



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

Department of the Taoiseach

Annual Report 2018



<i>Message from the Taoiseach</i>	2
<i>Introduction by the Secretary General</i>	3
<i>Our Mission</i>	4
<i>Civil Service Vision</i>	4
<i>Strategic Priorities 2017 – 2020</i>	5
<i>The Core Functions of the Department in 2018</i>	6
<i>Highlights</i>	6
<i>The Government and Cabinet Committees</i>	6
<i>State Visits and Events</i>	6
<i>Strategic Priority A – Support the Taoiseach and Government (including Support Services)</i>	6
<i>Strategic Priority B – Sustainable Economy</i>	6
<i>Strategic Priority C – A Better and Fairer Society</i>	6
<i>Strategic Priority D – Strong Relationships in Europe and the World</i>	6
<i>Strategic Priority E – Brexit (including Northern Ireland)</i>	6
<i>Strategic Priority F – Planning for the Future (including improving our capability)</i>	6
<i>Expenditure for the Year 2018</i>	6
<i>Staffing</i>	6
<i>Overview of energy use in 2018</i>	6
<i>State Board Appointments</i>	6

Message from the Taoiseach

This review of 2018 brings home the extraordinary work of staff in the Department of the Taoiseach across so many different areas. I want to thank all the staff for their dedication and professionalism during the course of the year. This report, while comprehensive, can only give the briefest glimpses into their varied work across so many discrete areas of activity.

This work includes:

- the extensive engagement, collaboration, and contingency planning on Brexit matters;
- contribution to the drafting and implementation of *Project Ireland 2040* and *Global Ireland 2025*;
- establishing a policing reform office in the Department to drive the implementation of *A Policing Service for the Future*; and
- ongoing engagement with the British Government and political parties in Northern Ireland with the aim of securing agreement for a functioning power-sharing Executive and Assembly.

It also includes facilitating the running of the Government. During the year fifty-two Government and fifteen Cabinet committee meetings were held, and more than a thousand parliamentary questions were answered as well as twenty-three thousand pieces of correspondence.

Often people are unaware of the role of the Department of the Taoiseach in organising notable events and official visits. During the course of 2018, two very successful events were held deserving of special mention:

- the visit to Ireland of Pope Francis in August, and
- the inauguration of President Higgins in November.

An extensive programme of international activity, both within and beyond the EU, is carried out to advance our strategic interests and to promote our values. I would like to acknowledge the support I receive in that work, from my own Department, as well as from officials across Government Departments and from our diplomatic service.

Finally, I would also like to thank my ministerial colleagues in the Department of the Taoiseach, Paul Kehoe TD, Helen McEntee TD, Sean Kyne, TD and Pat Breen TD, for their hard work and dedication during the year.

Leo Varadkar
Taoiseach

Introduction by the Secretary General

This is the second Annual Report under the Department of the Taoiseach's Statement of Strategy 2017-2020.

In 2018, the Department provided a wide range of support services to the Taoiseach, the Ministers of State assigned to the Department, the Government and general public.

Brexit provided one of the most challenging and demanding aspects of the Department's work during 2018. The Department provided extensive support to the Taoiseach and the Government on a range of Brexit related issues including throughout the negotiation process, and also established a new unit focussing on Brexit preparedness and contingency planning in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

The Department supported the Taoiseach in a broad programme of international engagements, both within and beyond the EU, including many Brexit related engagements.

The Department also engaged with the formulation and implementation of a broad range of government policy issues such as Project Ireland 2040, pension reform, housing and homelessness, climate change, health and justice reform, childcare developments, gender equality and disability and the North East Inner City initiative.

Additional responsibilities undertaken in 2018 included working on and supporting Future Jobs Ireland, the Action Plan for Online Safety, the National Digital Strategy, the Innovation District Advisory Group, Policing Reform, the Interdepartmental Group on Security of Ireland's Electoral Process and Disinformation and the Implementation Group on Seanad Reform.

The Department staff also provided the essential corporate support services underpinning the work of all divisions and ministerial offices in the Department. Press and protocol services supported a large programme of events including visits by Heads of State and senior EU officials, the visit of Pope Francis in August and the Presidential inauguration in November.

I would like to thank all the staff of the Department for their continued hard work, professionalism and commitment throughout the year.

Martin Fraser

Secretary General

Our Mission

Our purpose is to help the Taoiseach and the Government to develop a sustainable economy and a successful society, to pursue Ireland's interests abroad, to implement the Government's Programme and to build a better future for Ireland and all her citizens.

Civil Service Vision

To provide a world-class service to the State and to the people of Ireland



Strategic Priorities 2017 – 2020

Following the appointment of the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar T.D., in June 2017 and the subsequent formation of the new Government, a new Statement of Strategy 2017-2020 was prepared for the Department and published in January 2018. This was a revision of the Statement of Strategy 2016-2019 published in February 2017 following the 2016 general election. To support the work of the Taoiseach and Government six strategic priorities, agreed in 2017, have been identified in the Department's Strategy Statement 2017 – 2020.



