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I welcome the publication of the Annual Report 2018 of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Since being appointed Minister in 2017, I have been proud to lead the Department as it makes a difference to the lives of large numbers of Irish people on a weekly basis. Indeed, each week in Ireland over 1.3 million people receive a social welfare payment of one sort or another. My Department has spent over €20 billion in 2018 on schemes and benefits for families and individuals in our society, with around 80.6 million individual payments being made to social welfare recipients in the course of the year.

My Department is the largest in Government comprising of almost 6,000 civil servants. Owing to the wide range of services it provides, the Department positively impacts on the lives of almost every citizen in the State in the course of their life; from child benefit to the State pension and every possible life event in between - including maternity, paternity, illness, disability, unemployment and redundancy.

2018 was a year of continued recovery in employment and stable economic growth. As a Government, our top priority for the coming year is to continue our prudent approach to the economy and the management of public spending. As a Department, our priority is to address the needs of those who most need our help, to reduce poverty and enhance access to employment. The Budget changes in 2018 are shown to have had the greatest impact on non-earning households, increasing their income, their opportunities and reducing poverty.

My Department is committed to the promotion of active participation and inclusion in society through the framework of employment rights and the provision of income supports, employment services and other services. I am committed to ensuring that it will always be more worthwhile to be in work, than to rely solely on welfare alone.

This annual report once again highlights the wide range of service and policy reforms implemented by the Department in the last year. In July, following a public consultation process, we published a report of the Review of the Gender Recognition Act. The Back to Work Family Dividend Scheme was extended beyond 2021 and my Department provided €54m in funding school meals to support over 250,000 children. Funding of €1.76m was provided for training and supports for carers and funding of €16m was provided for "Ability" - a new pre-activation programme for young people with disabilities.

My Department reaches the most vulnerable people in our society, providing services and payments that assist people to find work and help to mitigate the financial hardship when work cannot be found or when people are simply unable to work. During 2018, we continued to innovate and plan new measures and policies to achieve this aim.

In Budget 2019, we increased the weekly rate of the increase for a qualified child by €2.20 for children up to age 12 and by €5.20 for children aged 12 years and over – recognising that the costs of raising and caring for children increase once that child reaches their secondary school years. This was accompanied by a €25 increase in the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance.

Furthermore, in the Budget, I allocated funds to establish a pilot programme for a hot meals scheme in schools. Hot dinners will be provided on a pilot basis in up to 36 schools to some 7,200 children. If successful, I will work with the Department of Education and Skills in extending the scheme on a much wider basis in future years and establish the scheme on a permanent basis.

In the same Budget, we also increased the income disregard for lone parents – this means they get to keep more of their own earnings and the National Minimum Wage was increased to €9.80 per hour to ensuring that work pays.

Recognising the importance of providing support for parents of young children and that the first year of a child’s life is of particular importance, I announced a new parental benefit.
scheme in Budget 2019 which will allow both parents to access Paid Parental Leave in the first year of their child’s life.

As part of our pre-budget consultation process during 2018, the issue of cost the of disability was raised. With the Budget, I announced my intention to commission research on this issue – a first step to comprehensively and effectively address this issue. This research, when complete, will provide a roadmap to inform policy direction in the future – from a whole-of-Government perspective – in relation to the adequate provision of support to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

By the end of 2018, I was also able to ensure the payment of a Christmas Bonus at a rate of 100% - restoring the Bonus in full and recognising the needs of people who are long-term financially dependent on their social welfare payment for all or most of their income, such as pensioners, people with disabilities and carers.

Furthermore I am committed to improving access to social welfare for those who are self-employed. This began in 2017 with the extension of Treatment Benefits and Paternity Benefit to the Self-employed. 2019 will see the introduction of a Jobseekers Benefit for the Self-employed for the first time.

We are continuing work on the reform and modernisation of our pension system and have undertaken a significant public consultation that will help to inform Government decisions on the operational structure for the Automatic Enrolment system- a State sponsored supplementary retirement savings system in which employees without personal retirement savings will be automatically enrolled into a quality assured retirement savings system. This new system will enroll its first members in 2022.

We have made progress on all of our priorities in Budget 2019. We increased the rate of weekly payments for over 1.3 million beneficiaries including pensioners, lone parents, jobseekers, carers, people with disabilities and widows. We enhanced working conditions for unsecure workers. My focus is firmly on employment, pension reform, and reducing child poverty. My goal is to ensure that people are rewarded for working by reforming the PRSI system and reinforcing the contributory principle. I want to ensure that economic recovery leaves no-one behind. Our long-term goals in this respect will be set out in a new Social Inclusion Strategy to be published in mid-2019.

Since my appointment as Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, I have been consistently impressed by the commitment and diligence of Departmental staff. I thank them for their commitment, on behalf of the millions who benefit from their work.

Regina Doherty T.D. Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Foreword

Secretary General
John McKeon

This is the second Annual Report on the Department’s Statement of Strategy 2017 to 2020 and sets out the progress made during 2018.

For many people 2018 may have been the first year in which the economic recovery, heralded by economists and others, began to filter through to their everyday lives. Employment levels reached record highs, poverty levels fell and, for the people we serve, a number of welcome budget increases in rates of payment were implemented from March.

Thankfully these trends have continued and as I write the level of unemployment has fallen to 4.4%, and is now at or about the level generally recognised as full employment.

Still the work of this Department continues, people in Ireland in every walk of life and every stage of life continue to rely on us for vital supports and services - from maternity and paternity benefit, to child benefit and working family payments through to pensions. In lives sometimes punctuated by jobseeking, illness/disability and caring responsibilities, everybody, at some stage in their life, accesses the services provided by the Department. Services which are not confined solely to income supports but encompass employment services, employment rights and registration of key life events including birth, change of identity, marriage and death.

This annual report sets out some of the many activities and achievements of the Department across this full range of activities for 2018. For example the publication of our Roadmap for Pension Reform and the consultations on new Automatic Enrolment and Total Contribution approaches to pension provision; the extension of new rights for workers particularly with regard to tackling the issue of precarious employment; the rollout of the Ability Programme to support people with disabilities access employment and the publication of the review of the Gender Recognition Act to name but a few.

While this progress is notable and welcome, we also have to acknowledge that from time to time we don't always get things right. One failure in 2018 which was particularly regrettable was the breakdown in Illness Benefit payments which some customers encountered following the move to a new IT system. I would like to apologise for these issues. I know how much people rely on the supports provided by this Department and how important it is that these supports are provided efficiently and seamlessly. Accordingly we set ourselves a standard of ensuring, come what may, that payments always issue. This is a standard which, unfortunately, we did not meet in this instance. Thankfully, most of these issues have now been resolved thanks to the hard work and ongoing efforts of our staff and we are now beginning to see the benefits of the new IT system in operation.

Another significant event during the year was the retirement of Anne Vaughan. Anne served the Department and its clients with great dedication and care for many years. She personified everything the Department stands for and, as Deputy Secretary General, she played a key role in leading the Department and advising Ministers and Government in good times and in bad. On my own behalf and on behalf of all the Secretaries General who benefitted from her counsel and support I wish to thank her and wish her a long, happy and well deserved retirement. In thanking Anne I wish to welcome her successor Jacqui McCrum. Jacqui brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with her, from her time in the Ombudsman’s Office and elsewhere, and is well placed to make a valuable contribution to the important work of the Department.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank all the staff of the Department for their support of the Department’s work and their ongoing commitment to serving the public. This dedication is exemplary and without their continued excellence, particularly throughout the period when we encountered payment issues in Illness Benefit, none of the progress or achievements outlined in this report would be possible.
Chapter 1
The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Functions of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

The Department supports the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection in the discharge of governmental, parliamentary and departmental duties.

The main functions of the Department include:

- advising the Government and formulating appropriate employment, labour market, social protection and social inclusion policies;
- designing, developing and delivering effective and cost-efficient income supports, activation and employment services and providing comprehensive, accurate information to all of its customers;
- working towards providing seamless delivery of services in conjunction with other Departments, agencies and bodies; and
- controlling suspected fraud and abuse in relation to social welfare payments.

The Department’s Mission

To promote active participation and inclusion in society through a framework of employment rights and the provision of income supports, employment services and other services.

Scale of the Department’s Business

The Department serves a wide and diverse group of clients including families, people in employment, unemployed people, people with illnesses and disabilities, carers and older people. In more recent times, the Department has expanded its remit to provide a range of services to employers. It has invested significantly in developing relationships with employers to position the Department as their preferred partner in relation to recruitment and employment support services.

The Department administers over 70 separate schemes and services, which affect the lives of almost every person in the State. Key services include:

- payment of a wide range of social insurance and social assistance income supports such as jobseeker payments, illness benefit, disability payments, pensions and supplementary welfare allowances, in addition to the universal payment of child benefit;
- through Intreo, the integration of employment and benefit payment services to ensure that the payment of income supports to people who do not have a job is directly linked to the important task of supporting people in their pursuit of employment, training and education opportunities, in order to improve their life chances;
- provision of a range of employment supports, guidance and placement services to help jobseekers find and secure employment;
- delivery of a range of employer services including recruitment services, online publication of job vacancies, employment supports (e.g. wage subsidy schemes available to people with disabilities) and redundancy and insolvency services;
- a range of community services to promote social inclusion and provide a pathway to employment for those who are unemployed; and
- support and lead analysis and the development of policy in areas including income distribution, minimum wage, social transfers, pension provision, social inclusion, labour market participation and employment services, employment law, public employment services, and labour market participation of the implementation of Government strategies for social inclusion under the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion and the Europe 2020 Strategy for Jobs and Growth.
Chapter 1  The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Management Board of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection 2018: Pictured back row, left to right are Kathleen Stack, Oliver Egan, Deirdre Shanley, Michael Bunyan, Teresa Leonard, John Conlon, Joan Gordon, Devesh Singh and Patricia Murphy. Pictured front row, left to right are Niall Egan, Anne Vaughan, John McKeon, Simonetta Ryan and Tim Duggan

Organisation of the Department

At the end of 2018, the Department had a total of 5,954 permanent staff.

The Department’s Organisation Structure as of June 2019 is set out in Appendix 1. From a customer perspective services are provided through:

- Centralised offices at various locations countrywide. These offices administer the Department’s many schemes, and also have a range of policy responsibilities. These include offices in Buncrana, Carrick-on-Shannon, Dublin, Dundalk, Letterkenny, Longford, Roscommon, Sligo, and Waterford.

- The Department’s network of 62 Intreo Centres provide services primarily to Jobseekers and single parents.

- A range of service partners including Branch Office providers, Local Employment Services, Jobclubs, Jobpath providers, Community Employment and Tús providers and EmployAbility companies.
Chapter 1  The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Offices and statutory bodies under the aegis of the Department include:

- **The General Registrar’s Office (GRO)**
  The GRO is responsible for the registration of births, stillbirths, adoptions, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths in the State. Day-to-day delivery of the Civil Registration Service is largely provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE), through a network of local Civil Registration Service offices across the State. The GRO also operates a genealogical research facility.

- **The Social Welfare Appeals Office**
  This office is responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlement and insurability of employment.

- **The Social Welfare Tribunal**
  This tribunal is a statutory body that deals with cases where entitlement to Jobseeker’s Benefit or Jobseeker’s Allowance is refused due to an involvement in a trade dispute. Where a person feels that he/she has been unreasonably deprived of employment because his/her employer refused or failed to follow the negotiating mechanisms available for settling disputes, he/she may apply to the Tribunal for an adjudication on the matter.

- **The Pensions Council**
  This council provides advice to the Minister on matters of relevance to pensions, with a particular focus on policies to support the future sustainability and adequacy of pension provision.

- **The Citizens Information Board (CIB)**
  Funded by the Department, the CIB is the national agency responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social and public services through the Citizens Information Services (CIS), and for the provision of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). The MABS service, in turn, provides Abhaile - a service to help homeowners find a resolution to their home mortgage arrears.

- **The Pensions Authority**
  This authority provides information, regulation and governance in relation to occupational and private pensions.

