

Circular HSC (F) 23/2023 sets out the delegations between the Department of Health and Health and Social Care bodies & NIFRS. It conveys delegated authority to commit and incur expenditure subject to the restrictions set out in the table below.

It is mandatory for HSC bodies to obtain prior Department of Finance approval for expenditure above the limits delegated to the Department of Health. Failure by the Trust to obtain the appropriate Department of Finance or Department of Health approvals will result in regularity and propriety issues. Any expenditure which falls outside a Trust's delegated authority and which has not been approved by the Department of Finance or Department of Health as appropriate is deemed irregular and could result in qualified accounts and investigation by the Public Accounts Committee.

All expenditure which is novel, contentious, repercussive or which could set a potentially expensive precedent, irrespective of size, even if it appears to offer value for money taken in isolation, must have Department of Health and Department of Finance approval before expenditure is committed.

Any payments/expenditure that require Department of Finance approval must be submitted through the Department of Health's Financial Policy and Accountability Unit, who will act as a single point of contact through whom all liaison with the Department of Finance on significant financial matters, including approvals, should be conducted. This is to ensure that appropriate Departmental approvals have been obtained and that regularity, propriety and value for money have been adhered to.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION					
		Department of Health	Trust Delegated Limit	Chief Executive	Director of Finance
1	Use of External Consultants ***		≤ £10,000		≤ £10,000
2	Capital Expenditure (excluding hospital schemes)	> £5,000,000	≤ £5,000,000	≤ £2,500,000	
3	Hospital Schemes – New Build, Extension, Refurbishment and Equipment involving capital expenditure	> £10,000,000	≤ £10,000,000	≤ £2,500,000	
4	IT Projects (Total project cost, i.e. capital plus revenue)	> £5,000,000	≤ £250,000	≤ £250,000	
5	Gifts – Any gift(s) to any individual or entity where the value of the gift(s) exceeds £250 Any collective gift(s) to any range of individuals or entities, where the value of the gift(s) to any one individual exceeds £250 or when the value of the collective gift(s) exceeds £5,000	Individual ≤ £250 Collective ≤ £5,000	Individual ≤ £250 Collective ≤ £5,000	Individual ≤ £250 Collective ≤ £5,000	
6	Losses – write off of cash losses and cash equivalents, bookkeeping losses, exchange rate fluctuations, fruitless payments and constructive losses, property in stores or in use due to any deliberate act	Full Authority	≤ £30,000	≤ £24,000	
7	Losses - The write off of losses relating to social security benefits, grants, subsidies arising from miscalculation, misinterpretation or missing information The failure to make adequate charges for use of public property or services or loans The write off of losses relating to pay, allowances, superannuation benefits where losses have arisen due to causes such as non-disclosure by beneficiary/fraud.	Nil **	Nil **	Nil **	
8	Losses – Waiver of Abandoned Claims	≤ £100,000	≤ £10,000	≤ £8,000	
9	Special Payments / Ex-Gratia Payments	≤ £100,000	≤ £10,000	≤ £8,000	≤ £8,000
10	Overpayments – Foregoing the recoupment of overpayments of pay, pensions and allowances	≤ £20,000	≤ £1,000	≤ £1,000	

11	Overpayments – Foregoing the recoupment of overpayments of grants	Nil **	Nil **	Nil **	
12	Special Severance Payments	Nil **	Nil **	Nil **	
13	Ex-Gratia Financial Remedy Payments (i.e. those made to complainants through an organisation’s internal complaints procedures/processes)	≤ £500	≤ £500		≤ £500
14	Ex-Gratia Payments to be made as a result of a recommendation from the NI Public Services Ombudsman	≤ £50,000	≤ £10,000	≤ £10,000	
15	Compensation Payments for Clinical Negligence (to include interim payments if overall settlement is expected to exceed delegated limits) including agreement of Periodic Payment Orders (PPOs) - Therefore, if the overall settlement is expected to exceed delegated limits, approval <i>must</i> be sought for interim payments (even though the interim payments themselves are below those limits)	≤ £2,000,000	≤ £1,000,000	≤ £1,000,000	
16	Compensation Payments following legal advice (this would include all personal injury and public liability claims)	≤ £100,000	≤ £25,000	≤ £25,000	
17	Compensation Payments without legal advice	≤ £10,000	Nil	Nil	
18	Extra-Statutory and Extra-Regulatory Payments	≤ £100,000	Nil	Nil	
19	Confidentiality Agreements	Nil**	Nil**	Nil**	
20	Grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue • Capital 	≤ £750,000 p.a. ≤ £750,000 in total	≤ £750,000 p.a. ≤ £750,000 in total	≤ £750,000 p.a. ≤ £750,000 in total	
21	Leases for Office Accommodation / Warehousing / Storage - both new and existing extension or renewal beyond break points. Excluding offices outside Northern Ireland.	Nil	Nil	Nil	
22	Pay Remits	As per FD Letter- Pay remit approval process and guidance	Nil	Nil	

23	Revenue Business Cases	Full Authority	Full Authority	Full Authority	
24	Confidentiality Agreements	Nil	Nil	Nil	
25	Foreign Exchange – Any proposals to negotiate contracts in foreign currencies other than euro, yet or dollar exceeding £2m	£2,000,000	£2,000,000	NA	
26	EU – All expenditure over £5m under the EU Programmes for which the Special EU Programmes Body is responsible	£5,000,000	£5,000,000	NA	

**** Prior DOH and DOF approval required in all cases**

*** All external consultancy business cases, regardless of value, must be submitted to FPAU prior to the commencement of an appointment process for any consultant. Where expected value of external consultancy is £10,000 or more the business case requires DOH Ministerial approval.