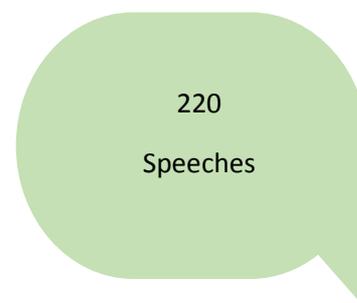
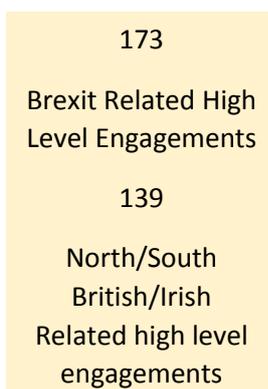
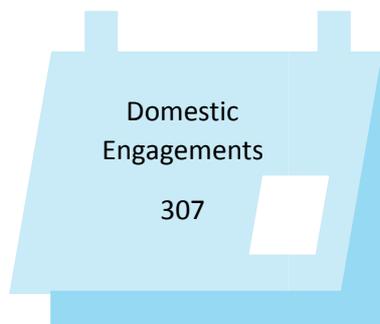
The Core Functions of the Department in 2018

- Delivering the Executive functions of the Taoiseach and the Government
- Providing the Government Secretariat
- Supporting the Taoiseach in carrying out his duties as Head of Government, including in relation to the Oireachtas, Constitutional issues, Protocol, the European Council, the North/South Ministerial Council and the British-Irish Council
- Working with the Office of the President and with the Houses of the Oireachtas
- Engaging with the formulation and implementation of Government policy, mainly through the system of Cabinet Committees, Senior Officials' Groups, the Programme for Government Office and the Parliamentary Liaison Unit
- The Office of the Taoiseach (as well as support for the Tánaiste)
- Support for Independent Ministers in Government
- The Office of the Government Chief Whip (who also has responsibility for the Central Statistics Office)
- Support for the Ministers of State assigned to the Department (with responsibility for Defence; for European Affairs, and for Data Protection)
- The Government Press Office and Government Information Service
- Providing briefing and advice for the Taoiseach on the full range of domestic policy issues and on international affairs (including through the work of the National Economic and Social Council)
- Supporting the Taoiseach and Government in the formulation, implementation and coordination across Government of policy on EU and international matters and in respect of Northern Ireland and British-Irish relations
- Delivering support services through Protocol and Corporate Affairs Division (HR, Finance, IT and other services).

Through the Civil Service Management Board, which is chaired by the Secretary General, we provide collective leadership of the Civil Service Renewal Programme, working closely with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

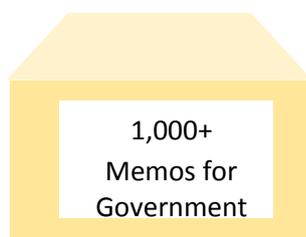
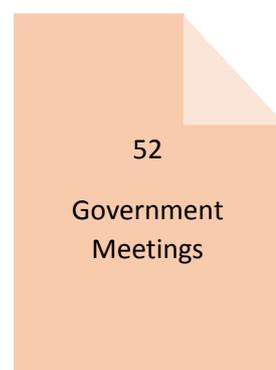
Highlights

During 2018, the 211.5 staff of the Department of the Taoiseach dealt with:

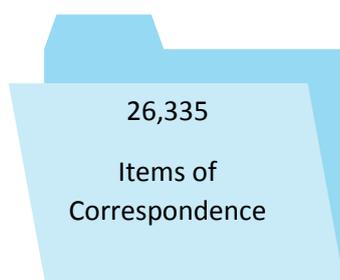


11 General Affairs Councils

15 European Council informal summits and EU high level engagements



661 Files transferred to the National Archives



The Government and Cabinet Committees

The Department provides the Secretariat to the Government. During 2018, the Government met 52 times and dealt with over 1,000 Memoranda. The Department supported two away-day Cabinet meetings in Sligo and Kerry and also provided support to the Taoiseach for ongoing bilateral meetings between him and Government Ministers.

The Department also provides the secretariat for Cabinet Committees and chairs the supporting Senior Officials' Groups. There were 15 Cabinet Committee meetings in 2018.