- **The Low Pay Commission**
  The principal function of the Low Pay Commission is to examine and make recommendations to the Minister on the appropriate level of the national minimum wage and related matters.
### Organisation Staffing in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Permanent Staff - by Grade</th>
<th>31 December 2016</th>
<th>31 December 2017</th>
<th>31 December 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Secretary</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Secretary</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Officer</td>
<td>61.80</td>
<td>59.60</td>
<td>56.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Assessor</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>30.30</td>
<td>28.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>273.88</td>
<td>271.18</td>
<td>274.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
<td>23.36</td>
<td>24.40</td>
<td>24.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Executive Officer</td>
<td>1518.47</td>
<td>1495.67</td>
<td>1501.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
<td>921.82</td>
<td>1477.77</td>
<td>1398.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Officer</td>
<td>575.07</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Officer</td>
<td>2575.87</td>
<td>2508.96</td>
<td>2513.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Grades</td>
<td>143.10</td>
<td>146.24</td>
<td>145.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Permanent Staff</strong></td>
<td><strong>6137.37</strong></td>
<td><strong>6025.12</strong></td>
<td><strong>5954.29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economic and Employment Recovery Continues

Ireland’s strong economic recovery continued in 2018. After a prolonged and steep decline between 2008 and 2012, employment levels have been in 2018 increasing for over five years. Ireland’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by an estimated 4.8 per cent in real terms, making it the fastest growing economy in the European Union for the fifth consecutive year.

In employment terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Irish labour market continued to perform strongly. Employment increased by 2.3% in the year, bringing total employment to 2,281,300 people, the highest number in the history of the State.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The annual increase of 50,500 (+2.3%) in employment was represented by an increase of 25,200 (+2.1%) in male employment and an increase of 25,300 (+2.5%) in female employment over the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time employment was up 48,200 (+2.7%), and part-time employment was up 2,300 (+0.5%) over the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in December 2018 was 5.7%, down from 5.8% in December 2017 and a peak of 15% in 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The long term unemployment rate decreased from 2.5% to 2.1% during 2018, accounting for 38.9% of total unemployment in Q4 2018 compared to 41.7% in Q4 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of people in the labour force was 2,410,100 in Q4 2018, an increase of 35,300 (+1.5%) over the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment levels at the end of 2018 were nearing rates last seen in the pre-economic crisis period. The unemployment rate is forecast to average 5.1% in 2019.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Live Register Figures Fall in 2018

At year end, December 2018, 204,000 people (seasonally adjusted) (199,669 non-seasonally adjusted) were signing onto the Live Register. This represents an annual decrease of 37,300 (-15.4%).

There has also been a steady fall in the number of people on the Live Register who are long-term unemployed (unemployed for 12 months or more). Latest figures show that the number of long-term unemployed for December 2018 is 79,542. This represents a decrease of 18.8 percent compared to December 2017 and 33.6 percent compared to December 2016.

Youth Unemployment Falls in 2018

Irish youth unemployment has fallen from a peak of 31.2% in 2012 to 12.2% in December 2018. Youth unemployment has fallen from being above the EU average in 2012 (23%) to below the current EU28 average at the end of the year (14.9%).

Youth unemployment can be expected to fall further in 2019, in line with the continuing forecast fall in overall unemployment. Additionally Ireland is on course to bring youth unemployment below 12% in line with targets set in Pathways to Work 2016-2020.
Chapter 2  
2018 Performance

Expenditure 2018

The provisional outturn, or total expenditure of the Department for 2018 is €20.3 billion.

The 2019 Revised Estimates Volume provides for expenditure of €20.5 billion on all department schemes, services and administration.

This allocation reflects projected trends in recipient numbers and payment values in 2019, as well as the impact of improvements announced as part of Budget 2019.

The Department’s expenditure is incurred across seven programme areas, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: Total Department Expenditure by Programme in 2018 and 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018 Provisional Out turn</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age Income Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age Employment Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness, Disability and Carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Payments, Agencies and Miscellaneous Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Department expenditure</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1: Percentage of Total Expenditure in 2018
## Key Activities 2018

### TABLE 3: 2018 at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Staff &amp; Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Budget 2018</td>
<td>€20Bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of phone enquiries received</td>
<td>6.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Intreo centres and branch offices</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct spend on programmes and services</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of PSCs issued</td>
<td>603,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of permanent staff</td>
<td>5954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend on salaries, support services and payments to service providers</td>
<td>€638 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSN) allocated</td>
<td>195,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of separate schemes and services</td>
<td>Over 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Employment Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Services</th>
<th>Payments</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job opportunities advertised on JobsIreland</td>
<td>82,000</td>
<td>Applications processed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of events for Jobsweek 2018</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>Weekly payment recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants in training, and employment programmes (Dec 2018)</td>
<td>53,550</td>
<td>Monthly child benefit recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobseeker case office engagements (invites)</td>
<td>279,961</td>
<td>Individual payments made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*before Courts as of end December 2018
## Scheme Recipients 2018

**TABLE 4: Number of Recipients by Scheme 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Pension (Contributory)</td>
<td>411,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Pension (Non-Contributory)</td>
<td>95,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow/er’s or Surviving Civil Partner’s Contributory Pension</td>
<td>121,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobseeker’s Allowance</td>
<td>155,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobseeker’s Benefit</td>
<td>34,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Parent Family Payment</td>
<td>39,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Welfare Allowance</td>
<td>16,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity Benefit</td>
<td>21,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternity Benefit</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carer’s Allowance</td>
<td>79,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carer’s Benefit</td>
<td>2,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Allowance</td>
<td>140,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalidity Pension</td>
<td>57,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness Benefit</td>
<td>55,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Injury Benefit</td>
<td>938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Benefit</td>
<td>628,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Family Payment</td>
<td>54,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domiciliary Care Allowance</td>
<td>39,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Benefits</td>
<td>439,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Travel</td>
<td>934,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Benefit</td>
<td>1,270,313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2  2018 Performance

Social Inclusion and Poverty

Progress made towards reaching the national social target for poverty reduction is reported annually in the Social Inclusion Monitor (SIM). The 2016 Monitor\(^1\) was published in June 2018, based on the data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) for 2016. The most recently available Survey on Income and Living Conditions data is for 2017 and was published by the CSO in December 2018\(^2\).

The results reflected the impact of the ongoing economic recovery and employment growth experienced in 2017. The main changes included:

- A significant reduction in the consistent poverty rate which fell to 6.7% in 2017 from 8.2% in 2016. This is the largest year-on-year reduction in percentage points in the consistent poverty rate since 2004. The 2017 consistent poverty rate is now only slightly higher than the 2010 rate of 6.3%, despite having risen to a high of 9% in 2013.

- A significant reduction in the basic deprivation rate, which fell to 18.8%, from the 2016 figure of 21%. This is a continuation of the yearly decline in deprivation rates since the peak level of 30.5% in 2013.

- The rate of consistent poverty among children has fallen to 8.8% (105,000 children), down from 10.9% (130,000 children) in 2016. Having reached a high of 12.7% in 2013, the rate is now similar to levels in 2009/2010.

- The Irish contribution to the Europe 2020 poverty target (measured by combined poverty\(^3\)) also improved. The ‘combined poverty’ rate in 2017 was 27.8%, down over 10 percentage points from a peak of 38% in 2013.

- The at-risk-of-poverty rate decreased from 16.2% to 15.7% in 2017. The at-risk-of poverty threshold was €12,521 per annum or €240 per week for a single person.


Employment continues to be a significant factor when considering the poverty figures. The 2017 consistent poverty rate for those aged 16 years and over in employment is 1.4%, compared to 24.1% for those aged 16 years and over who are unemployed. Similarly the 2017 consistent poverty rate for households where there is no-one at work is 21.3% whereas for households where one person is at work the rate is 5.1% and where two people are at work the rate is 0.8%.

The continued growth of the economy, together with the increasing number of people in employment and the welfare measures introduced in recent budgets, is expected to result in further reductions in the number of people in consistent poverty, at risk of poverty or experiencing deprivation over time.


\(^3\) Combined poverty includes those who are in consistent poverty or at risk of poverty or deprivation
Chapter 2  
2018 Performance

Poverty and Deprivation Rates by year 2007-2017

Impact of Social Transfers on the At Risk of Poverty Rate

Social transfers in 2017 continued to perform strongly in reducing the at-risk-of-poverty rate. Social transfers (excluding pensions) reduced the at-risk-of-poverty rate from 32.3 per cent to 15.7 per cent, an absolute reduction of 16.6 percentage points. In relative terms, this represents a poverty reduction effect of 51 per cent. Ireland remains one of the best performing EU member states in reducing poverty through social transfers.
Chapter 2  2018 Performance

Implementing Budget 2018 - €343m in additional expenditure

The Programme for Partnership Government commits to above-inflation increases in weekly rates for pensioners, and supports increases in the rates of payment for people with disabilities and carers. A wide range of changes were introduced to welfare payments as a result of Budget 2018 and at a cost of an additional €343 million in overall expenditure.

From March 2018, there was a €5 increase in the maximum rate of all weekly payments including all pension payments, Carer’s Allowance/Benefit, Disability Allowance, Jobseeker’s Allowance/Benefit, One-Parent Family Payment and Maternity/Paternity Benefit with proportionate increases for qualified adults and those on reduced rates of payment.

This measure fulfils the The Programme for Partnership Government Commitment and also benefits the full range of working age social welfare recipients, such as those in receipt of maternity and paternity benefit, lone parents, jobseekers and employment programme participants.

Increased Payments to Families and Children

The payment in respect of qualified children increased from €29.80 to €31.80 per week in 2018. This was the first increase in this weekly rate of payment since 2010. The measure is targeted at low-income families, such as lone parents and their children, who experience relatively high rates of poverty.

The income disregards for the One-Parent Family payment and Jobseeker’s Transition payment increased by €20, from €110 to €130 per week, to help encourage one parent families to stay in, and return to, work. The thresholds for the Working Family Payment also increased by €10 per week for families with up to three children.

The allocation for the Department’s School Meals Programme for 2018 was €54 million, for 1,580 schools and organisations, supporting over 250,000 children.

Other Payments

Budget 2018 provided for the introduction of a new Telephone Support Allowance, designed to provide additional financial support to pensioners and people with disabilities with limited means, living on their own. Eligible customers (who are in receipt of both the Living Alone Increase and the Fuel Allowance) automatically receive payments of €2.50 per week from June 2018.

The Fuel Allowance season was extended by an additional week, from 26 weeks to 27 weeks. Funding for the Free Travel scheme increased by €10 million to €90 million in 2018, in line with the Programme for Government commitment to fully protect the scheme.

Christmas Bonus

In December 2018, a Christmas Bonus was paid to over 1.2 million long-term social welfare recipients, including pensioners, people with disabilities, carers, lone parents and the long-term unemployed. The Bonus was paid at 100 per cent for the first time since 2008.

Feedback from customers

"She acted in such a kind and professional manner, and was so approachable by either phone or email. People like this make the world a better place, with their kindness and ability to listen and prompt replies."

Mary
Chapter 2  2018 Performance

Social Impact Assessment of Budget 2018

Each year the Department publishes its social impact assessment of the welfare and income tax measures in the recent Budget. The assessment builds on prior analyses prepared by the Department to inform ministerial deliberations on the Budget. The publication is intended to contribute to public understanding of the impact of budgetary policy.

In February 2018, the Department published its social impact assessment of the welfare and income tax measures in Budget 2018. Social impact assessment is an evidence-based methodology which estimates the likely effects of policies on household incomes, families, poverty and access to employment. It uses the ESRI tax/welfare model, SWITCH, to simulate the impact of budgetary changes on a representative sample of households drawn from the CSO Survey on Income and Living Condition.

As well as the main welfare and income tax measures in Budget 2018, the assessment also took account of the increase in the national minimum wage. The principal finding was that average household incomes would increase by 1.1 per cent (€11.40 per week) as a result of Budget 2018. The bottom two income quintiles gained most, with smaller gains among the middle and top quintiles. The bottom quintile gained over twice that of the top quintile (1.9 per cent compared to 0.8 per cent). This means that welfare measures primarily benefitted lower-income households. The income tax measures, though spread across all quintiles, were most beneficial to those in the second and fourth quintiles.

The assessment found that non-earning households (lone parents, couples with and without children and single people) gained most from Budget 2018 (with an increase of up to 3 per cent). Some other family types with above average gains included earning lone parents, single-earner couples with children and retired single people. The assessment showed that social transfers continued to perform strongly in reducing poverty with an estimated 0.6 percentage point reduction in the population at-risk-of-poverty.


Pre-Budget Forum

In July 2018, Minister Regina Doherty T.D. and Minister of State for Disability Issues, Finian McGrath, T.D. hosted the Department’s annual Pre-Budget Forum in Dublin Castle. This annual event is an opportunity for community, voluntary and business organisations to discuss and debate policy issues and present their thoughts and views on the upcoming Budget. Approximately 50 community and stakeholder representative groups attended and participated in the forum, and provided valuable feedback, which was used to inform Budget 2019.
Budget 2019
Minister Doherty delivers an additional €361.6 million in social welfare expenditure

Budget 2019 Measures Announced

New Parental Benefit to be introduced
Budget 2019 provides for the introduction of a new social insurance based paid Parental Benefit scheme for employees and the self-employed. The measure will provide for two weeks paid leave/benefit for each parent in the first year of a child’s life. The payment will be paid at the same weekly rate as maternity and paternity benefit.

