Civil Service Management Board

Annual Report 2019

Foreword from the Civil Service Management Board

We are pleased to present the fifth Annual Report of the Civil Service Management Board.

Much progress was made throughout 2019 on the remaining active actions of the Civil Service Renewal Plan. The Board met 7 times in 2019 and discussed a broad range of initiatives and actions being progressed across Departments and Offices that positively impacted both employees of the Civil Service and members of the public.

Two more Organisation Capability Reviews – that of the Courts Service and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation – were completed, and their respective Action Plans were published. Furthermore, the review of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government was completed and that of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht commenced. These reviews were future-focused and assessed the capacity and capability of the organisations.

OneLearning continued to grow its course portfolio and expand its reach throughout the Civil Service, developing and strengthening the skills of thousands of civil servants across the country.

The roll-out of the Mobility Scheme continued throughout 2019 and facilitated 182 moves over the course of the year.

Importantly, many Government Departments and Offices adopted the single Government Identity and migrated to Gov.ie throughout 2019. This strong foundation of a unified approach to information and communication across Government Departments proved invaluable in getting vital messaging out to the public in 2020, including in relation to COVID-19 and Brexit.

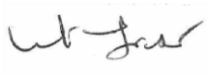
While there are a number of actions that will need to be carried forward in a successor to the first Civil Service Renewal (CSR) Plan, the 25 actions have, for the most part, been completed or well progressed over the lifetime of the Plan. The vision of this Plan – "to provide a world-class service to the State and to the people of Ireland" – remained central throughout its implementation and the Board is proud of the work progressed by civil servants to ensure the Plan's success, since its inception in 2014.

In addition to overseeing the implementation of the CSR Plan, the Board also focused its attention on a critical set of strategic issues over the course of the year, including the progress of the Transformation Programme within the Department of Justice and Equality and the challenges posed by Brexit.

The Board will continue to drive positive change across the system in the coming years, ensuring our vision of a world-class Civil Service is always kept in focus.

Civil Service Management Board

November 2020



Martin Fraser

Secretary General to the Government

Secretary General

Department of the Taoiseach

Robert Watt

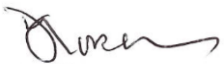
Secretary General

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Colm O'Reardon

Secretary General

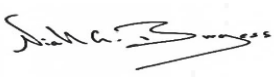
Department of Health



Derek Moran

Secretary General

Department of Finance



Niall Burgess

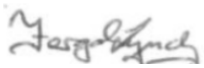
Secretary General

Department of Foreign Affairs

Brendan Gleeson

Secretary General

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine



Fergal Lynch

Secretary General

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Dr. Orlaigh Quinn

Secretary General

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Pádraig Dalton

Director General

Central Statistics Office

Damien Moloney

Director General

Office of the Attorney General

Niall Cody

Chairman

Office of the Revenue Commissioners

John McKeon

Secretary General

Department of Social Protection

Mark Griffin

Secretary General

Department of the Environment,

Climate and Communications

Seán Ó Foghlú

Secretary General

Department of Education

Katherine Licken

Secretary General

Department of Tourism, Culture,

Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Kevin McCarthy

Secretary General

Department of Rural and

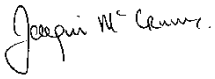
Community Development

Graham Doyle

Secretary General

Department of Housing, Local

Government and Heritage



Jacqui McCrum

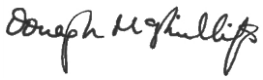
Secretary General

Department of Defence

Maurice Buckley

Chairman

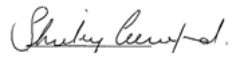
Office of Public Works



Oonagh McPhillips

Secretary General

Department of Justice



Shirley Comerford

Chief Executive

Public Appointments Service

Jim Breslin

Secretary General

Department of Further and Higher

Education, Research, Innovation

and Science

Ken Spratt

Secretary General

Department of Transport

Civil Service Renewal – Vision, Mission, Values and Commitments

Values
A deep-rooted public service ethos of independence, integrity, impartiality, equality, fairness and respect
Values
The highest standards of professionalism, leadership and rigour
Values
A culture of accountability, efficiency and value for money
Commitments
We will maximise the contribution of all staff, by nurturing and rewarding talent and by encouraging civil servants to develop their potential in a workplace committed to equality, diversity and mutual respect
Commitments
We will encourage creative and innovative thinking, constructive problem-solving, openness to change and flexible working methods
Commitments
We will ensure through appropriate merit based recruitment, training and life-long learning and development, that the civil service has the necessary expertise to advise on and to implement public policy in a complex and changing world

Civil Service Renewal Achievements in 2019

Progress on Renewal Actions in 2019

The following outlines progress made on the 17 live actions.