The system of Cabinet Committees is constituted as follows:

Cabinet Committee A (Economy)	Oversees issues relating to the Economy, Jobs, the Labour Market, Competitiveness, Productivity, Trade and the Action Plan for Rural Development, the Digital Economy and Pensions
Cabinet Committee B (Social Policy and Public Services)	Oversees and co-ordinates in the areas of social inclusion, poverty reduction and service delivery Supports the development and implementation of public service reform
Cabinet Committee C (European Union including Brexit)	Oversees the co-ordination of the Irish position on key European issues and the Government's response to Brexit including the economic impact and the negotiations at an EU level and with the administrations in Belfast and London
Cabinet Committee D (Infrastructure)	Ensures a co-ordinated and whole of Government approach to the development and implementation of policy in relation to housing, infrastructure investment and delivery, climate action and the National Planning Framework
Cabinet Committee E (Health)	Oversees issues relating to health including delivery of health service reforms
Cabinet Committee F (National Security)	Keeps under review the State's systems for analysis of, preparation for, and response to, threats to national security and provides for high level co-ordination on issues of national security
Cabinet Committee G (Justice and Equality)	Provides political oversight of developments in relation to justice and equality issues

State Visits and Events

During 2018, the Department organised, or assisted in organising, a number of notable events and inward official visits, including:

- President of Italy, H.E. Mr Sergio Mattarella
- Prime Minister of Luxembourg, H.E. Mr Xavier Bettel
- President of European Council Donald Tusk
- Prime Minister of Belgium H.E. Charles Michel
- Prime Minister of South Korea, Lee Nak-yeon
- President of European Commission, Jean Claude Juncker
- CEO IMF, Christine Lagarde
- Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz
- Duke and Duchess of Sussex
- Pope Francis
- President of State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas
- Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt. Hon. Winston Peters
- Former UK Prime Minister, Rt. Hon Sir John Major,
- Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan
- Beijing Party Secretary, Cai Qi
- Prime Minister of Estonia, Jüri Ratas

The Department also supported the Taoiseach and the Ministers of State as they represented and promoted Ireland at various meetings and engagements abroad, including:

- St. Patrick's Day events in Austin, Dallas, Durant OK, Washington D.C. and New York
- The World Economic Forum in Davos
- Bilateral engagement with EU leaders in Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Romania, Italy and Finland in the context of discussions on the future of Europe and the Brexit negotiations.
- British Irish Council Summits held in Guernsey and Isle of Man
- Two visits to the United Nations headquarters in New York; in July to launch Ireland's Security Council campaign and in September for UN General Assembly events, including the Mandela Peace Summit
- 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM12)
- Five European Council meetings, three informal summits and seven EU high level engagements
- Armistice Commemoration in Paris
- The Minister of State for European Affairs attended 11 General Affairs Council meetings

The Department is responsible for the coordination of the annual Easter Commemoration Ceremony which takes place at the GPO on Easter Sunday and the National Day of Commemoration. The Department was also responsible for the organisation of the Presidential inauguration ceremony and State reception in 2018 in Dublin Castle.

Strategic Priority A – Support the Taoiseach and Government (including Support Services)

The Department provided a wide range of support services to the Taoiseach, the Ministers of State assigned to the Department, the Government and the public, as well as internal support services in 2018. This included work associated with 52 Government meetings, 1,312 Parliamentary Questions, briefings, 220 speeches, 490 Freedom of Information requests, Internal Audit, tours of Government Buildings, responding to representations from the public, organising events and responding to media queries. The Department also provided administrative support to two Commissions of Investigation and to the Citizens' Assembly until its completion in July 2018.

In October, 2018, Seán Kyne T.D was appointed as Government Chief Whip and Minister for State for Gaeilge, the Gaeltacht and the Islands.

The Programme for Government Office in the Department monitors the implementation of the Programme for Government and published the second Annual Report in 2018 setting out progress across all Departments.

The Parliamentary Liaison Unit continues to facilitate the enhanced relationship between the Government and the Oireachtas. It provides support to Ministers and their Departments on Oireachtas matters, including assistance with Private Members' Business.

The Citizens' Assembly completed its work programme in 2018 and submitted its final two reports on the three remaining topics to the Houses of the Oireachtas – Climate Change, Fixed-Term Parliaments and the Manner in which Referenda are held – in April and June 2018 respectively.

A referendum on the Eighth Amendment (the Citizens' Assembly report on which was submitted in June 2017) was held in May 2018 and a further referendum on the removal of the offence of blasphemy from the Constitution (as recommended by the Convention on the Constitution) was held in October 2018.

The Department co-ordinates the Interdepartmental Group on Security of Ireland's Electoral Process and Disinformation. The Group published its first report in July 2018. A public consultation was held on the regulation of transparency of online political advertising in October 2018. Submissions received helped form the basis of discussions at the Open Policy Forum on Regulation of Transparency of Online Political Advertising which was held in December 2018.

The Department provided the secretariat to the Implementation Group on Seanad Reform. After its initial meeting on 9th May 2018, the Group met twelve times in 2018 and published its report in December 2018.

During Storm Emma in February/March 2018, the National Emergency Co-ordination Group successfully led the interdepartmental and multi-agency response to the extreme weather event. The Taoiseach and the Department contributed strongly to this comprehensive and measured response, ensuring timely communication in the interests of public safety for the duration of the event.