Measures for Families and Children
Budget 2019 also benefits families and children through a range of measures including:

- A new Hot School Meals Pilot Programme was announced in Budget 2019, with hot dinners to be provided on a pilot basis in up to 36 schools for some 7,200 children.

Jobseeker’s Benefit for the Self-Employed
The Programme for Partnership Government commits to improved social insurance benefits for the self-employed. In late 2019, a new Jobseeker’s Benefit support will become available to the self-employed.

Other Measures Announced for 2019

- The Fuel Allowance season will be extended by an additional week, from 27 weeks to 28 weeks.

- From March 2019, there will be an increase in the Daily Expenses Allowance (formerly Direct Provision Allowance) rate from €21.60 per week to €38.80 per week for adults and €29.80 per week for children.

- An increase of €2 million in the materials grant payable on Community Employment Schemes is also being introduced in 2019.

- An additional €5 million funding is being provided for the Free Travel scheme. This brings annual spending on the scheme to €95 million.

- A further €5 million has been allocated for the Free Television Licence bringing spending on it to €60 million as an element of the Households Benefits package.
Chapter 2 2018 Performance

Award winning approach to customer engagement

The Department’s innovative approach to informing how it delivers service was recently recognised with the award of “Best Use of Innovation in Customer or Employee Engagement” by Confirmit in the Achievement of Customer Excellence awards, recognising the customer satisfaction survey for its work in the development of a “Voice of the Customer” metric.

This award follows on from other awards received in recent years including the international Best Practice award from the International Social Security Association and the national awards for Outstanding Contribution and for Customer Service Excellence as part of the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation programme. Building on its success with Jobseekers, the customer satisfaction survey will be extended to additional customer groups in 2019.

Redundancy, Insolvency & Debt Recovery Activity in 2018

The Redundancy Payments Scheme is governed by the Redundancy Payments Act 1967 (as amended) and provides for eligible employees to be paid from the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) where an employer is unable to make this payment. Under the Protection of Employees (Employers’ Insolvency) Acts, 1984 – 2004, the Insolvency Payments Scheme addresses situations where an employer has become legally insolvent. A person appointed to wind up the business can submit applications on behalf of employees for certain entitlements, which are outstanding. For example, arrears of pay, holiday pay, pay in lieu of minimum notice and some unpaid pension scheme deductions.

The Department administers both schemes and recorded a decrease in applications in 2018.

Redundancy and Insolvency Scheme Applications in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy Payments Scheme Applications</td>
<td>3,056</td>
<td>2,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insolvency Payments Scheme Applications</td>
<td>2,875</td>
<td>2,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Payments</td>
<td>5,931</td>
<td>5,132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both schemes are supported by an online application option. All insolvency applications, and almost 70% of redundancy applications, were made online in 2018.

Debt Recovery of Redundancy and Insolvency Payments

As redundancy and insolvency payments are made on behalf of the employer, every payment becomes a debt against the employer. It is the Department’s policy to make every effort to recover the debt in full. The Department has a dedicated debt recovery unit, which manages all aspects of the recovery process.

In 2018 the number of employer debtors engaging with the Department increased on previous years as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employer Debt Amount</th>
<th>Number of Payments</th>
<th>Employer Debtors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>10.63m</td>
<td>4,022</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>6.69m</td>
<td>4,707</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>9.65m</td>
<td>7,658</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2  2018 Performance

Illness Benefit Reforms and Service Issues
As part of the Department’s move to digital service delivery a new IT system was developed to facilitate online submission of medical certificates by GPs and to reduce the requirement for weekly submission of medical certificates via a process known as closed certification. Unfortunately the implementation of the new system led to a significant customer payment issues during August - November 2018, which are deeply regretted. The Department has since resolved these issues and the benefits of e-certification and closed certification should become evident in 2019.

Moving Online
Over the course of 2018 the Department continued to grow the online services available through www.MyWelfare.ie and www.welfarepartners.ie.

MyWelfare.ie Progress in 2018
Following extensive customer and staff engagement, a new interface for MyWelfare.ie was launched, which was designed to make online information and customer applications simpler and easier for users to navigate. Over the year online applications and services grew steadily, with increases in applications for key schemes outlined in the graph below.

MyWelfare Statements 2018 v 2017

In 2018, a Benefit of Work estimator tool was developed on MyWelfare.ie to advise customers who are considering a return to work on how taking up employment may affect their existing entitlements. These tools can offer information and benefit of work estimations to customers on Jobseeker’s Payments, One-Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension and Partial Capacity Benefit.

In 2018, these tools were used to generate over 17,500 such estimates to better inform our customers about potential future entitlements. In addition, an online application service was delivered on MyWelfare.ie to allow customers who wished to submit applications for a Pension Recalculation (T12 project) to do so easily online.
Appointments made on MyWelfare.ie for PPSN and PSC increased from just over 180,000 in 2017 to almost 246,000 in 2018.

WelfarePartners Progress in 2018

WelfarePartners is the Department’s digital service for business partners. This online service is used by Community Employment Programme managers and also by Dentists, Opticians and Audiologists who provide services under the Department’s Treatment Benefits scheme. Currently some 96% of (business users) Treatment Benefit service providers have opted to use the WelfarePartners online system, which is indicative of level of usability, efficiency and reliability of the new system. Whereas 490,000 Treatment Benefit claims were manually processed in 2016, in excess of 1.2 million were processed in 2018 with the same level of staff resources.

International Social Security Association (ISSA) Good Practice Award 2019

The Treatment Benefit reform and transformation to digital delivery via WelfarePartners project was recognised by the ISSA with a good practice award at an award ceremony in Baku, Azerbaijan in May 2019.

In making the award the international jury citation stated that, ‘the project shows that almost anything can be achieved when the right minds and the right technologies are put together: service that is capable of processing three times the volume of claims but with the same number of staff; a system that service providers would adopt and use voluntarily; and transitioning service to a new IT platform with absolutely no disruption in service’.
Chapter 3
Strategic Objectives and Review
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

The Department’s Strategic Objectives 2017 - 2020

The Statement of Strategy 2017-2020 is the Department’s eleventh Statement of Strategy. The Department’s overall mission for 2017 to 2020 is to "promote active participation and inclusion in society through the framework of employment rights and the provision of income supports, employment services and other services".

The statement strategy identifies three Strategic Objectives to focus the activities of the Department in pursuit of this mission.

1. Put the client at the centre of policy and service delivery

2. Drive cost efficiency and effectiveness

3. Develop staff, structures and processes

Feedback from customers
"She sorted this matter out within an hour for me. She was very professional and understanding to my problem. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her good work. It was nice to deal with someone who is very good at her job."

Alan
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Objective 1 of the Department’s Statement of Strategy 2017 to 2020 is a commitment to put the client at the centre of its services and policies. High-level strategies identified to deliver on this objective include:

- Delivering client focused commitments in the Programme for a Partnership Government and broader Government policy.
- Contributing to Government social protection and employment policy formulation through economic analysis and evaluation. This is supported by the Department’s participation in the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service’s Medium Term Strategy 2016 to 2019.
- Ensuring speedy access to accurate decisions, payment and reviews for all schemes and services.
- Focusing on maximising employability by providing income support, targeted activation and training referral, development and employment services.
- Working with other Departments, offices, agencies, employers and stakeholders in providing client-centred services.
- Attaining better outcomes by tackling poverty for children and families, people of working age, people with disabilities and older people by providing appropriate income supports.
- Ensuring that the Department’s services and information resources are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Identifying client service requirements and establishing client satisfaction levels through regular surveys and the provision of feedback mechanisms.
Chapter 3

Children and Families

Back to School Clothing & Footwear Allowance

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (BSCFA) helps eligible families with the extra costs of clothing and footwear when children start school each autumn. The rates of the payment for the 2018 scheme were €125 for children aged 4 to 11 and €250 for children aged 12 to 22 (in full time second level education).

In 2018, as in previous years, the majority of BSCFA payments were fully automated with no application form required from customers. This process identified some 104,500 families that, on the basis of the information available, qualified under the scheme and these payments were made in July 2018. Some 50,300 applications were also processed during 2018 by the Department’s office in Sligo. Overall a total of 144,000 families with some 266,700 children benefitted from the scheme at a cost of €49.9 million during 2018.

School Meals Programme

Funding towards school meals was provided in 1,580 schools and organisations, supporting over 250,000 children, at a cost of some €54 million during 2018. The programme is an important component of policies to encourage school attendance and extra educational achievement. Funding for the School Meals programme has increased by €3.6 million to €57.6 million in 2019. From September 2018, additional funding was provided to existing DEIS schools to provide breakfast and lunch for the majority of children. Funding was also provided to 19 new non DEIS schools for the provision of breakfast clubs.

School Meals Nutrition Standards Fully implemented

In September 2017, ‘Nutrition Standards for School Meals’ was published under the auspices of Healthy Ireland, the national Framework which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Ireland. These guidelines complement and support existing healthy eating policies and were fully implemented in all schools in the School Meals Scheme during 2018.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Review of Gender Recognition Act 2015

The Gender Recognition Act 2015 provides for a statutory review of the operation of the Act, to be commenced within two years of the Act coming into operation.

In November 2017 the Minister established a group to undertake the review. The group was chaired by Moninne Griffith (Executive Director, BeLonG To) and included representation from the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland (TENI), other independent experts in the field and Government bodies with an interest in this area (Departments of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Children and Youth Affairs, Justice and Equality, Education and Skills, Foreign Affairs and Trade; and the Health Service Executive).

Following a public consultation process, the report of the Review Group was submitted on 15 June 2018 and published by the Minister on 18 July 2018.

Feedback from customers

"I'm sure they deal with all sorts of people with issues all day long and the job is stressful, but the kindness and humanity shown to me was beyond the call of duty. Their calmness and non judgemental attitude and reassuring voices brought me back from the edge".

Amy
Secondary Benefits

Telephone Support Allowance

A new Telephone Support Allowance came into effect in June 2018. The Allowance is a support payment of €2.50 per week aimed at people who live alone and receive certain other payments from the Department. It was paid to 124,597 customers in the week commencing 4 June 2018. The customer base has continued to rise and by the end of December 2018 129,244 customers were in receipt of the allowance. The cost of the Telephone Support Allowance in 2018 was over €9.6m.
**Fuel Allowance**

Fuel Allowance is a means assessed payment to help householders receiving long-term social welfare payments who are unable to provide for their own heating needs. It is paid weekly between October and April.

The option for qualifying customers to receive their fuel allowance in two lump sum payments was introduced from October 2017. The Department subsequently undertook a communications campaign to promote public awareness of the new payment option. By October 2018, 59,526 individuals (16% of the eligible customer base) opted to receive their allowance by way of a lump sum payment.

**Rent Supplement**

In 2018, the rent supplement scheme supported approximately 28,700 tenancies per month at a cost of approximately €179 million. In recognition of the difficulties in the rental market, the Department continues to implement a targeted, case-by-case approach that allows for flexibility and supports tenants to remain in their homes. A protocol arrangement with Threshold operates in the areas where housing supply issues are particularly acute covering Dublin, Cork, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow and Galway City.

During 2018, approximately 720 families and individuals, or 14 per week, were supported through increased rent supplement payments. At the end of 2018, the total number of flexible payments provided to support people in their homes, is over 13,000. The Department also provides supports to tenants towards rent deposits and rent in advance under the Exceptional Needs Payment (ENP) scheme. In 2018, some 2,700 such payments were made at a cost of almost €1.9 million.

**Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)**

Under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme, responsibility for the provision of rental assistance to those with a long-term housing need is transferring to Local Authorities (LA’s). HAP was successfully rolled out in 2017 completing Action 2.4 of the Rebuilding Ireland - Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness. The performance of the scheme has remained in line with forecast throughout 2018 with rent supplement recipients declining by 10,000 cases by the year end.

From January 2017, the Department introduced a change to the minimum contribution for young people under age 26 in receipt of rent supplement and reduced rates of weekly social welfare. This measure provides a young person with additional disposable income of between €10 and €20 per week.

At the end of December 2018, some 43,400 active HAP tenancies were in place, of which 10,400 (24%) were recorded as transferred directly from Rent Supplement. The agreed targeted completion date for the transfer of rent supplement recipients with long term housing needs to HAP is by the end of 2020.

**Exceptional and Urgent Needs Payments**

Under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) scheme, the Department may make a single Exceptional Needs Payment (ENP) to help meet essential, once-off expenditure which a person could not reasonably be expected to meet out of their weekly income. An Urgent Needs Payment (UNP) is a once-off payment made to people who may not normally qualify for SWA but who have an urgent need which they cannot meet from their own resources or an alternative is not available at that time.

