,184
Stakeholder engagement	800	4,140
Travel and subsistence - Council	387	9,213
Books & newspapers	372	407
Hospitality and venue hire	56	7,688
Travel and subsistence-Staff	(82)	1,640
Election	-	33,586
Insurances	-	3,068
	431,946	442,032
Non-Cash Items		
Notional audit fee	11,500	11,500
	11,500	11,500
Total Expenditure	1,073,200	1,353,917

4. Other Income

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Interest income	6,183	17,847
Other income	11	-
Total	6,194	17,847

5. Property, plant and equipment

CURRENT YEAR	Office Equipment £	Computer Equipment £	Furniture & Fittings £	Total £
Cost or Valuation				
As at 1 April 2020	72,494	55,266	50,217	177,977
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
As at 31 March 2021	72,494	55,266	50,217	177,977
Depreciation				
As at 1 April 2020	72,494	53,965	50,217	176,676
Charge for period	-	651	-	651
Disposals	-	-	-	-
As at 31 March 2021	72,494	54,616	50,217	177,327
Net Book Value				
As at 31 March 2020	-	1,301	-	1,301
As at 31 March 2021	-	650	-	650
Asset Financing				
Owned	-	650	-	1,301
Total as at 31 March 2021	-	650	-	650

GTCNI holds no third party assets.

PRIOR YEAR	Office Equipment £	Computer Equipment £	Furniture & Fittings £	Total £
Cost or Valuation				
As at 1 April 2019	72,494	55,266	50,217	177,977
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
As at 31 March 2020	72,494	55,266	50,217	177,977
Depreciation				
As at 1 April 2019	72,494	53,315	50,217	176,026
Charge for period	-	650	-	650
Disposals	-	-	-	-
As at 31 March 2020	72,494	53,965	50,217	176,676
Net Book Value				
As at 31 March 2019	-	1,951	-	1,951
As at 31 March 2020	-	1,301	-	1,301
Asset Financing				
Owned	-	1,301	-	1,301
Total as at 31 March 2020	-	1,301	-	1,301

GTCNI holds no third party assets.

6. Intangible Assets

CURRENT YEAR	Computer Software & Licences £	Total £
<u>Cost or Valuation</u>		
As at 1 April 2020	31,470	31,470
Additions	31,732	31,732
Disposals	-	-
As at 31 March 2021	63,202	63,202
<u>Amortisation</u>		
As at 1 April 2020	2,623	2,623
Charge for period	10,488	10,488
Disposals	-	-
As at 31 March 2021	13,111	13,111
<u>Net Book Value</u>		
As at 31 March 2020	28,847	28,847
As at 31 March 2021	50,091	50,091
<u>Asset Financing</u>		
Owned	50,091	50,091
Total as at 31 March 2021	50,091	50,091

GTCNI holds no third party assets.

PRIOR YEAR	Computer Software & Licences £	Total £
<u>Cost or Valuation</u>		
As at 1 April 2019	-	-
Additions	31,470	31,470
Disposals	-	-
As at 31 March 2020	31,470	31,470
<u>Amortisation</u>		
As at 1 April 2019	-	-
Charge for period	2,623	2,623
Disposals	-	-
As at 31 March 2020	2,623	2,623
<u>Net Book Value</u>		
As at 31 March 2019	-	-
As at 31 March 2020	28,847	28,847
<u>Asset Financing</u>		
Owned	28,847	28,847
Total as at 31 March 2020	28,847	28,847

7. Financial instruments

GTCNI's core functions are funded from fee income from teachers' registration. GTCNI has no borrowings and mitigates its exposure to liquidity risk by managing its resources. Its cash balances are held in commercial bank accounts, none of which materially expose GTCNI to interest rate risk. Assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling. GTCNI is not materially exposed to currency risk.

8. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Amounts Falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	11,315	18,617
Accrued income	1,277	12,759
Total	12,592	31,376

9. Cash and cash equivalents

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Balance at 1 April	1,920,963	1,902,763
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	201,418	18,200
Balance at 31 March	2,122,381	1,920,963
The following balance at 31 March were held at commercial banks and in cash in hand:	2,122,381	1,920,963

10. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Amounts Falling due within one year:		
Trade payables	1,859	15,784
HMRC payable	0	7,700
Salaries and exit payments	0	58,270
Accruals	138,919	63,889
Total	140,778	145,643

11. Commitments under leases

Total future minimum lease payments under operating leases are as follows:

Obligations under operating leases comprises:

Buildings:	2020-21	2019-20
	£	£
Not later than one year	65,286	65,286
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	65,286
Later than five years	-	-
	65,286	130,572

12. Capital Commitments

GTCNI has no capital commitments at 31 March 2021.

13. Related party transactions

GTCNI is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department of Education (DE) which is regarded as a related party. GTCNI also entered into a number of immaterial transactions with schools in Northern Ireland for which DE is regarded as the parent.

In addition, the Council had a number of material transactions with other government departments and central government bodies as follows:

- Central Procurement Directorate (CPD)
- Departmental Solicitors Office (DSO)
- Department of Finance (DoF)
- IT Assist

During the year, none of the Council members, members of the key management staff, or other related parties undertook any material transactions with GTCNI, other than those disclosed in the Remuneration Report. A register of members' interests is available and can be inspected at GTCNI's office, Albany House, during normal working hours. As staff are currently working an office/home hybrid model, please contact GTCNI to make an appointment

14. Events after the reporting period

The Council was stood down by the Education Minister on 13th December 2021. GTCNI remains operational with governance and oversight provided by DE officials.

Two Employment Tribunal cases were settled in November 2021 and these have been accrued in the 2020-21 Financial Statements.

Date for authorisation for issue

The Interim Chief Executive Officer/Registrar authorised these financial statements for issue on 4 October 2022.

Introduction

1. The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) is required to prepare an Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and the Department of Education (DE) directions issued thereunder.
2. As required by DE's accounts direction, GTCNI submitted its draft 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) on 7 May 2021. However, it was incomplete, with GTCNI advising that this was due to delays in receipt of pension and remuneration figures.
3. GTCNI provided an updated Annual Report and Accounts on 30 May 2021. However, some pension and remuneration figures remained outstanding.
4. A complete Annual Report and Accounts was provided by GTCNI on 16 May 2022, over 13 months after the financial year end and 12 months after the required submission date.
5. Finalisation of the 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts and its subsequent audit have been delayed due to a number of reasons:
 - GTCNI's Finance & Contracts Manager resigned with effect from 18 June 2021. GTCNI explored a number of avenues to recruit a replacement including secondment and the use of a central government framework agreement. However, these were unsuccessful. Similarly, GTCNI's initial attempts to recruit directly via recruitment agencies were unsuccessful. Consequently, GTCNI was unable to finalise its Annual Report and Accounts or facilitate an audit until a Head of Corporate Services was appointed from a recruitment agency on 21 March 2022. This officer subsequently left GTCNI employment on 26 August 2022 and a replacement took up post on 12 September 2022.
 - On 13 December 2021, the Education Minister announced that following an independent Effectiveness Review which revealed systemic failures and a breakdown of working relationships within the Council, she had decided to stand down the GTCNI Council and its Committees with immediate effect. The implications of this decision for governance arrangements, including approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, needed to be established. The arrangements were not finalised until the end of June 2022.
 - The Chief Executive left GTCNI on 31 May 2022. Whilst an updated Annual Report and Accounts had been submitted before his departure, a number of queries arose during the audit process which took time for GTCNI to address due to the loss of corporate knowledge as a result of his and the Finance & Contracts Manager's departure.

Conclusion

6. In order to fulfil its financial reporting requirements, it is essential that GTCNI submits a complete 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts for audit as soon as possible.
7. I will continue to keep this area under review, reporting again as necessary.



Dorinnia Carville
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4 October 2022