Support Services

The Department's HR Unit continued to provide HR services to employees and managers in the Department in collaboration with the National Shared Services Office (NSSO). As part of our commitment to being an employer of choice, the HR Unit undertook a number of initiatives in response to the results in the 2017 Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey. These included consultations with staff on key elements of the Department's new HR Strategy in development; a continued focus on the promotion of workplace well-being activities; and a number of workplace-health initiatives including the provision of in-house health checks and the flu vaccine to staff organised by the Management Services Unit.

In line with the Department's commitment to diversity in the workplace, we participated in AHEAD's Willing Able Mentoring Programme in 2018 which offers graduates with disabilities the chance to undertake 6-month paid mentored work placements.

The Department's Management Services Unit completed a number of maintenance projects in 2018 and dealt with 1,776 helpdesk calls. Work has commenced on the development of a new Official Languages Scheme for the Department to be published in 2019. In 2018, the Department dealt with 86 items of correspondence in Irish and continued its commitment to providing information in Irish including for significant events - the Pope's visit and the Presidential Inauguration.

In 2018, the Department's Finance Unit provided a range of financial services that contributed to the effective use of the Department's financial resources through the delivery of economy, efficiency, value for money and promptness in all expenditure. A total of 2,911 supplier invoices were paid with a total value of €10.5 million. The Finance Unit continued to deliver procurement support services to the Department in close consultation with the Office of Government Procurement.

During 2018 a new ICT infrastructure project was completed which ensures business continuity for the Department through a modern, robust, supported network and server infrastructure. Significant work advanced on enhancing the eCabinet system in collaboration with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. The Department's email and calendaring systems were replaced with a modern, updated system with additional functionality and the first elements of a desktop and laptop consolidation project were completed. Regular ICT support was provided with 8,568 helpdesk calls dealt with.

The Department's Information & Records Management Unit administered the transfer of 661 files or file parts in respect of the year 1988 to the National Archives in line with the National Archives Act.

The Department ensured its preparation for the implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from May 2018, with a Data Protection Officer in place, with necessary training and briefing provided across the Department on impacted areas.

The Department received no disclosures under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 from its employees or former employees in 2018.

Strategic Priority B – Sustainable Economy

The Department supports the Taoiseach and the Government in developing and implementing policy to deliver sustainable and regionally balanced economic growth and quality employment, as well as to promote effective planning and delivery of infrastructural developments, taking account in particular of the economic challenge posed by Brexit. The Cabinet Committees and associated senior officials groups backed by the Department's economic division help to implement policies in these areas.

Ireland continues to experience sustainable and balanced economic growth. Employment continues to increase, and now stands at almost 2.3 million. Unemployment was down to 5.4 per cent in March 2019.

Cabinet Committee A oversees issues relating to the economy and the labour market, competitiveness, productivity, rural development, the digital economy and pensions.

Cabinet Committee D works to ensure a coordinated and whole of government approach to the development and implementation of policy in relation to housing, infrastructure investment and delivery, climate action and the National Planning Framework.

During 2018 the economic division contributed to the policy formulation and drafting of Project Ireland 2040 launched in February 2018; prepared and published two Action Plan for Jobs Progress Reports; carried out research and consultation on Future Jobs Ireland, including leading the National Future Jobs Summit with D/BEI in November; supported the finalisation of the Pensions Reform Plan; and supported cross-government action and responses in priority policy areas and sectors including housing, climate action, white collar crime, connected and autonomous vehicles and the impact of the US Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

The economic division also co-ordinated Ireland's National Reform Programme and response to EU Commission on Ireland's Country Specific Recommendations and EU2020 targets.

The economic division supports the Taoiseach's participation in the Labour Employer Economic Forum which brings together representatives of employers and trade unions with Government Minister to discuss areas of shared concern affecting the economy, employment and labour market on a thematic basis.

The economic division also works with the Minister of State with responsibility for data protection to help ensure a whole-of-government approach to data protection and broader digital issues and provides the secretariat to the interdepartmental committee on data issues, to the Government data forum and the Innovation District Advisory Group.

The economic division is currently leading the development of a new overarching national digital strategy in collaboration with other relevant Departments. During 2018 a Framework for Developing the new National Digital Strategy was approved by Government and a full public consultation to inform the development of the Strategy took place. The division also organised a second Data Summit which was attended by over 400 people and took place in Croke Park. In addition, the Division assisted the Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Data Protection in preparing for the coming into effect of GDPR in May 2018.

Strategic Priority C – A Better and Fairer Society

The Department assists the Taoiseach and the Government in delivering on the programme for Government objective of public policies and services which drive a socially inclusive and fair society and to assist in renewing and transforming the public service. The social policy and public service reform division assists the work of Cabinet Committees B, E and G and the associated senior officials' groups.