The ENP scheme is demand led and payments are made at the discretion of the officers in the Department’s Community Welfare Service administering the scheme taking into account the requirements of the legislation and all the relevant circumstances of the case in order to ensure that the payments target those most in need of assistance. In 2018, over 112,500 payments issued under the ENP and UNP schemes at a provisional cost of €42 million.
In March the Department’s Intreo service hosted JobsWeek 2018. Over 130 events were held across the country as part of this annual dedicated week of activity to showcase the services and supports available to jobseekers and employers.

From 2nd March- 9th March 2018 almost 14,500 jobseekers connected with over 450 employers in 134 events across the country. There was an increase in the number of targeted events tailored to meet the needs of specific jobseekers, as this approach has been found to produce better measurable outcomes for specific client groups and sectoral employers.

There was also an increase in employer events which is reflective of the Department’s work to encourage employers to engage with the Department.
The flagship 2018 Intreo Careers Fair brought together jobseekers and those seeking a new career with employers, education training providers and employment advice services in Dublin Castle.

The Department hosted 53 exhibitors (representing 77 organisations), over 200 individual coaching sessions, and provided career focused seminars for over 750 attendees. The event was fully subscribed, both from an exhibitors and attendees perspective with over 2,400 people registered to attend.

Feedback from staff

"I’ve been on the other side of the counter. I know what it’s like to be sat there and to feel nervous and anxious and upset...... so I always try to put myself in the customer's shoes".

Ciara, Cahirciveen Intreo Centre
Employment Supports

Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD) Scheme to continue beyond 2021

This Back to Work Family Dividend scheme helps to support welfare recipients move from dependency on primary social welfare payments into work. It also reduces the risk of child poverty, in line with the Programme for Government commitments. BTWFD had 7,075 claims active as at 31/12/2018 (with 14,694 child beneficiaries), and the provisional expenditure figure for BTWFD for 2018 as per the Appropriation Accounts is €21.044m.

In 2018 the Department amended the scheme to enable it to continue accepting new entrants after 31 March 2018, and also to continue operating the scheme beyond March 2021.

Treatment Benefits

2018 was the first year of the new online Treatment Benefit system on welfarepartners.ie which facilitated 2,099,242 eligibility checks from dentists, opticians and medical appliance suppliers.

In parallel, the Department’s online service “MyWelfare” was extended to facilitate individual PRSI contributors in checking and confirming their own eligibility to Treatment Benefits. This system and the Treatment Benefit scheme have been extremely successful with treatments to 1.27 million patients at a value of €92.4 million in 2018.

Working Family Payment

The Working Family Payment (WFP) is an important income support payment for people in employment who have children and are on low pay. It is a weekly tax-free payment that assists people avail of employment opportunities and it is important in reducing the risk of child poverty in line with the Government’s policy objectives. In 2018, 54,116 individuals received the Working Family Payment in respect of more than 122,000 children.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

JobsPlus

JobsPlus is an employer incentive, paid over two years, which encourages and rewards employers who offer employment opportunities to the long term unemployed. The tiered nature of the JobsPlus incentive has been effective in targeting the longer term unemployed and about 70 per cent of grants are paid at the higher €10,000 level in respect of employees who are long term unemployed. In 2018, 5,469 employers received JobsPlus in respect of 7,556 employees.

A Focused Policy Assessment of JobsPlus undertaken in 2017 identified that workers over the age of 50 were under-represented on JobsPlus with fewer than 10 per cent of JobsPlus employees in this age bracket. To address this Budget 2018 introduced changes to JobsPlus eligibility to increase the incentive for employers to employ longer term unemployed people who are aged over 50.

This change has had a positive impact on hiring practices. The average number of over 50's availing of the JobsPlus scheme, between 2013 – 2017 was 10.5 per cent. In 2018, this had increased to 15.6 per cent. By the end of 2018 over 11,500 employers had availed of JobsPlus since the scheme began in 2013 and over 19,000 people who were long-term unemployed had commenced work with the support of JobsPlus.

Young Jobseekers - Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS)

The Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) was launched by Minister Doherty in October 2018. YESS is targeted at young people aged between 18 and 24 who have been unemployed for 12 months or more or who face significant barriers to employment. The scheme aims to help young people by providing them with an opportunity to learn basic work and social skills in a supportive environment while on a work placement.

YESS is specifically for those young people who are not currently engaged in employment, education or training. Participation on the scheme is wholly voluntary for both participants and placement hosts. Jobseekers who participate in the scheme will receive a minimum payment of €229.20 per week (equivalent to the national minimum wage) for the duration of the placement.
Employer Services

Almost 82,000 vacancies were advertised on JobsIreland.ie and on the EURES jobs site throughout the European Union. A series of information workshops were held to advance awareness and use of the JobsIreland.ie online service. The JobsIreland.ie service was a finalist in the ONE DEASP awards under the ‘Customer Focus’ category.

The annual Jobs Week 2018 saw over 134 events held nationwide with over 50 employers and almost 2,500 jobseekers/job changers attending the main event in Dublin Castle.

A newly designed programme to support opportunities for young people was launched in October 2018. The Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) is a work placement scheme aimed at young people, who are long term unemployed or who have barriers to employment. The YESS scheme operates at no cost to the employer while they provide work experience, mentoring and training to participants. Within 12 weeks, 262 placements were made available reflecting a positive response to the new scheme.

The Employer Engagement team was shortlisted in the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards 2018 under the Excellence in Innovation category. The nomination reflected their successful national recruitment campaign for 500 staff in junior and senior positions across seven Irish stores with a large UK retail chain in a project led by the Key Account Managers.

Feedback from staff

"Listen to them, what they’re saying but also listen to what they’re not really saying. Trust has to start immediately because you need to advise the customer and give them all the information that they require for their situation."

Paula, Kenmare Intreo Centre
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

EURES and European job opportunities

EURES is a Pan-EU employment service designed to support employers and workers recruit and find jobs throughout the EU. EURES Ireland (European Employment Service of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection), together with the support of the European Commission hosted an online Jobs Fair “Connect to your Future” in 2018, with a focus on employers recruiting for the hospitality and tourism sector.

This online Jobs Fair puts talented jobseekers from all EU/EEA countries in touch with hospitality and catering employers who provided job opportunities across the North West region of Ireland.

Employers who took part in the online event had access to a range of recruitment services including registering an exhibitor account, publishing their vacancies on the event website and promoting their organisation to a large pool of European jobseekers. Interested parties had the opportunity to communicate with exhibitors via individual online chats and to attend the virtual presentations.

EURES Ireland also delivered a number of recruitment projects for Irish-based companies sourcing suitably skilled candidates from Europe particularly in the areas of ICT, language and nursing skills.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Pathways to Work Strategy 2016 – 2020

The Pathways to Work strategy includes 86 actions across 11 Departments and agencies and 10 performance metrics against which progress is measured. The Government publishes quarterly performance updates and renews the strategy on an annual basis to take account of evolving economic and labour market conditions.

By the end of Q4 2018, 82% of actions have been completed. The Department is in the process of reviewing the Pathways to Work strategy in the context of a much improved economic climate, to ensure that the activation framework is aligned to the current needs of the labour market.

Action Plan for Jobless Households- Progress in 2018

The Action Plan for Jobless Households published on 25th September 2017 fulfils a commitment in the Programme for Government and in the overall Pathways to Work 2016-2020 strategy. It also responds to concerns about the level of household joblessness raised at European level.

The Plan sets out to extend activation services to people who are not working but are not defined as unemployed by traditional measures, and would benefit from closer attachment to the labour market. It focuses in particular on improving employment rates of households with children.

In 2018, the earnings of people with families, when transitioning from welfare to employment, will be improved further by measures announced in the 2019 Budget. These include increases to the minimum wage, increased earnings thresholds on the Working Family Payment, increases to the income disregard for lone parents and increases to the qualified child allowance.

A preliminary approach to promoting access to the labour market for the adult dependents of jobseeker claimants focusing on jobless households was initiated in June 2018, in a number of pilot locations. The pilot focussed on engaging the adult dependant by providing advice on a range of employment supports and programmes that are available locally and free of cost to them. It also aimed to inform the adult dependent that a dedicated case officer is available to help them secure the required education and training supports. The findings of the initial pilots informed the rollout of additional projects in further locations across the country. The results will be compared to evaluate ‘lessons learned’ and the value of this innovative engagement model.

Progress against each of these reform actions and milestones continue to be monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the Cabinet Committee on the Economy and Jobs. Implementation of these policy measures will address the level of joblessness and help to create an environment which will further reduce the rate of joblessness over the coming years.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings System

The Roadmap for Pensions Reform confirmed Government’s intention to develop, and begin implementation of, a State sponsored supplementary retirement savings system in which employees without personal retirement savings will be automatically enrolled. Under this reform employees will be automatically enrolled into a quality assured retirement savings system, with freedom of choice to opt-out. The policy objective of automatic enrolment is therefore to encourage long term saving amongst those who may otherwise suffer an unwanted and significant reduction in living standards at retirement.

The Department published its ‘Strawman Proposal for an Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings System’ in August and launched a national public consultation process. In excess of one hundred written submissions were received from a diverse range of stakeholders including employer and employee representatives, industry bodies, advocacy groups and interested individuals.

In addition to the written submissions, a series of regional public consultation seminars was held in Dublin, Galway and Cork. These seminars were complemented by an online survey to identify preferences regarding the structure and design of the system. Furthermore, the Department provided a dedicated briefing session for members of the Oireachtas and also attended a special meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

The feedback received during the consultation process is to be used to inform Government decisions on the design of the Automatic Enrolment system.
Illness, Disability, Carers- Supports

Supports for Carers

During 2018, the Department continued to provide and to build on supports for carers. Developments during the year included:

Training and Supports for Family Carers Funding

The Minister approved funding of €1.763 million to provide a range of training and supports for family carers in December 2018. This provided funding for 13 projects under the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2018. The funding focusses on projects that promote training and supports for family carers. It includes the provision of structured training, information and support networks including the development of support groups to assist with transition at the end of the caring role, under the theme of personal and social development of people who are economically or socially disadvantaged. The projects were selected as part of a competitive process organised by Pobal that evaluated each of the applications against a number of predefined criteria.

New Carers Form Introduced

Following extensive consultation with stakeholder groups, the Department introduced a new application form for Carer’s Allowance/Benefit in 2018. The application form includes a new “Care Report” section and was designed to help Carers to provide important information in respect of the care needs of the person they are caring for and the type of care they are providing in a more user friendly way. Its design will also help officials in the Department to make a decision on entitlement as quickly as possible, with a clearer overview of the caring needs and provision in place.

Annual Carers Forum 2018

As part of its commitments under the National Carers Strategy the Department hosts the Annual Carers Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity for carer representative groups to discuss issues with relevant departments and State Agencies. The 2018 Annual Carers Forum took place in November.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Ability Programme

In June 2018 funding of €16 million was announced to support 27 projects to deliver a new pre-activation programme for young people with disabilities, under the umbrella of the “Ability” Programme. The funding for this programme amounts to around €16 million over a three year period and is being provided jointly under the EU’s ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) Operational Programme, 2014-2020 (PEIL, 2014–20) and the Irish Exchequer.

Ability is a new pre-activation programme for young people with disabilities aged between 15 and 29 years of age. Its aim is to promote employment prospects and meaningful social roles for young people with disabilities. In particular, young people who are distant from the labour market, through engagement in training and personal development activities, followed by an incremental exposure to work.

Pobal have been contracted by DEASP to manage the programme and it is being delivered by 27 community and voluntary groups from around the country. The projects being funded have been designed to assist young people in their transition from school to further education and employment. This will be undertaken using person-centred, case management approaches that support participants to achieve their desired employment goals. It is expected that Ability will support over 2,600 young people with disabilities aged between 15 and 29 over the course of the programme.

The Ability Programme delivers on commitments made in the Government’s Comprehensive Employment Strategy, particularly under action point 5.1, which seeks to provide a comprehensive Programme of employment supports to assist people with disabilities to find and retain work, regardless of the level of their support need.

In 2018 the Department continued to provide a wide range of work-related supports for people with disabilities, which play an important role in supporting increased participation in the labour force by people with disabilities. These include the Wage Subsidy Scheme, the Reasonable Accommodation Fund for People with Disabilities and a support services employment, EmployAbility.
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Wage Subsidy Scheme

The Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) offers financial support to private sector employers who employ people with disabilities. Sometimes the nature of a disability can restrict an employee's productivity in comparison with other staff, irrespective of their ability to do a job. In situations where this results in a loss of productivity for the employer, the WSS allows the employer make up the shortfall through grant assistance in the form of a wage subsidy. The scheme is open to employers who can provide between 21 and 39 hours of employment per week to employees with a disability. At the end of 2018, there were over 2,650 employees with a disability supported under the WSS.