Action 6 – Expand the model of sharing services and expertise across organisations

The mission of the National Shared Services Office (NSSO) is to "provide excellent corporate business services to Government and other Public Services Bodies that meets end users' needs and delivers value for money".

- At the end of 2019, the NSSO had partnered with all Government departments and 57 Public Service Bodies including An Garda Síochána, Military and Prison Services, providing HR and pension administration services to 37,600 civil servants and 145,400 public service payees, including over 60,000 pensioners, were in receipt of payroll and related services.
- Significant improvements were made in service quality, resulting in a 54% reduction in service management issues.
- The NSSO manually completed 230,779 HR transactions and 1 million digitised automated transactions for customers in 2019, completed over 4 million payroll transactions and answered 153,000 customer calls.
- In 2019 the NSSO undertook its first large-scale customer engagement survey, and completed a benchmarked survey of its client HR Officers. Based on the results, a substantial customer service action plan is being developed.
- The NSSO began a helpdesk service for OneLearning, introduced payroll self-service data analytics for clients and successfully went live with PAYE Modernisation.
- The NSSO published its first Statement of Strategy in 2019. The Strategy, which covers the period 2019 – 2022, outlines four goals for the organisation – deliver excellent shared corporate services; engage, enable and empower our people; invest in new digital technologies; and champion shared services across the public sector.

Action 7 - Significantly develop strategic HR capability

The People Strategy is the overarching strategic HR agenda for the Civil Service up to 2020. It builds on the strength of the Civil Service and on the significant progress made under the Civil Service Renewal Plan.

- The People Sub-Group was reconvened in 2019 to oversee the high level implementation of the change required to deliver on the People Strategy.
- A review of the Civil Service HR operating model, supported by funding from the European Commission, was finalised in 2019. Six recommendations came out of this review and work is now underway on designing, testing and implementing these recommendations in three Departments – the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

- A Strategic Workforce Planning 'Train the Trainer' workshop (2 days) commenced rolled out across the Civil Service in 2019.

Action 8 - Open up recruitment and promotion processes at all levels

- Open recruitment is in place across all grades by the Public Appointments Service. In 2019 the Public Appointments Service interviewed 11,424 people and assigned 7,752 to a range of roles across the Civil Service.
- Open recruitment at Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General level continues to be filled by open competition via the Top Level Appointments Committee. Of the 22 positions filled in 2019 through the Top Level Appointments Committee, 36% were female appointments.
- Of those assigned to positions through open and interdepartmental/confined competitions in 2019 - 62% of Clerical Officers and Executive Officers were female, 56% of Higher Executive Officers were female, 49% of Administrative Officers and Assistant Principals were female, and 27% of Principal Officers were female.
- At the time of publication there was 211 active participants taking part in the 2019/2020 graduate development programme.
- An information pack entitled *Guidance Handbook for Civil Servants Before, During and After Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave* was published in 2019.
- Work continued throughout 2019 on researching flexible working arrangements at senior levels.

Action 9 - Establish a new shared model for delivering learning and development

The Learning Management System (LMS) is a digital platform enabling Civil Service staff to access all learning and development opportunities. It allows for the online administration, enrolment, reporting and tracking for both OneLearning and Department specific courses.