Cabinet Committee B covers social policy and public services, including education, children, social inclusion, the Irish language, arts and culture and continued improvements and reform of public services. Cabinet Committee E deals with issues related to health, including the delivery of health service reforms. Cabinet Committee G, established in early 2018, provides for political oversight of developments in relation to justice and equality issues, including implementation of the Government's programme of reform in the areas of justice and policing.

During 2018 issues progressed through Cabinet Committee B included gender equality initiatives to reduce the gender pay gap, promote wage transparency, and increase women's membership on State boards and on corporate boards through Better Balance for Better Business; the Technological Universities Bill; the LGBTI+ Youth Strategy; the First 5, A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families; disability issues; the National Childcare Scheme; the Childcare Support Act; the National Survey on the Prevalence of Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI); the North East Inner City initiative; and the review of the Special Needs Assistants (SNA) Scheme. The Department led the development of the cross-Government Action Plan on Online Safety which was published in July.

Developments in relation to the NEIC in 2018 include new Gardaí assigned to the area; 50 social employment positions; refurbishment works on the Lourdes Daycare Centre; and the development of the P-TECH initiative in three second level schools to link industry and education through mentorships and internships.

In 2018, Cabinet Committee E considered Sláintecare; health expenditure; the HSE National Service Plan; scheduled and unscheduled care and waiting lists; the Nursing Home Support Scheme; CervicalCheck; and the Report of the Independent Review Group to examine the role of voluntary organisations in publicly funded health services.

Issues considered by Cabinet Committee G included reforms in the Department of Justice and Equality; Garda reform; the High Level Implementation Plan to implement the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI); access to the labour market for asylum seekers, undocumented children and adults in Ireland, the Magdalen Restorative Justice Scheme; and amendments to the Judicial Appointments Bill.

A policing reform implementation programme office was established in the Department to drive the implementation of the policing reform plan - *A Policing Service for the Future*, which was approved and published by the Government in December 2018.

The Department also supported the Creative Ireland Programme which saw some major gains in 2018 including significant progress in the roll out of the Creative Youth Plan. Cruinniú na nÓg - a national day for creativity for children and young people was rolled out on 23rd June, 2018.

Strategic Priority D – Strong Relationships in Europe and the World

Throughout 2018, the Department supported the Taoiseach in an extensive programme of international engagement, both within and beyond the EU. Such engagement is important to advance Ireland's strategic interests, drive increased investment, trade and jobs, strengthen Ireland's bilateral and political relations and develop shared responses to global and regional challenges.

The Department works closely with other Departments to promote Ireland's interests globally and to maximise our influence politically and economically.

In 2018, the EU Section continued its work to ensure Ireland plays a full and effective role in all aspects of the European Union, promoting and protecting our national interests while contributing to progress and prosperity across the Union, including engaging in the debate on the future of Europe. It prepares the Taoiseach's participation in meetings of the European Council and his meetings with other EU Heads of State and with the EU institutions. It takes a strategic approach to Ireland's engagement on policy matters and to bilateral engagement and alliance building. The section works closely with other Departments to ensure whole-of-Government coherence on issues of significance for Ireland, including Brexit and the Union's budget, and maintains an overview of progress on major horizontal EU policies. It contributes to discussion of and thinking on these issues across the system.

The Department also supported the Minister of State for European Affairs at the European Council and at 11 General Affairs Council meetings which considered issues including preparatory work for European Councils, the multi-annual financial framework, migration and security. In addition, the Department supported the Minister of State in a series of bilateral visits to 17 countries.

In 2018, the International Section continued to support the Taoiseach and Government in advancing Ireland's strategic international objectives, including increased and diversified inward investment, export trade and tourism, strengthening Ireland's bilateral and multilateral relations, and global challenges such as Sustainable Development. The International Section ensures a co-ordinated and whole of Government approach to Ireland's strategic international interests, including implementation of Global Ireland 2025, the Sustainable Development Goals, and other internationally-focused issues.

In June 2018, the Taoiseach launched Global Ireland 2025, a strategic initiative to double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint by 2025. This is the most ambitious renewal and expansion of Ireland's international presence since the foundation of the State. It allows Ireland to be more ambitious in pursuing our strategic international objectives, promoting our values, exerting our influence, enhancing our international reputation, and contributing to peace, security, sustainability and prosperity in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world.

Global Ireland also highlights the need for Ireland to deepen our engagement with international partners, particularly through multilateral organisations including the United Nations. A major part of this drive for deeper engagement with the multilateral system is Ireland's campaign for election to a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the 2021-2022 term. The campaign, led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, was officially launched by the Taoiseach at the UN headquarters in New York in July 2018. Ireland's candidature reflects our continuing engagement on issues of international importance and the centrality of the UN to our foreign policy.