EmployAbility

The mission of EmployAbility is to provide support to people with disabilities to secure and maintain paid employment in the open labour market, leading to independence and career progression.

- There are currently 24 EmployAbility contracts in place with service providers nationwide.
- The combined value of the contracts entered into for the service is €9.8m in 2019.
- Overall the service has an active caseload nationally at any one time of about 3,000 clients.
- The service currently covers 31 locations around the country.

At the end of 2018:

- The number of clients who underwent needs assessment was 735 per month, up from 680 per month in 2017 (+8% increase).
- The number of clients who undertook a job search increased from 978 per month in 2017 to 982 per month in 2018 (+0.4%).
- The number of people in open market employment was at a monthly average of 1,151 in 2018 up from 1,082 in 2017 (+6.4%).
- The number of people with disabilities who entered into open market employment was 1,162 in 2018, compared to 1,027 in 2017 (+13%).
- The ratio of people who left for full time employment was 2.5:1 compared to part time employment.
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Make Work Pay Activity in 2018

The Make Work Pay report, published in April 2017, was compiled following a commitment in the Comprehensive Employment Strategy to better identify how people with disabilities could take up work.

The report’s recommendations included how the Disability Allowance payments and other schemes should be reconfigured for new entrants aged 18 and over to ensure that their work ambitions could be explored systematically at an early age (‘the principle of early engagement’).

It also included a number of important recommendations that have already been implemented including:

- ensuring people with a long-term disability payment who have moved off the payment to employment, retain their Free Travel Pass for a period of five years;
- a "fast-track" reinstatement of Disability allowance, or Invalidity Pension for people where employment does not work out; and
- the launch of a new, easy-to-use "benefit to work calculator," to calculate the net benefit and financial implication of work which was launched in 2018. The Benefit of Work calculator for Disabilities and Illness payments was launched in May.

As of 31 December 2018, a person in receipt of Disability Allowance (DA) who is intending to take up work will no longer have to provide evidence that the work is of a rehabilitative nature before they can avail of the income disregard. The income disregard allows people with disabilities to work and continue to receive all, or a proportion, of their DA payment and associated secondary benefits.

To progress the recommendations on how Disability Allowance payments and other schemes should be reconfigured for new entrants aged 18 and over, a wide ranging consultation process was launched in March 2018. This included:

- a series of national consultation events were undertaken in Dublin, Cork, Sligo and Limerick in April 2018;
- the preparation of consultation material in a number of accessible formats (including Easy to read and plain English) in order to inform people with disabilities and their families of the nature and implications of the recommendations;
- online questionnaires designed to allow people with disabilities and their families to provide an input;
- an invitation to advocacy groups to submit written submissions; and
- direct consultation event to engage with a number of young people with disabilities.

Outcomes from stakeholder questions, four regional consultations (Dublin, Cork, Sligo, and Limerick), and online questionnaires were compiled. These outcomes were further considered by the key stakeholder focus group. A report has since been prepared and possible next steps to address the recommendations are being actively examined.
Individual Placement and Support

The Department participated as a partner organisation in the Integrating Employment and Mental Health Service project, which ran between 2015 and 2017. The project successfully demonstrated improved integration between mental health services and employment support services can lead to improvements in the employment outcomes of people with mental health difficulties through the application of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment.

Throughout 2018, the Department collaborated with the Department of Health and the HSE to extend the availability of IPS to all Mental Health Services in each Community Healthcare Organisation. This will see funding from the HSE Service Reform Fund (SRF) and funding from the HSE’s Clinical Programmes for 27.5 IPS employment specialists for a three year period. As a result of this cross-departmental cooperation, the IPS service will be available in each of the HSE Community Healthcare Organisation areas in 2019.

Incomes and Employment

The Department is responsible for regulating terms and conditions of employment that are fair and reasonable - balancing the interests of workers and employers to ensure that economic activity and employment is sustainable.

Employment Rights

Employment rights legislation was recently strengthened by the enactment of the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018, which is one of the most significant pieces of employment legislation in a generation.

The Act delivers on the Programme for Government commitment to address the challenges of the increased casualisation of work and to strengthen the regulation of precarious employment. In a changing world, this reform enhances the legal protections available to workers in the modern labour force.

The Act of 2018 provides that:

• employers must give to employees their core terms of employment within five days of starting work;
• zero hours contracts are restricted to situations where the work is of a genuinely casual, emergency or short-term relief nature;
• there will be minimum payments for people when they are called into work, but sent home without work;
• a “band of hours” system has been introduced whereby an employee can request to be placed on a contract that better reflects the hours they have worked over a 12 month reference period;
• there are strong anti-penalisation provisions, including recourse to the Workplace Relations Commission, for employees who invoke their rights under this legislation; and
• national minimum wage rates for younger people and trainees have been simplified.
Low Pay Commission

The Low Pay Commission was established under the National Minimum Wage (Low Pay Commission) Act 2015. Its main functions are to make evidence based recommendations to the Irish Government on the appropriate rate of the National Minimum Wage and on related matters referred to it by the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

This recommendation is evidence-based; and is on the basis of research and consultations with employers, workers and their representatives. The Commission also takes written and oral evidence from a wide range of organisations.

Since its establishment in 2015 the Commission has submitted recommendations on the appropriate rate of the NMW for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. All the Commission’s recommendations, for increases of 50 cent in 2016, 10 cent in 2017, 30 cent in 2018 and 25 cent in 2019, were accepted by Government.

Raising Public Awareness of False Self-Employment

False self-employment is an employment relationship which creates the appearance that a person is self-employed, when, for all practical purposes they operate as an employee working in a business. Such arrangements lead to avoidance of tax and social insurance payments and deny affected workers key employment rights.

In January 2018, the Department published a report on ‘The use of intermediary-type structures and self-employment arrangements: implications for Social Insurance and Tax Revenues’. The report was the work of an interdepartmental working group comprising officials from the Departments of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Finance, and the Revenue Commissioners, and included the results of a public consultation.

Following a recommendation in the report, the Department conducted an extensive ‘False Self-Employment’ communications campaign in May 2018. The main purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness of this issue, which is believed to exist across a number of industry sectors in Ireland. It was also aimed at making workers and employees aware of the services of the Department’s ‘Scope Section’, which can make a determination on an individual’s employment status where it is in question.

The campaign covered radio, print and social media. To reflect the international and multi-cultural nature of the modern Irish workforce, online and social media elements of the campaign were provided in eight languages: French, Hindi, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian and Spanish. The dedicated webpage attracted more than 10,500 unique visits.
Reaching out to Clients

Communications & Customer Service Events in 2018

Every year the Department arranges an official stand presence at events which provide key opportunities for face-to-face engagement with clients and the general public.

The aim is to provide information to clients and increase awareness of the wide range of services and supports which the Department provides. Forms and information leaflets are widely distributed at such events.

That, the Department had an official information stand presence at:

- The National Ploughing Championships in Tullamore in September;
- Two Pregnancy and Baby Fairs in the RDS in October and March;
- 50s Plus; an Expo also held in the RDS in October;
- Tullamore show, in August.

At these events, knowledgeable staff provided clients with both general information and, if requested and where possible, more targeted information and advice on a one-to-one basis. The Department’s presence at these events receives very positive feedback from our clients.
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Customer Experience Conference

In November 2018, the Department held its first Customer Experience Conference in Croke Park.

200 staff members from across the country, across all grades and business areas attended the day-long conference which focused on customer experience: exploring what this means, what our customers expect from us, gaining a better understanding of our customers’ expectations, and hearing the difference a good experience can make to our customers, and how we can improve and enhance their experience of interacting with the Department.

Speakers from organisations such as IKEA and the CX Company and experts on cultural change and staff wellbeing, shared their experiences and insights. The event was highly rated by staff and demonstrates the Department’s ongoing commitment to improving the experiences of our customers in their interactions with us.

Micheal Killeen
CX Company and
Jacqui McCrum
Deputy Secretary

Tina McDonald (IKEA),
John McKeon Secretary General,
Jacqui McCrum Deputy Secretary,
Niall Egan Assistant Secretary and
Sarah O’Callaghan Principal Officer

Micheal Killeen
CX Company and
Jacqui McCrum
Deputy Secretary
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Communications and Public Information 2018

In 2018 the Department delivered:

- **CAMPAIGNS**
  - 13 events (digital, radio, social media, video, TV on demand)
  - 4 corporate videos

- **EVENTS**
  - 37 events
  - Including National Ploughing Championships, Pregnancy and Baby Fair, 50 Plus Expo

- **PRESS**
  - 573 press queries
  - 88 press releases
  - 37 media & press events

- **ACCESSIBILITY**
  - 2 sign language videos
  - 2 braille publications

- **WEB**
  - 10.2K Twitter followers
  - 7.23 million media impressions in 2018
  - 3.99 million visits

- **SOCIAL MEDIA**
  - 3.88 million unique visits

- **DESIGN**
  - 15 publications
  - 3 customer guides
  - 250 forms (online & print)
Customer Service Forum (CSF)

The Customer Service Forum has firmly established itself as an important quarterly opportunity for the Department to create meaningful conversation, information sharing as well as feedback and engagement with its key customer groups. The Forum aims to share information about changes, projects and plans in the Department’s schemes and services and to learn and receive feedback from our customers and their representative groups. The Forum is organised by the Department and each event is evaluated by participants to provide important guidance on their information needs and preferences. A wide range of national customer representative organisations are invited to attend the forum.

During 2018, the Customer Service Forum took place quarterly and focused on sharing important information on a range of changes and topics including the NALA plain English project, the Strawman proposal for a new Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings System, MyWelfare.ie and the Medical Review and Assessment Service Process. It also worked with the customer representative group in the customer centric design of the new MyWelfare.ie website, which benefited greatly from the inputs of real users at the early design prototype stage.

“During 2018 the Customer Service Forum focused on changes which were occurring in the Department.”
Official Languages Act

The Department continued to provide a service through Irish in 2018 in line with the requirements of the Official Languages Act, 2003. The Department’s Customer Charter and Action Plan states that the Department will ‘provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one of the official languages’.

The Department’s Language Scheme 2015 to 2018 set out the Department’s commitments to customer service in Irish and advises of the availability of services through Irish.

In 2018, the Department developed it’s new Language Scheme 2018 to 2021 which was approved by the Minister and submitted on 21 December 2018 for confirmation by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Translation and Interpretive Services

In line with the Department’s commitments to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all its customers, interpretive and translation services and the provision of information in alternative formats such as Braille or Audio were provided to Department customers during the year.

In 2018, the Department arranged for the Irish translation of 745 documents. In addition, there were over 3,680 translations into some 50 other languages. Over 1,800 customers were provided with the services of a language interpreter to assist them in their interactions with the Department, 47 customers availed of the services of a Sign Language Interpreter and 56 received information in alternative formats.

During 2018, the Department completed the rollout of the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) across the network of Intreo offices. This service was available in 62 locations by the end of the year. IRIS offers a video link to a live Irish Sign Language Interpreter provided by the Sign Language Interpreting Service. As the service is now operational in all Intreo centres Department staff can request the service on behalf of a customer, as an alternative to the in - person Sign Language Interpreter services currently in place, if this suits the customer’s needs. The service is available Monday to Friday 9.00am to 6.30pm.
Jobseeker Customer Satisfaction in 2018

Since 2015, the Department has undertaken customer satisfaction surveys in order to understand how its customers interact with the unemployment supports and employment services offered to Jobseekers.

Almost 20,000 people have engaged with the Customer Satisfaction Surveys since their initiation. The surveys provide an essential feedback mechanism and inform how the Department develops and tailors its services, while receiving early warning of emerging issues and challenges.

The surveys use intelligent sampling and the Department’s innovative Jobseekers Longitudinal Database (JLD) to deliver a representative sample of our customer audience. The surveys are undertaken through telephone interview, by SMS text and by postal survey. The development and rollout of the survey approach is sponsored by senior management and is used by them to inform its assessment of organisation performance and shape service delivery. This brings the ‘voice of the customer’ deep into our business.

Having undertaken Jobseeker customer satisfaction surveys in 2015, 2016 and 2017, the Department also conducted an SMS Jobseeker customer satisfaction survey in 2018. Jobseeker satisfaction levels with Intreo services remain very high, with an average score of 4.04 out of 5. This was a slight improvement on 2017 showing a continuing upward trend. Jobseekers were also confident that their interaction with Intreo Centres would improve their employment prospects in the future.