- Following completion of the pilot, the new LMS was rolled out to the majority of the Civil Service in Q4 2019 by the Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Robert Watt and the Action 9 Project Sponsors, Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners Niall Cody and Secretary General of Housing Planning and Local Government John McCarthy.
- There are now 65 courses available which are reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- By the end of 2019 there have been 12,835 attendances at OneLearning courses across 25 counties and 45 Civil Service Bodies.
- In 2019 OneLearning secured training rooms in Dublin City.
- All OneLearning courses were made available across the Civil Service on the LMS, providing opportunities for colleagues to network and collaborate in open enrolment courses

Action 10 - Introduce structures and transparent talent management programmes to develop future leaders

- The second tranche of the Executive Leadership Programme ran from 2018 to 2019 and involved 21 Senior Public Servants and 40 Principal Officers.
- The Senior Public Service Executive Leadership programme had 10 female and 11 male participants. The PO Executive Leadership programme had 22 female and 18 male participants.
- Mentors were assigned to support participants who completed the programmes in Quarter 2 2019.
- An external evaluation of the programme was carried out at the request of the Board to inform how the programme would progress. The National University of Galway, Ireland was selected to carry out this review.
- A Working Group is examining the range of supports that could be put in place for emerging leaders at levels up to and including Assistant Principal and how the Civil Service can further support staff to develop their careers.

Action 11 - Strengthen the performance management process

- Work on strengthening the capacity of managers with a view to embedding effective performance management across the system continued throughout 2019.
- The compliance rate for LEADS and PMDS in 2019 was 93.8% with 99.7% rated satisfactory.
- A Working Group of HR managers was established to consider of how the Civil Service Disciplinary Code would be amended in light of changes to the Civil Service Regulation Act 1956-2005 and the Public Service Management Act 1997.
- Analysis was carried out on the operation of a Centre of Expertise pilot, which delivered a HR Advisory Service to 7 Departments in 2018. The findings from the review were positive.

Action 13 - Publicly recognise staff excellence and innovation

The Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards recognise the achievements of civil servants and showcase examples of best practice and innovation in Government Departments and Offices. In 2019, four of the eleven categories included projects where the Civil and Public Service collaborated.

- 90 entries were submitted for consideration in 2019 and a shortlist of 32 projects across the 11 categories were announced. A nominee day was held in Collins' Barracks to record videography and photography of all the shortlisted teams. The winning projects were announced at a ceremony on the 19th November 2019 in St. Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle (Appendix 3).

Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards 2019

Action 14 - Strengthen professional expertise within corporate functions

- The strategic implementation plan, to take forward the actions outlined in the ICT HR Professionalisation Strategy, was progressed in 2019. This included 34 Apprentices (17 Network Engineers, 17 Software Developers) hired on a 2 year scheme to move to EO ICT on successful completion of programme.
- The HR Operating Model Project Phase 1, with support from the EU, was completed in June 2019. 6 key recommendations were made and the Board gave sign off to move to Phase 2 with 3 pilot departments – the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Civil Service HR Division (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform).
- Work continued on strengthening professional expertise in HR, ICT, Financial Management and Communications functions.

Action 15 - Expand career and mobility opportunities for staff across geographic, organisational and sectoral boundaries

The Civil Service Mobility Scheme aims to facilitate the effective mobility of staff across the Civil Service through an open, fair, transparent and practical system. It allows staff to pursue development opportunities and relocation while also supporting the needs of Departments. Feedback on the scheme has been very positive to date.

- Phase 1 of the Civil Service Mobility Scheme, which facilitates the effective mobility of Clerical Officers and Executive Officers within and between 46 location zones, went live over 2018 and 2019. 182 moves were carried out in 2019.
- Consideration of the implementation of Phase 2A (for Higher Executive Officers and Administrative Officers) and Phase 2B (for Assistant Principals) continued in 2019.

Action 17 - Improve project management capacity

The Civil Service Project Management Leaders and Advisory Service (PMLAS) provides leadership for the project managers handbook, network, portal and training and act to promote the network and the use of the handbook/portal across the civil and public service

- By end 2019 the Project Managers' Network comprised approximately 600 members drawn from across the civil and public service
- PMLAS provided input to the development of the project management foundation training module provided by OneLearning. As of the end of 2019, approximately 1,680 officials had attended this course since it began in late 2017.
- The Project Managers' Network was broadened to the wider public service in 2019. Four network events were held during the year with the first meeting of the broadened network taking place in the Printworks in Dublin Castle in September 2019 on the theme of *Achieving Quality Outcomes at Programme and Project Level.* Other themes covered that year included *From Managing Change to Change Making* and *Project Managing Complex Technology Projects.*
- Work continued in 2019 on the on the development of an approach to continuous professional development of project managers within the civil and public service.