Strategic Priority E – Brexit (including Northern Ireland)

The Department continues to support the work of the Taoiseach and Government in respect of the Government's consideration of Brexit issues including the negotiation process, preparedness and contingency planning. The international, EU and Northern Ireland division covers work on all international, EU, British-Irish and Northern Ireland affairs, including Brexit matters. It supports Cabinet Committee C to oversee the overall Government response to Brexit. The economic division is engaged with the possible economic impacts of Brexit with a particular focus on jobs and competitiveness. The Department works closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which has lead responsibility for Brexit policy matters and other relevant Departments.

In 2018, the Department established a unit to work on Brexit preparedness and contingency planning. The unit supports a Secretaries General group, which oversees ongoing work on national Brexit preparedness and contingency planning. It also supports a group of Assistant Secretaries focussed on no deal planning, and a Senior Officials Group on Brexit-related legislation. The unit is focussed on cross-Government co-ordination, planning and programme management, and works closely with colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and other relevant Departments and Agencies to ensure an effective whole-of-government approach to Brexit preparedness and contingency planning.

On 25 November 2018, EU27 leaders of the European Council endorsed a Withdrawal Agreement negotiated by European Commission and UK representatives. A Political Declaration on future EU-UK relations was also approved at the same time. The Withdrawal Agreement reflects the Irish Government's priorities in the negotiations on Brexit. These are to protect peace and the Good Friday Agreement and to ensure the continuation of the common travel area in all circumstances. It sets out arrangements required to avoid a hard border on this island. This Agreement was rejected by the UK Parliament. While the Government and the EU remain committed to securing a negotiated outcome, uncertainty persists and therefore the risk of a no deal Brexit has unfortunately not been fully averted and preparations by Government for all possible scenarios are therefore continuing.

A detailed Contingency Plan published in December set out the Government's analysis of a no-deal Brexit under a series of important headings: economic and fiscal impact; security; Northern Ireland and North-South relations; Relations with Great Britain; and sectoral analyses. In January 2019 an updated Contingency Plan was published outlining progress in no-deal contingency planning particularly concerning the Common Travel Area, Medicines and Transport Connectivity.

In 2018 intensive work was undertaken across Government to screen all Irish legislation to identify areas where legislative amendments would or may be required in the context of a no deal Brexit. A committee of senior officials was established to prepare proposals for the drafting and enactment of the necessary emergency legislation. A draft Omnibus scheme (Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Bill 2019), focused around the broad themes of protecting the citizen, and supporting the economy, enterprise and jobs, was prepared for consideration by the Government in early 2019 before being presented to the Dáil. Complementary secondary legislation was also progressed in 2018.

Northern Ireland

As co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement, the Taoiseach and the Government continued to engage with the British Government and political parties in Northern Ireland to get the necessary political process commenced to secure agreement for a functioning power-sharing Executive and Assembly.

The Taoiseach and the UK Prime Minister met eight times during 2018, including to discuss the restoration of the Institutions and the impact of Brexit on the island. The Taoiseach visited Northern Ireland on five occasions in 2018, meeting with the main political parties, and a range of business and community representatives. Senior officials in the Department participated in a total of 139 North/South and East-West meetings in 2018.

The British Irish Intergovernmental Conference met in June and November 2018. Both Governments re-affirmed their shared commitment to all of the political institutions established by the Agreement and to securing the effective operation of power-sharing, devolved government in Northern Ireland and the resumption of the North/South Ministerial Council at the earliest opportunity.

Maintaining peace and building relations on this island remains a core priority for the Government. The Government continued to prioritise the ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement and Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, which protects the Good Friday Agreement and gains of the peace process in all its parts.

The Taoiseach addressed the fourth plenary meeting of the All-Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit in Dundalk in April 2018. Since the launch of the All-Island Civic Dialogue at the end of 2016, the Government has heard from over 1,500 civic society and industry representatives from across the island on the implications of Brexit for their sector.

Strategic Priority F – Planning for the Future (including improving our capability)

The Department, through the Cabinet Committee process, supports and brings a whole-of-government approach to the formulation and implementation of cross-Government policies in a range of areas to address longer-term challenges and plan for the future. Specifically, the Department has worked to develop an annual process of risk assessment in order to identify and bring focus to policy making which anticipates and prepares for longer term trends and shorter term shocks.

The Department published the 2018 National Risk Assessment setting out a high level overview of strategic risks facing the country based on consultation with Departments, stakeholders and the public. It acknowledges the significance of risk arising from Brexit which could have far-reaching impacts on nearly all aspects of national life, while also noting the importance of keeping sight of other strategic risks.

The Department also supports the NESC in its role of providing strategic advice to the Taoiseach. During 2018, the NESC continued to advise the Taoiseach on strategic policy issues relating to sustainable economic, social and environmental development in Ireland including the publications on low work intensity households and on urban development land, housing and infrastructure.