The results were also positive for Jobpath providers. Overall satisfaction levels remain high at 3.57 out of 5. Scores across the key areas of premises, staff and processes were in the top quartile. Service users praised staff for their helpful, informative and respectful engagement and their strong support in helping jobseekers find employment.
Corporate Governance

Corporate Governance Framework

The Department’s Corporate Governance Framework, which is reviewed annually, sets out our governance standards, which are fundamentally about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest. This framework is part of a common approach to governance shared across the Civil Service as set out in the Civil Service Renewal Plan (CSRP) and will continue to evolve over time.

Governance is concerned with having in place appropriate structures and processes for directing and managing our organisation so that all stakeholders can be assured that the organisation is operating effectively and efficiently. It is about transparency, accountability and consistency, and about operating in a participative environment. The five high level governance principles as outlined in this framework help to guide the organisation taking account of the changing needs of our stakeholders, including our staff, as we continue to seek new ways of doing things for the benefit of our customers and all stakeholders.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Act 2014 introduces a positive duty on public bodies to have due regard to human rights and equality issues. Our Department’s mission is to promote active participation and inclusion in society through the framework of employment rights and the provision of income supports, employment services and other services.

The Department’s objective is to continue putting our customers at the centre of all our operations, providing an efficient and effective service and continue developing our staff, structures and processes. As a Department we are totally committed to the positive difference we can make to our customers’ lives and Irish society, and have a responsibility to our staff who deliver our services daily.

The information within this report demonstrates our commitment through the variety of services and engagements we deliver to supporting our objectives in this area. During 2018, the Chief Commissioner, Ms Emily Logan presented at the Department’s Senior Management Conference. In addition IHREC presented at the Social Inclusion Forum which the Department hosted in the Aviva Stadium and the Department’s Assistant Principal forum in Dublin Castle.
Identity Management

Personal Public Service (PPS) Number

The Department provides identity management services to public service agencies, facilitating the use of the PPS Number in the delivery of public services, developing online services and enhancing systems for control of fraud and abuse. A total of 194,537 PPS Numbers were allocated in 2018.

Assuring a Secure and Verified Identity

Many public services are not only of high value (for example the State pension is valued at over €12,000 p.a. to each person) but also require the use of personal data of the service users. In order to ensure that personal identities can be verified in a manner that protects access to this data and simplifies customer service the Department developed a process known as SAFE (Standard Authentication Framework Environment).

SAFE registration is used to verify a person’s identity and enables individuals to gain access to public services more efficiently and with a minimum of duplication of effort. At the same time, it preserves their privacy to the maximum extent possible.

A PSC is a physical token that can be held by a person and used to prove that their identity has been verified. It can also be used to access some services in a simple manner e.g. a travel pass on public transport by people entitled to free travel. SAFE verification also enables a person to register for the MyGovID services which now support secure online access to services such as Maternity Benefit, Jobseeker payments and Paternity Benefit thereby reducing the need for a customer to visit a physical office or submit paper forms by post. MyGovID customers can also access Department payment and contribution statements and Revenue online tax services using a single log in. To date, over 2.98 million people have been SAFE registered.

During 2018, over 602,800 PSCs were issued bringing to over 3.64 million the total number of PSCs issued at end 2018. This includes over 1.137 million PSCs providing entitlement to Free Travel.

As a result of facial matching procedures, facilitated by the SAFE registration process, a total of 203 cases of suspected identity fraud have been detected and referred for investigation since the inception of the PSC. These cases are at various different stages of the investigation and prosecution process.
Compliance and Anti-Fraud Activity in 2018

The Department strives to ensure that social welfare schemes are delivered and administered in a manner that is consistent with the underlying statutory framework and good practice. The impact of inadequate management of schemes goes beyond simple loss of money and poor customer service. It undermines confidence in the administration of social welfare systems and erodes the legitimacy of the income supports and other services the Department provides across the whole of society.

The Department’s current strategy to tackle errors and fraud across social welfare schemes has three aims, centered on:

- minimising the incidence of fraud and preventing it from entering the social welfare system in the first place;
- increasing the likelihood of finding incorrect or fraudulent claims by performing regular reassessments of claims and quickly correcting any errors found; and
- strengthening the sanctions for those who are caught engaging in fraudulent claiming and actively recovering the money overpaid.

Claim Reviews in 2018

During 2018, our staff members conducted over 742,000 claim reviews. These consisted of a review of a person’s eligibility to receive support and involved a number of approaches including direct customer enquiries, face-to-face engagement and inspections, including inspections of employer workplaces and financial records. In-depth investigations may be needed where fraud is suspected. These are undertaken by the Special Investigations Unit, which is supported by seconded officers of An Garda Síochána specifically assigned to support complex investigations.

The Department continues to emphasise the obligation on customers to report changes in their lives or circumstances. Even small changes of income or family circumstances can impact on the rate of payment a person is entitled to receive. The consequences of these changes can be significant, particularly as overpayments accumulate quickly. This can result in repayments having to be made from ongoing social welfare payments or earnings for long periods.

The expertise of our staff is central to rolling out an effective prevention and detection approach and to improving the services we can deliver to our customers.

However, with complex schemes, mistakes do occur. We try to ensure that clear, understandable information about scheme conditions is communicated to customers. Our staff members need to support customers when corrections are required and to act swiftly to minimise the impact of such mistakes.
Compliance & Anti-Fraud achievements in 2018

- The Department reviewed the entitlement of over 742,000 customer claims, including where inspections and investigations were undertaken.
- Control savings, which include some element of overpayments, are recorded at €556 million for 2018. The annual target of €520 million was exceeded.
- Overpayments of benefit and assistance on individual cases amounted to €108 million over the course of the year.
- Repayments of €81 million were made in respect of customer overpayments in 2018. The target was to recover €95 million in the year.
- The Department considered 361 cases for prosecution in 2018. At the end of 2018, the CSSO had 484 departmental cases in the court system.
- The result of a control survey on the Carer’s Allowance scheme were published during 2018 and work continues on a number of surveys, which will be published in 2019.
- The Department will publish a new 5 year control strategy in 2019 to cover the period 2019 - 2023. This strategy will build upon the success of the Compliance and Anti-Fraud Strategy 2014-2018.

The Department has implemented an inspection programme of all schools and organisations in the scheme and approximately 1,260 organisations have been inspected since August 2015. In 2018, some 245 organisations were inspected and the results are currently being analysed. This supports the schools in ensuring that the scheme is delivered in line with the Department’s policy to provide maximum benefit to the children. Each school has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place, which clearly sets out both the Department’s and the school’s obligations in implementing the scheme.

Feedback from customers

“I would like to compliment the staff member Linda whom I spoke with this morning. She was so helpful and considerate I was immediately struck by the bright welcoming atmosphere, the spotless, cleanliness and above all the friendliness of the reception staff”.

Claire
Financial Management

Project Governance and Procurement Policy

The Project Governance Committee (PGC) is a sub-committee of the Management Board that approves and monitors the Departments project portfolio, and oversees procurement processes and approves significant procurements. Project proposals are evaluated and prioritised, and budgets and resources assigned in line with the Department’s Statement of Strategy, the Programme for a Partnership Government, and business plans. The PGC met in dedicated sessions on eight occasions during 2018 and also dealt with project governance items as part of the regular Management Board meetings throughout the year.

The Department aims to achieve value for money in the procurement of goods and services and is committed to participating fully in the public procurement reform initiatives of the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect. In accordance with the provisions of GDPR, all contracts that involve a contractor processing personal data have been reviewed. The Department RFTs, guidelines and templates have also been amended to reflect these and other changes throughout the year. Information about the Department’s procurement policy is available at www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Procurement-Policy.aspx.

In accordance with Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, which requires FOI bodies to publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner, the Department publishes details of all public contracts over €25k awarded on its website. http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Contracts-Awarded.aspx.

Action 17 of The Civil Service Renewal Plan committed to improving project management capacity in the public service. The Department is represented on the inter-Departmental Project Management Leaders Advisory Service (PMLAS) which organised four major Project Managers’ Network events during 2018. The themes were: Aligning and creating the conditions for success; Managing Innovation and Change; Delivering Business Results; and Collaboration in Action. The network has over 460 members across the Civil and Public Service, 38 of whom are from DEASP. Information about the Project Managers Network and the events is available at www.reformoffice.per.gov.ie/projectmanagersnetwork.

A foundation level Project Management course has been developed by the PMLAS and provided through the “One Learning” programme, which provides a range of training courses for staff across the Civil Service. In 2018, twenty nine Departmental staff attended the 2 day course.
Digital Innovation

Digital Services Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Why introduce online?</th>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Benefits to Customers</th>
<th>Benefits to Department</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Improve customer service</td>
<td>1 Channel and Service choice</td>
<td>Better and faster service - 24/7</td>
<td>Improved Customer Service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current and growing demand for secure, fast and efficient online services for our customers</td>
<td>2 Digital by Desire</td>
<td>More choice - additional channel</td>
<td>Operational efficiencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Serve increasing number of customers</td>
<td>3 Self Service options</td>
<td>Safe and secure</td>
<td>Potential to improve internal processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographics and other changes creating increased and long-term demands in Department’s services</td>
<td>4 Minimum or zero touch processes</td>
<td>Easier for Customers</td>
<td>Helps deal with increasing customer numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Improve efficiencies</td>
<td>5 Process adaption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online delivery provides an opportunity to improve our processes, and to improve and better manage workflows in line with available resources</td>
<td>6 High quality customer support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 Safe and Secure</td>
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<td>MyWelfare.ie</td>
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</table>
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MyGOVID

MyGovID is a secure online account for accessing public services online. MyGovID accounts have been developed so that they can also be used by other Government departments and State agencies to authenticate customers online.

MyGovID is currently used to provide authenticated access to the Department’s MyWelfare.ie service, to the Revenue Commissioners’ myAccount online service, to SUSI for student grant application service, the National Driving Licence Service for online renewal of driving licences and to the JobsIreland website. Work is underway with other Government Departments and State agencies to help them to use this facility to provide their services online.

Over the course of 2018, there has been an increased take-up of this service by customers with over 623,142 people now registered with the service.

MyWelfare.ie

MyWelfare is the online home of welfare services. It allows customers easy online access to a range of services - from making appointments and applying for certain benefits to updating your details and ordering statements.

MyWelfare is safe, secure, and accessible anytime, anywhere, and on all devices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5: MyWelfare_ie Data</th>
<th>Year 2018</th>
<th>2015 - Dec 2018</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Appointment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create Irish Language PPSN/PSC Appointment</td>
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<td>Scheme Maintenance</td>
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<td>Create Close Claim Request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution History Statement - Level 0</td>
<td>22,520</td>
<td>30,772</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution History Statement - Level 2</td>
<td>13,914</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRSI Refund</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Customer Consultation, MyWelfare.ie and MyGovID

In 2018 the Department engaged in a review of digital services to seek customer feedback on the MyWelfare.ie and MyGovID sites. The purpose of this was to examine the customer journeys and experiences, and to learn from customers what they liked and did not like about the site before we moved to add more online services.

This process delivered excellent results, challenged our thinking and changed the Department’s way of communicating with our online services. It also clearly showed us what our customers understood, liked and wanted from us online.

As a result, we have made the MyGovID sign up process simpler with quicker access to MyWelfare and all Government services. The new look MyWelfare site was relaunched in September 2018.

Online Certification Pilot

Online certification is a new service being piloted in two locations, Galway and Ballina since February 2018. It allows Jobseekers Benefit customers to certify unemployment online. The pilot has recently been extended to Jobseekers Allowance customers. Initial feedback confirms that the pilot is successful with customers.

Development and rollout of the Estimators

The Department launched a ‘benefit of work estimator’ for customers in receipt of a range of Disability payments on MyWelfare.ie in May 2018. An estimator for One Parent Family payments followed in November. The tool takes minutes to use and shows in an easy to read chart how income from employment may affect a person’s Disability or Illness payments.

This development of estimators was a recommendation of the Make Work Pay report and was designed to assist people in receipt of a Disability payment who were considering taking up work or increasing their working hours.

The existing Jobseeker estimator, that had been in use for many years, was also updated in November 2018 to cater for part time work patterns. It shows how starting work or increasing your hours could affect a person’s payment. The estimate includes income from employment and any social welfare payments a person may still be entitled to, as well as supports for low income families, such as Back to Work Family Dividend and Working Family Payment.

The estimators are available at MyWelfare.ie to all users. They do not require an account or login and are completely anonymous for users.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Contributory State Pension entitlement review project

On the 23rd January 2018 the Government announced significant improvements to pension calculations for post -September 2012 State pension (Contributory) pensioners. The measures also aim to help people who spent time out of the workforce for caring duties. Significant system and legislative changes were required to cater for the new changes. Over 120 temporary staff were recruited, in phases, from the end of September 2018 to process the reviews.