Project Managers' Network 2019

Action 19 – Expand the ICT capacity of Departments and increase efficiencies by creating common systems and infrastructure

Implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy continued throughout 2019.

- A Digital Leaders Sub Group of the Board was established in 2019 to advance digitisation across the Civil Service.
- 8 Departments migrated to Gov.ie in 2019.
- The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer also continued the process of on-boarding of Departments to shared desktop and shared applications services.
- A key enabler of digital, MyGovID continued to expand in its adoption with the introduction of new services such as online drivers licence renewal and online access to the National Childcare Scheme.

Action 20 - Implement a programme of Organisational Capability Reviews

A system of Organisational Capability Reviews was initiated in 2017 to assess the capability of each Department and recommend practical actions to develop and improve this on a phased basis.

- The Review of the Courts Service and that of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation were published online in 2019 along with their corresponding Action Plans to address the findings in their Organisation Capability Reviews.
- During 2019 the review of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht was completed and the review of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government commenced in 2019.

Action 21 - Publish the framework for assignment of responsibilities for all Departments

- A chapter on creating new Departments, drafted by the Department of Rural and Community Development, was finalised in 2019 and published in early 2020.

Action 22 - Strengthen policy making skills and develop more open approaches to policy making

- A suite of documents – framework, checklist and system wide supports – to support policy development in the civil service, were finalised in 2019.
- In 2019 the Department of Children and Youth Affairs held open policy debates on the potential introduction of open or semi-open adoption in Ireland, and on child poverty. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine hosted an open policy debate on the future Agri-Food Strategy to 2030.
- A broad range of online consultations were conducted throughout 2019 including on the development of a National Security Strategy by the Department of the Taoiseach; the implementation of the clean energy package by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment; and access to contraception by the Department of Health.

Action 23 - Nominate a Civil Service Spokesperson to communicate on behalf of the Civil Service

- Work progressed throughout 2019 on the application of the unified Government identity across public service bodies.
- A module on communications was developed and delivered to the AO Graduate Development Programme.
- A recruitment campaign for Communications Specialists at HEO level was completed with successful applicants now posted across multiple Departments and Agencies.
- The Government Communications Network held 11 events in 2019. Each event aimed to provide opportunities for peer learning, networking and capacity building across Public Sector Communications.
- The Government Information Service continued to engage with Action 4 of Our Public Service 2020 – significantly improve communications and engagement with the public – to ensure synergies and avoid duplication of effort.
- Regional Town Hall meetings took place in Limerick and Cork focusing on 'Your career in the Civil Service - Are you realising your potential?', and to communicate the achievements of the Civil Service Renewal Plan to date. A Town Hall was also held in Dublin on the topic of 'Opportunities for Innovation within the Civil Service - Are you Innovating for the Future?'
- Since the launch of the Civil Service Renewal Plan in 2014, four formal progress reports have been published, the most recent in May 2019.

Action 24 - Improve how data is collected, managed and shared

- The National Data Infrastructure (NDI) champions group, chaired by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) met quarterly in 2019. The Group was expanded to the Public Service in 2019, to include agencies with high value data.
- The group continued to develop a 'dashboard' to measure NDI maturity for Public Sector Bodies. The NDI dashboard summarises the coverage of record-level PPSNs and Eircodes for key data holdings of Government Departments and agencies under their aegis and identifies where opportunities exist for improved coverage of the PPSN and Eircode in administrative systems and processes.
- Ordnance Survey Ireland released the Eircode Application Programme Interface (API) which is now available to Public Sector Bodies (PSBs) to integrate into existing and new address capture ICT system applications.
- 21 statisticians, 3 senior statisticians and 3 graduates were seconded from the CSO to Departments as at the end of 2019.
- Pathfinder projects were progressed in the areas of Education, Health, Housing and Justice over the course of 2019.
- In 2019 the CSO published the following pathfinder reports:
  - Higher Education Outcomes 2010 – 2016

- Further Education Outcomes 2010 - 2016
- Post Primary Outcomes for academic years ending 2012 and 2013
- Geographical Profiles of Income in Ireland 2016
- Urban and Rural Life in Ireland, 2019
- Measuring Distance to Everyday Services in Ireland, 2019
- Projected First-Issue Driving Learner Permits 2018 – 2021

Action 25 - Introduce and annual employee engagement survey to involve staff at all levels in ongoing organisational improvement.

Results of the 2017 Survey were published in March 2018 and disseminated to all staff. Departments and Offices received their individual results in July 2018. It was agreed that the next Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey would be held in September 2020 rather than September 2019 as originally planned. This will allow Departments and Offices sufficient time to address the findings of the 2017 survey in a meaningful way. The Board continued to receive updates in 2019 on the implementation of action plans across the system.

- Work continued throughout 2019 on preparations for the 'Go Live' date for the next iteration of the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, including survey methodology and requirements
- Work continued throughout 2019 on supporting Departments and Offices in responding to the findings of the 2017 survey, including targeted workshops, additional support material and running working group sessions on the topic of Innovative Climate as part of Innovation Week.
- The DCU-led research on the 2017 Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey entitled 'Shaping the Future of Work in the Civil Service in Ireland: Enriching Involvement, Innovation, Performance, and Citizen Impact. Supplementary Grade Analysis' was launched in 2019. The report builds on the findings of the 2017 survey and provides further insights in to key areas including the most challenging results of the survey.

Progress on Remaining renewal Actions

Eight of the 25 actions contained in the Renewal Plan have either been closed out or are being progressed as business as usual within the system and are no longer considered by the CSMB in the normal course of business. As such, these eight actions will not be reported on in this Report. These actions are listed at Appendix 2.

Next Phase of Renewal

The first Civil Service Renewal Plan (2014-2017) has created a strong foundation of a unified, professional, responsive, open and accountable Civil Service. Lessons have been learned from the implementation of this Plan and, having considered these, and the future challenges facing the Civil Service, the Board believe that the development of a longer-term strategy and overarching vision and framework for Civil Service Renewal is required. Work on the development of this strategy, vision and framework continued throughout 2019.

Appendix 1: Civil Service Management Board Membership 2019

Martin Fraser (Chair)	Department of the Taoiseach
Robert Watt	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Jim Breslin	Department of Health
Maurice Buckley	Office of Public Works
Niall Burgess	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Kevin McCarthy	Department of Rural and Community Development
Niall Cody	Office of the Revenue Commissioners
Pádraig Dalton	Central Statistics Office
Graham Doyle	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
Mark Griffin	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
Katherine Licken	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Fergal Lynch	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
John McCarthy	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
John McKeon	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Aidan O'Driscoll	Department of Justice and Equality
Damien Moloney	Office of the Attorney General
Derek Moran	Department of Finance
Brendan Gleeson	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Seán Ó Foghlú	Department of Education and Skills
Maurice Quinn	Department of Defence
Orlaigh Quinn	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
Shirley Comerford	Public Appointments Service

Appendix 2: Actions that have been closed off or are well established

Action 1	Establish an Accountability Board for the Civil Service
Action 2	Create a Civil Service Management Board
Action 3	Set a common governance standard
Action 4	Strengthen strategic planning and business planning processes
Action 5	Improve the delivery of shared whole-of-government projects
Action 12	Design and implement a robust performance review process for Secretaries General and Assistant Secretaries
Action 16	Re-design organisational and grade structures
Action 18	Increase the authority, flexibility and accountability for managing staff resources by delegating more responsibility to Departments

Appendix 3: Winners of the 2019 Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards

Excellence in Policy Making and Implementation

Global Ireland: Expansion of Ireland's Diplomatic Network – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Excellence in Innovation

DBEI Innovation Week – Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

Citizen Impact and Customer Service

Advanced Nursing Practice – Department of Health

Leading Reform

Single Scheme Administration Project – Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Excellence in People, Skill and Organisational Development

SMART Start - Year One Induction & Development Programme – Central Statistics Office

Excellence through Collaboration

Bail Supervision Scheme – Department of Children and Youth Affairs/ Irish Youth Justice Services

Research, Analytics and Insight

The ObSERVE Programme – Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment /Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Integrated Digital Excellence

Treatment Benefit goes Digital – Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection

Excellence in Culture, Values and Diversity

Fresh Approaches to Driving Women's Participation in the Arts and Culture Sector - Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Employee Engagement

IDEAS - Innovation in the Department of Education and Skills – Department of Education and Skills

World Class Civil Service

PAYE Modernisation – Office of the Revenue Commissioners