In 2018, a number of critical long term strategic policy initiatives were advanced:

The Government published Project Ireland 2040 which provides a framework for future development that will enable growth over the next 20 years in a manner that provides for better and sustainable regional balance, less commuting and greater vibrancy in our villages, towns, cities and rural areas. The Land Development Agency, launched in September 2018 will work to ensure the optimal use and management of State land through strategic development and regeneration, with an immediate focus on delivering homes, including social and affordable homes.

The Government Roadmap for Pensions Reform 2018-2023 was launched in February 2018. This is a five year plan to improve pensions' sustainability and coverage. The Plan's six strands include reform of the state pension, public service pensions reform, improving governance and regulation, introduction of a new automatic enrolment pension scheme for private sector workers, and providing older people with greater flexibility to work to, and beyond, the normal retirement age.

The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy was published in August 2018. It is the Government's plan for delivering a sustainable and equitable health and social care service over the next ten years. Sláintecare is an ambitious and complex reform programme that will take ten years to implement in full. The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy lays out the direction for the next ten years and actions for the next three years that will be taken to lay the foundations for reform.

Future Jobs Ireland, the Government's new co-ordinated plan to prepare for the opportunities and challenges of the future economy, was developed during 2018. It sets out ambitious actions to enhance productivity, create quality and sustainable jobs, and build a resilient and innovative economy.

The Government launched First 5, A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families. The aim is to assist families and babies at this critical juncture in their lives, create a well-functioning early childhood system and broaden the range of options for parents to balance working and caring.

Improving Our Capability

The Department continues to value and invest in its talent by actively supporting workplace learning. Building on the comprehensive Learning and Development Programme in place for employees, the Department participated in OneLearning’s Learning Management System pilot in Quarter 4. There were also opportunities for employees to undertake academic study in areas aligned with the business needs of the Department, and to attend relevant seminars and conferences.

There was continued emphasis on performance management particularly through focused induction and probation processes. Training on the Civil Service Underperformance Policy and Disciplinary Code was made available to all managers in the Department. The Department’s ePMDS compliance rate for 2018 was 98%.

The Department supported the work of the Civil Service Management Board, chaired by the Secretary General, which met 8 times in 2018 to oversee implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan. As part of the overall effort to enhance capability and performance across the Civil Service, specific progress was made during 2018 on mobility, including the launch of Phase 1A, for Executive and Clerical Officers; Organisation Capability Reviews in the Courts Service, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht; and the development of departmental responses to the findings of the 2017 Employee Engagement Survey.

The Department is also involved with Our Public Service 2020, the framework for development and innovation in the public service, through membership of the Public Service Leadership Board and the Public Service Management Board. The Department has a role in progressing Action 4 “enhance communication and engagement with the public” and a number of initiatives were agreed by the Board in 2018 which are to be progressed over the course of 2019.

The streamlining communications and capacity building workstreams will continue, including the single web portal www.gov.ie, which the Department migrated to in 2018; the single government identity project; efficiency measures with better cross-Government collaboration; and training and continuous professional development of employees working in the area of communications.