Since late September 2018, the Department has been examining the Social Insurance records of approximately 90,000 pensioners, born on or after 1 September 1946, who have a reduced rate State pension (Contributory) entitlement based on post Budget 2012 rate-bands. These payments are being reviewed under a new Total Contributions Approach (TCA) to pension calculation which includes provision for homecaring periods. Wherever possible, reviews are processed based on information already held by the Department. Where there are unexplained gaps in an individual’s Social Insurance record, a written request for further information is issued. Over 45,000 requests for information have been issued to date.

Feedback from staff
"I try to put a smile on my face because I really do think it travels down the phone line and if people hear an engaged voice straight away I think it sets them off in a positive state of mind."

Catherine, Cork Intreo Centre
WelfarePartners

Welfare Partners (www.welfarepartners.ie) was launched in 2017 and is a digital service for business partners of the Department. Community Employment (CE) was the initial service to employers with phased releases in March, July and September 2017. Community Employment Sponsors can complete Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for participants, submit wage and training budget claims and engage with the Department online thus replacing the historical practices which were paper based and labour intensive. To date some 296,079 ILP and change requests have been completed online. 609 Community Employment applications have been made on Welfare Partners since 2017.

Treatment Benefits services were provided in phased releases from August 2017 (online eligibility checking) and October, 2017 (claims for payment). 96% of Treatment Benefit providers have signed up to Welfare Partners. That is 2,280 of the total of 2,400 contracted practitioners. 95.7% of claims in December 2018 were submitted and processed online. In 2018 there were a total of 1.27 million claims to the value of €92.4m.

A Welfare Partners strategy has been prepared for publication to set out the rationale, principles and the expected benefits this channel will bring to our business partners and the Department. The Department is examining possibilities to extend the range of online services for Welfare Partners in 2019.

WelfarePartners.ie Services Requests for 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Service Details</th>
<th>Number of Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Learning Plan</td>
<td>Status Change Request</td>
<td>129,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual Learning Plan Request</td>
<td>126,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Update Outcome Request</td>
<td>83,722</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scheme Application</td>
<td>Community Employment Application</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Benefit Eligibility Assessment</td>
<td>Dental Benefit</td>
<td>1,340,352</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical Appliance Benefit</td>
<td>31,698</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optical Benefit</td>
<td>720,877</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create Medical Necessity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Benefit Contact Update</td>
<td>Contract Details Update</td>
<td>32</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Feedback from customers

"She acted in such a kind and professional matter, and was so approachable by either phone or email. People like this make the world a better place, with their kindness and ability to listen and prompt replies".

Mary
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Uptake on Online Services

Registering for appointments online is one of the key MyWelfare services with average monthly usage of 13,127 PPSN/PSC appointments (Jul 15- Dec 18). The Contribution Statement service on MyWelfare continues to grow in usage with average usage of 2,227 per month since its introduction in 2017. Approximately 9,855 change/update addresses details have been submitted via MyWelfare since it was introduced in 2017. 17,174 Parental Benefit and 3,378 Maternity Benefit applications have been made on MyWelfare since September 2016.

JobsIreland

JobsIreland.ie is the Department’s recruitment website. The website hosts vacancies for both private employers and Department schemes such as the Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS). In 2018 almost 82,000 vacancies were advertised on JobsIreland.ie. Both Jobseekers and Job Changers can register on the website together with employers from every industry.

In addition to advertising vacancies on the JobsIreland.ie website, vacancies are also promoted through social media channels Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Registrations on JobsIreland.ie 31st December 2018
Energy Efficiency and Awareness

Throughout 2018, the Department continued to engage with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) through its Optimising Power @ Work energy efficiency campaign. While the Department continues to achieve energy savings through the rationalisation of its buildings portfolio and through the provision of more efficient accommodation. The major energy saving in 2018 was the refurbishment works to the Department’s Kilmainham data centre in 2017. A further 6 per cent energy saving was achieved in 2018.

Up to the end of 2018, the Department has achieved an overall energy saving of 32 per cent and is on target to meet the Public Sector target of 33 per cent by 2020. The Department in conjunction with the OPW completed the retrofit of LED lighting in its offices in Sligo (Cranmore) and Longford in 2018. Further, energy efficiency works are planned for Limerick and Waterford during 2019. These retro fits of buildings should enable the Department to reach its 2020 target.

The Department continues to ensure that procurement policies include provisions for Green Procurement. Energy Efficiency criteria are included in Requests for Tenders (RFTs) where relevant, including IT equipment and non-IT equipment. Energy, including electricity, is procured centrally through the Office of Government Procurement to obtain savings through economies of scale.
International Relations and Regulations

Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Department handled 2,510 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in 2018. Of these, 2,032 (81%) were from members of the public requesting copies of their personal details held by the Department, 467 were non-personal and 11 were of a non-personal/mixed nature.

The Department is committed to the provision of consistent and high quality, FOI responses and provides appropriate training to its staff.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests Received 2014 - 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Non-Personal</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2,101</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1,848</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2,089</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,932</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,070</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into operation from 25 May 2018. It imposes new accountability and transparency rules on data controllers such as the Department. The GDPR reinforces existing data protection principles and introduces new rights for data subjects in relation to their data being processed.

The Department assigned a fully resourced team to prepare for, and ensure compliance with, new requirements. These preparations included: the appointment of a Data Protection Officer who acts independently and is supported by the Data Protection Unit; development or revision of data protection policies and guidelines including a comprehensive privacy statement; development and maintenance of a Record of Processing Activities. Significant data protection awareness activities were conducted including 36 newsletters, presentations to staff, provision of training materials, poster campaigns and a dedicated awareness week in October.

The GDPR eliminated the requirement for customers to pay a fee when seeking a Subject Access Request (SAR). During 2018, 276 SARs were submitted to the Department, 88 pre-GDPR and 188 from 25 May 2018 to year end.
EU Legislative Developments

EU legislative proposals with implications for employment affairs and social protection progressed during 2018:

Revision of Posted Workers Directive

As part of its Labour Mobility Package, the European Commission published proposals in March 2016 to amend Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers. Following agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, these revisions were adopted in Directive (EU) 2018/957 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, which came into effect on 30 July 2018. Member States have until July 2020 to transpose this Directive, which provides that:

- posted workers will benefit from the same rules on remuneration as local workers of the host Member State from the first day of posting;
- the general period of posting will be up to 12 months, with the possibility of a 6 month extension subject to satisfactory notification being provided. Posted workers will be subject to most aspects of the labour law of the host country after 18 months of posting;
- collective agreements in the host Member State can be applied to posted workers, not only in the construction sector as at present, but in all sectors and branches;
- temporary work agencies must guarantee the same terms and conditions to posted workers as apply to temporary workers hired in the Member State where the work is carried out; and
- in the case of the international road transport sector, the rules will be stipulated in sector-specific legislation which will be published by the European Commission.

Revision of EU Regulations on Coordinations of Social Security System

The Labour Mobility Package also included proposals which were published by the European Commission in December 2016 for the revision of the EU Regulations on the Coordination of social security systems (Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009). These proposals focus on a number of areas of coordination where it is considered that improvements are required, for example:

- access to social benefits for economically inactive EU citizens;
- coordination of Long-Term Care Benefits;
- unemployment Benefits for cross-border workers;
- family Benefits which replace income during child-raising periods; and
- applicable legislation in the case of posted workers.

The Council agreed its overall negotiating position on these revisions in June 2018 and the European Parliament adopted its position in December 2018. Negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission commenced in January 2019, with the intention of seeking a compromise agreement on these revisions before the current Parliament completes its term.

Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions

As part of the follow-up to the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Commission published proposals in December 2017 for a Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions in the EU. These proposals aim to update and replace the Written Statement Directive (91/533/EEC) to take account of changes in the world of work in the intervening period, including, in particular, the increase in atypical employment contracts. Among the key elements of this Directive are revised obligations to inform workers of the essential aspects of their employment relationship and the definition of a number of minimum rights for workers, including the right to:

- limit the duration of the probationary period at the beginning of the job to six months;
- take up another job with a different employer in parallel;
- know reasonably in advance when work will take place;
- ask for a more secure job and receive a written reply from the employer; and
- receive mandatory training free of cost.

Regulation for a European Labour Authority

The European Commission published a proposal for a Regulation establishing a European Labour Authority in March 2018. The aim of this proposal is to establish a new EU agency to progress fair labour mobility in the internal market by ensuring that EU rules on the free movement of workers, the posting of workers and the co-ordination of social security systems are enforced in a fair, simple and effective way. In addition, the European Labour Authority will aim to:

- enhance co-operation between Member States in tackling undeclared work;
- facilitate joint inspections;
- improve access to information by individuals and employers about their rights and obligations in the areas of labour mobility and social security coordination; and
- mediate in cases of disputes between national authorities.

The European Parliament adopted its position on this Regulation in November 2018 and the Council agreed its negotiating position in December 2018. Negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission commenced in January 2019, with the intention of seeking a compromise agreement on this Directive before the current Parliament completes its term.

Directive on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers

In order to address the work-life balance challenges faced by working parents and carers, the European Commission published proposals in April 2016 for a Directive on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers which aims to increase female labour market participation by encouraging an equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men.

While the provisions of this Directive relate mainly to statutory entitlement to various forms of family leave, for which the Department of Justice and Equality has responsibility, there are a number of aspects which have social protection implications, such as:

- the introduction of a non-transferrable paid parental leave of 2 months per parent; and
- a reduction to 6 months in the qualifying period for paid paternity leave.

Chapter 3

EU – UK Relations

The Department continued with its assessment of the implications of Brexit for social security schemes and services, including pensions and Child Benefit, provided by Ireland and the UK, including Northern Ireland. A bilateral agreement has now been concluded with the UK, which provides for the continuation of existing arrangements with regard to eligibility for and payment of benefits between the two jurisdictions.

Other International Measures Revisited: European Social Charter

The Revised European Social Charter is a Council of Europe treaty to promote and protect socio-economic rights. Ireland has also ratified the Additional Protocol to the Charter providing for a system of Collective Complaints, lodged by the social partners and other non-governmental organisations recognised by the Council of Europe. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is the lead Department for the Charter and has responsibility for co-ordinating Ireland’s reporting obligations across Government.

Annual reports are submitted by Ireland on the Charter based on four thematic groups. The annual national reports are examined by the European Committee on Social Rights, an independent expert body.

The Annual Report submitted in October 2018, contains provisions concerning the thematic group of ‘Children, Families, and Migrants’. The findings of the European Committee on Social Rights on Ireland’s report submitted in 2017, are published on the Council of Europe’s website.
Chapter 3 Strategic Objectives and Review

Develop Staff, Structures and Processes

Learning and Development

The Department’s Staff Development Unit (SDU) has responsibility for the planning and provision of learning and development programmes in the organisation. The Department develops, delivers, and oversees high quality training and education provision in order to ensure that staff are fully equipped to perform their functions effectively.

These learning and development needs are addressed through a mixture of internally and externally delivered training and education.

In 2018, Staff Development Unit successfully retained the Excellence Through People (ETP) Award under the National Human Resource Management Scheme, following a surveillance assessment by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

SDU also invests in and supports ongoing professional development of both its own national tutor/trainer team and the wider Divisional and HQ trainer network, including achievement of QQI Level 6 Certification in Training & Development and corporate membership of the Irish Institute of Training & Development (IITD).

Accredited Education Programmes

The Department continued to invest in learning and development, 2018. Following selection of the National College of Ireland (NCI) in 2016 as the Department’s educational partner, the Department engaged in a project to introduce Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) accredited education programmes for staff through placing the former internal OneDSP curriculum on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

A suite of seven programme frameworks for accreditation (Major Awards at NFQ levels 6, 7 and 8) have been designed and developed and were officially validated by the QQI Executive in September 2018. Six programmes are designed for staff in the following frontline roles Case Officer, Designated Person, Deciding Officer, Intreo Centre Manager, Social Welfare Inspector and Appeals Officer, while the seventh “Certificate in Social Protection Studies” has been designed to provide an understanding of the role the Department plays in Government and in society in terms of assisting our customers. The Department will commence incremental rollout of the programmes during 2019.
During the development phase, the former OneDSP Case Officer curriculum was also integrated with an existing QQI L8 Certificate in Employability Services. Since November 2016, this programme has run on four occasions with over 100 Case Officers enrolling. Students from across the four programmes graduated from NCI School of Business in November 2018.

**Other learning and development initiatives**

**Engagement & Innovation**

In 2018, the Engagement & Innovation (E&I) Programme continued to develop and become embedded as a process within the Department. The E&I Programme engages staff and enables them to contribute to organisational development and customer service projects. The programme aims to engage and empower staff and to facilitate organisation-wide innovation. It encourages and supports staff to become involved and to contribute to the changes that affect their everyday work.

The 6 E&I leadership teams (Strategic Leadership Team, 2 Regional Leadership Teams and 3 Headquarter Leadership Teams) met quarterly during 2018. Much progress was made throughout the year including the completion of a number of significant projects including:

- Role of the HEO in the Intreo Centre;
- Data Protection.
- Supports for staff on Maternity leave.

Since the commencement of the programme in 2013, 137 projects have been established with 111 projects brought to completion. Over 900 members of staff have engaged with these projects which have looked at a diverse range of issues such as Wellness at Work, Maternity Benefits, Mobility, Work Processes and Training Needs Analysis for staff.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

The 19th Social Welfare Summer School was held in Queens University Belfast in August 2018. The theme of the 2018 summer school was Welfare, Work and Well-Being: Challenges for the 21st Century.

The Summer School was attended by 47 students from both the DEASP and the Dept. for Communities (DfC) in N. Ireland. For the first time this year, Clerical Officers were eligible to attend the Summer School, which proved to be very beneficial to both the school and the participants.

Overall, the school was a huge success with satisfactory rates of 81% in the "excellent" category of the evaluation process. Based on the results of the Evaluation Survey, the most positive responses included:

• The chance of meet other civil servants from North and South.
• The sharing of experiences between DEASP and DfC.
• Tutors sharing expert knowledge asking thought provoking question.
• Academic lectures were very informative and relevant.
• Getting a taste of academic life.
• Gained insight into social policy and a new appreciation of the work involved in implementing policy.
• Meeting new friends.

Planning is now underway for the 2019 Summer School, which will be held in Dublin. This will mark the 20th anniversary of the Summer School.
Chapter 3 Strategic Objectives and Review

Refund of Fees Scheme & Scholarship Programme

2018 saw the introduction of the new Masters Scholarship Programme, which provided a development opportunity to all staff up to and including HEO grade to develop their academic knowledge and professional competence in core areas such as operations management and programme/project management. Along with support through advance payment of fees, successful candidates are provided with appropriate day release for programme attendance and appropriate study leave. Three candidates were selected to participate in this programme.

The Department continues to support staff learning and development through its Refund of Fees Scheme, which enables staff to study in their own time and receive financial support and study leave. Courses supported are aligned with the essential and emerging business needs of the Department. 100 staff were approved for support under this scheme for academic year 2018/2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course study categories for DEASP staff in 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short / Foundation Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6 Advanced / Higher Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree / Higher Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 9 Masters Degree / Post - Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 10 Doctoral Degree / Higher Doctorate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies/ Administration/ Management</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy/ Administration/ Management/ Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Policy/ Sociology</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountancy</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Guidance/ Career Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Analysis/ Statistics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

One DEASP Learning & Development Programme

Since the commencement of the One DEASP Learning and Development Programme in 2014, 14,000 attendances have been recorded at Instructor-led courses; and in 2018 there were over 3,100 attendances. Over 13,000 e-learning modules have been completed by staff via the OneLearning and Development Programme since start of the in 2014. In 2018 approximately 3,200 modules were completed. Other training outside the scope of this programme saw approximately 6,500 staff attendances at various training courses; delivered both internally and by external providers.

One Learning Shared Learning and Development Service

In 2018, OneLearning, the shared learning and development centre for the Civil Service, introduced its suite of training courses to support staff development in the core competencies of customer service and communications, innovation and change, interpersonal and communications skills, leadership, management and delivery of results, team working and people management along with various IT courses and Irish language training. Departmental staff availed of almost 90 courses across a wide range of subject areas.

Irish Language Training

Irish Language training was promoted through STÓR (the Department’s intranet) to assist the Department in achieving its obligations for delivery of services through Irish. Irish language courses are delivered by Gaelscoilvia One Learning offering a range of professional Irish language courses to staff within the Department. In 2018, 26 staff commenced the Teastas sa Ghairmiúl (Certificate in Professional Irish) at various levels.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

Assistant Principal Forum 2018

The Department’s annual Assistant Principal (AP) Forum was held in Dublin Castle in January 2018. Over 230 Assistant Principals from across the Department attended.

The AP Forum is an important event for the Department which brings APs together to discuss the priorities for the coming year while also looking at key strategic issues. APs are key staff in the Department and play a vital role in the development of policy and in driving the implementation of the Department’s strategies and services throughout the country. The event is an important networking opportunity for geographically dispersed APs across the organisation.

Over the two days, participants had the opportunity to hear contributions and presentations from both internal and external speakers, including an external perspective from IBEC, ICTU, The Ombudsman’s Office, the Human Rights and Equality Commission and Threshold, the housing charity.

Presentations along with Q&A were delivered on GDPR, Children First and DEASP obligations, HR developments, Digital Services, the Front Office Back Office Project as well as resilience support on Live Well Work Well.
Chapter 3  Strategic Objectives and Review

One DEASP Values Recognition Awards 2018

The Department’s One DEASP Values Recognitions Awards event was held in November. It was attended by nominees from all over the country. There was a wide variety of individuals from an extensive geographical spread all of whom were nominated for making exceptional contributions in line with the Department’s five core values. Over 75 nominations were received and there were a total of 25 award winners as well as one overall winner.

The One Department Values Recognition Awards event was held in November and attended by nominees from all over the country.
Appendices
## Appendix 1  Legislation enacted in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Welfare Acts in 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Act 2018 (No. 37 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Welfare Regulations in 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Supplementary Welfare Allowance) (Amendment) (No. 1) (Assessment of Means) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 60 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 1) (Assessment of Means) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 61 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 2) (Change in Rates) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 102 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 3) (Jobseeker’s Transitional Payment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 103 of 2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Supplementary Welfare Allowance) (Amendment) (No. 2) (Diet Supplement) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 104 of 2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Rent Allowance) (Amendment) (No. 1) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 106 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 4) (Assessment of Means) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 306 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 5) (Assessment of Means) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 333 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Supplementary Welfare Allowance) (Amendment) (No. 4) (Assessment of Means) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 334 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 6) (Prescribed Time) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 375 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Section 290A) (Agreement) Order 2018 (S.I. No. 551 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 9) (Subsidiary Employment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 651 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare (Consolidated Contributions and Insurability) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 653 of 2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2  Organisation Structure as of May 2019

Chief Appeals Officer
Joan Gordon

Secretary General
John McKeon

Deirdre Shanley
Assistant Secretary

Paula Lyons
Assistant Secretary

Tim Duggan
Assistant Secretary

Rónán Hession
Assistant Secretary

Michael Bunyan
Assistant Secretary

Niall Egan
Assistant Secretary

Finance/Corporate
Financial Control
Jim McDonnell
Estimates / EUFC
Ciara Lawler
Planning / Legislation
Elaine Quinn
Data Protection
Joan McMahon

HR / Facilities
SDU/IR
Pat Delaney
Workforce Planning
Dermot Sheridan
Performance
Ann Marie O’Connor
Facilities Management
Christopher McCamley

Pensions / Social Insur / Emp Rights
Pensions / HHB Policy
Alan Flynn
Auto-Enrolment Programme
Roshin Sen
PRSI Policy / CES
Sean Reilly
Employment Rights / Scope / PRSI Refunds
Clare Dowling
EU International
Dearbháil Nic Giolla Mhicil

Working Age Income Sup’ Policy
Illness, Disability and Carer’s Policy
Helen McDonald
Policy Reviews
VFMS / GRS
Dave Dillon
Jobseeker Payments
Jackie Harrington
Families & LPC
John O’Toole
SWA
Des Henry

IS Services
Tech’ Architecture / SDM
Stephen O’Neill
BOMi Projects / Admin
Louise McKeever
IS Infrastructure
Kevin Coady
Digital Services
CRS
Daragh O’Connor
BOMi Business Change & Project Office
John Muldowney
Prod. Support / OPS
Sean Gaffney
Info. & Network Security
Willie Whelan

Service Development
Digital Services
Donal Spellman
SQ / Press Office
Sé Goulding
Business Architect
Paul O’Meara
External Service Delivery (Incl. EmployAbility)
Chris Kane
Customer Comms & Service*
Sarah O’Callaghan
*Incl CIB
Appendix 2  Organisation Structure as of May 2019

Deputy Secretary
Jacqui McCrum

John Conlon
Assistant Secretary

Kathleen Stack
Assistant Secretary

Teresa Leonard
Assistant Secretary

Oliver Egan
Assistant Secretary

Devesh Singh
Acting Chief Medical Officer

Internal Audit
Seamus Quinn

Employment Services

Business Intelligence
Ciaran Judge

Activation Policy/ SID
Dermot Coates

Empl. Programmes & Incentives
Nora Durcan

Activation Case Mgmt.
Barry Kennedy

Employer Relations R&I Ops
Siobhan Lawlor

Operations Control

Control Policy / Ops
Eugene Walsh

CIS
Peter Scully

SIU
Kieran O'Dwyer

DAO / FOI
Anne McManus

GRO Ops
TJ Fleming

Centralised Ops

FO/BO Programme
Philip O'Donohoe

Carers / Working Family Payment
Christine Gilligan

DA / Invalidity Pension
Brian Malloy

IB
Mary O'Sullivan
Mairín Haran

Non Con Pens / HHB
Joanne Walsh

Con Pensions
Anne Marie Cassidy

CB / DCA / TB / Mat
Tony Kieran

Back Office Ops / RSU
Eoin Brown

Regions East Midlands & West / NW

Dublin / Mid
Lisa Doyle / Noel Hand

Leinster
Cork
Marie O'Flynn

North East
Paul Carroll

South East
Liam Daly

Mid-West
Jim Lynch

Midlands
Veronica O'Brien

North West
Tina Burns (Acting)

Deputy Chief Medical Officer
Teck Tai (Acting)
Appendix 3  Publications in 2018

Annual Report 2017
Corporate Governance Framework 2018
A Roadmap for Pensions 2018-2023
Annual report of the Registrar General to the Minister for Social Protection under section 11 of the Civil Registration Act 2004 for the year 2017
Annual SWS Statistical Information Report 2017
Compliance and Anti Fraud Strategy 2014-2018 annual report 2017 and target report statement 2018
Implications for Social Insurance and Tax Revenues by the Department of Finance and the Department of Employment affairs and Social Protection
Indecon Review of Job Clubs
Indecon Review of Local Employment Services
Jobseeker satisfaction with public offices research - Published March 2019
JobPath Customer Satisfaction Survey 2017
JobsPlus Employer Survey
Report of the Social Inclusion Forum 2017
Report of the Social Inclusion Forum 2018
Report on the Gender Recognition Act 2015
Report to the Oireachtas in accordance with European Union (scrutiny) Act 2002 by the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection for the period 1st July-31st December 2017
Report to the Oireachtas in accordance with European Union (scrutiny) Act 2002 for the period 1st January to 30th June 2018
Social Impact Assessment of the welfare and income measures in Budget 2019
Social Inclusion Monitor 2016
Social inclusion Report incorporating Annual Reports for 2015 and 2016
Social Insurance Fund 2017
Statement of Strategy 2017-2020
The use on intermediary-type structures and self-employment arrangements
### Appendix 4  Ministers of the Department since 1947

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
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<tr>
<td>James Ryan</td>
<td>22 January 1947</td>
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<td>20 March 1957</td>
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<td>Seán MacEntee</td>
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<td>24 June 1959</td>
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<td>Kevin Boland</td>
<td>12 October 1961</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Joseph Brennan</td>
<td>16 November 1966</td>
<td>2 July 1969</td>
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<td>Kevin Boland</td>
<td>2 July 1969</td>
<td>6 May 1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Brennan</td>
<td>6 May 1970</td>
<td>14 March 1973</td>
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<td>Brendan Corish</td>
<td>14 March 1973</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles J Haughey</td>
<td>5 July 1977</td>
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<td>Michael Woods</td>
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<td>30 June 1981</td>
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<td>Gemma Hussey</td>
<td>14 February 1986</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Woods</td>
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<td>Michael Woods</td>
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<td>Dermot Ahern</td>
<td>26 June 1997</td>
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<td>Séamus Brennan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Cullen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Hanafin</td>
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<td>Éamon Ó Cuív</td>
<td>23 March 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joan Burton</td>
<td>9 March 2011</td>
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<td>Leo Varadkar</td>
<td>6 May 2016</td>
<td>14 June 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regina Doherty</td>
<td>14 June 2017</td>
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## Appendix 5  Ministers of State at the Department since 1947

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>9 July 1969</td>
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<td>Frank Clusky</td>
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<td>Tom Nolan</td>
<td>25 March 1980</td>
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<td>Tom Hussey</td>
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<td>Mary Flaherty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denis Gallagher</td>
<td>23 March 1982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rory O’Hanlon</td>
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<td>Fergus O’Brien</td>
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<td>John Donnellan</td>
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