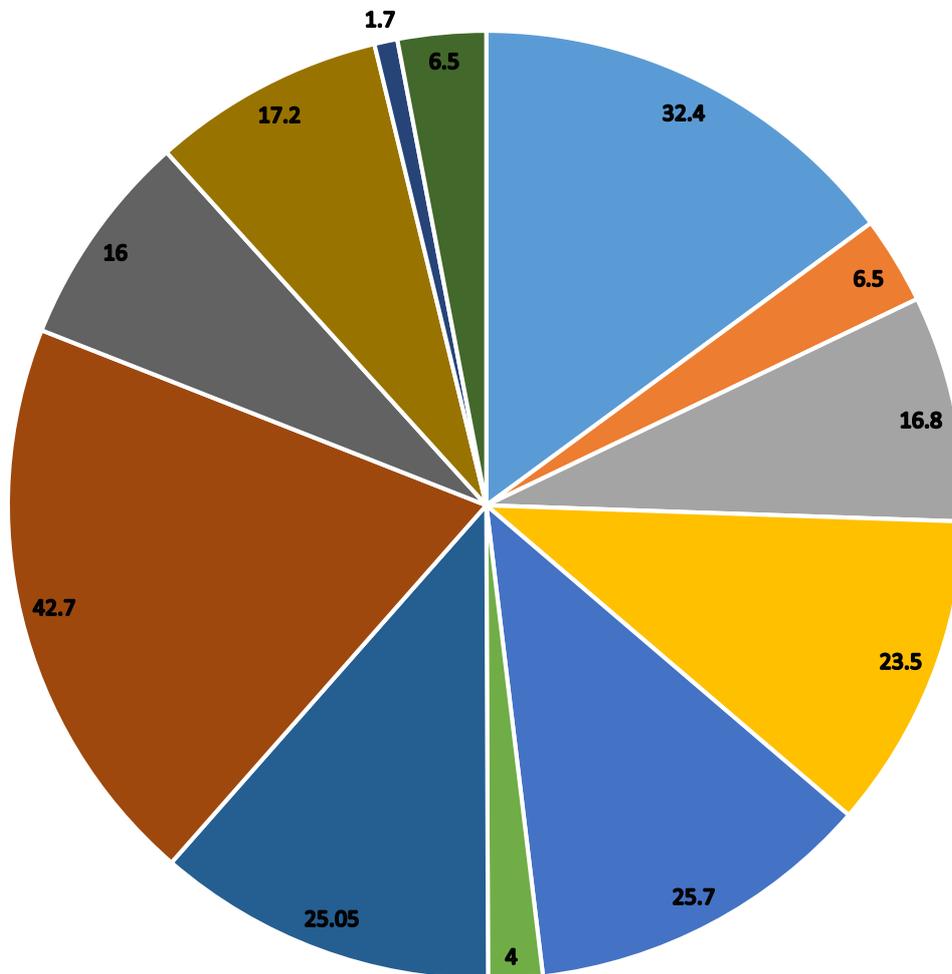
Expenditure for the Year 2018

2018 Provisional Outturn	
	€000
ADMINISTRATION	
Salaries, Wages and Allowances	13,796
Travel and Subsistence	538
Training and Development and Incidental Expenses	3,524
Postal and Telecommunications	249
Office Equipment and External IT Services	1,494
Offices Premises Expenses	414
Consultancy Services	0
Total Administration	20,015
OTHER SERVICES	
National Economic and Social Development	
Office (Grant-in-Aid)	1,889
Tribunals of Inquiry	1,999
Commissions of Investigation	2,877
Citizens' Assembly	534
Gross Total	27,314
Less Appropriations-in-Aid	(801)
Net Total	26,513

(Interest/compensation paid in 2018 because of late payments totalled €1,220.43)

Staffing

There were 218 whole-time equivalent staff working in the Department at end 2018.



- CORPORATE AFFAIRS (IT, HR, MSU, FINANCE)
- INFORMATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT UNIT
- SOCIAL POLICY AND PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM
- ECONOMIC DIVISION
- INTERNATIONAL, EU AND NORTHERN IRELAND
- BREXIT PREPAREDENESS AND CONTINGENCY UNIT
- GOVT SECRETARIAT, PROTOCOL AND PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON UNIT
- TAOISEACH AND MINSTERS OF STATE OFFICES
- GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE (INCORPORATING THE GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE)
- SERVICE STAFF
- INTERNAL AUDIT
- COMMISSIONS OF INVESTIGATION / TRIBUNAL STAFF

Overview of energy use in 2018

Energy usage in the Government Buildings complex, including the Department of the Taoiseach, is administered by the Houses of the Oireachtas. Over recent years there have been some significant changes in the way energy services are apportioned among the different tenants of the complex and these changes have complicated reporting. However, Department returns to SEAI for 2018 reporting showed continuing improvements in energy efficiency.

Energy usage in the Department is incurred for lighting, heating, air-conditioning, hot water, office and IT equipment and catering equipment. Work is on-going to decrease energy usage and the Department is engaged with the OPW on various projects that will aim to achieve more energy efficiencies.

OPW continued with lighting upgrades around the building during 2018 replacing existing lighting with LED light bulbs and retro-fitting light fittings where necessary. This programme is now nearing completion.

During 2018, the Department of the Taoiseach consumed a total of energy as follows:

992 MWH of Electricity

964 MWH of Gas

The Department also consumed 5.6 tonnes of wood pellets used in the complex's biomass boiler.

The Department is continuing to strive to achieve further energy reductions working with the SEAI and the Optimising Power at Work Team.

State Board Appointments

The Taoiseach appoints members to two state boards – the NESC and the National Statistics Board. Appointments generally fall into three categories - independent members, members nominated by sectoral organisations and ex-officio members (including public servants). The Taoiseach has limited discretion on appointments depending on the category where the vacancy arises. All appointments to the NESC and to the National Statistics Board are made in line with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards and on the basis of the relevant legislative provisions.

Membership (31 December 2018)

	Independent		Sectoral Nominees		Ex-officio		Total		% Female
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
National Economic and Social Council	4	3	10	5	4	2	18	10	36%
National Statistics Board	0	2	3	0	3	0	6	2	25%

Appointments 2018

	No. of Appointments in 2018	Gender	
		M	F
National Economic and Social Council	5*	3*	2
National Statistics Board	0	0	0

*1 male appointee was a sectoral organisation nominee

The Department of the Taoiseach will endeavour to improve gender balance on the NESC and the National Statistics Board by requesting nominating bodies and organisations to take account of gender balance when making nominations in future. The Department will also seek to ensure that the nomination of independent members continues to meet the Government's gender balance objective.



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach