

**IMPLEMENTATION
BODY**

Summary of progress reported for the period April to September 2011

This document contains a summary of progress reported by each sector for the 6-month period, April to September 2011 and updates on a number of public service-wide developments. It should be read in conjunction with the First Annual Progress Report published by the Implementation Body in June 2011, which assessed savings and progress in the first year of the Agreement to end March 2011.

Copies of the full progress reports for each sector are available on the Implementation Body's website (www.implementationbody.gov.ie). Individual departments and agencies have been requested to publish their progress reports on their own websites.

1. Reducing the cost and size of the public service

A key objective of the Public Service Agreement is to facilitate a significant reduction in the number of staff working in the public service, achieve substantial and sustainable savings on the Exchequer pay bill and maintain and improve the services available to citizens and business.

During the six month reporting period, April to September 2011, staff numbers in the public service have been reduced by a further 5,576. Part of this fall is accounted for a seasonal reduction in numbers in the Education Sector where Quarter 3 numbers are down due to the summer break and are expected to increase somewhat in Quarter 4. Nevertheless, the figures confirm that the public service as a whole remains on track to achieve the end 2011 target for numbers of 301,000, as set out in the *National Recovery Plan 2011-2014*.

The Body noted that the numbers employed in the public service have reduced significantly since their peak at the end of 2008. As of September 2011, there were approximately 22,000 fewer people working in the public service than in December 2008. In addition, the Body notes that further significant departures are expected over the next reporting period, ahead of the expiry of the period within which pay reductions are disregarded for the purpose of calculating pensions (29th February 2012).

Table 1 below shows the reduction in numbers to date across each sector of the public service.

Table 1

	2008	2011	
	Qtr4	Qtr3	Difference
Defence Sector	11,265	10,169	-1,096
Education Sector¹	95,024	90,578	-4,446
Health Sector	111,025	104,287	-6,738
Civil Service²	38,817	36,571	-2,246
Justice Sector	15,692	14,477	-1,215
Local Government Sector	35,008	30,089	-4,919
State Agency Sector	13,060	11,709	-1,351
Total	319,891	297,880	-22,011

The Body also notes that the flexible redeployment of staff within and across sectors, which is specifically facilitated by the Croke Park Agreement, has been, and will continue to be, critical to supporting the maintenance of public services as staff numbers are further reduced.

2. Building a leaner and more integrated public service

Under the Agreement management and unions are committed to working together to build a leaner and an increasingly integrated public service. The Agreement accepted that flexible redeployment would be central to achieving greater integration in the public service. Paragraph 1.8 of the Agreement commits all parties to dismantling barriers to a unified public service labour market. It also commits that, to the greatest extent possible, there will be standardised terms and conditions across the public service.

The Body noted a number of important developments during the reporting period which will facilitate the achievement of a more integrated public service:

- Negotiations were progressed during the reporting period to standardise annual leave across the public service. These negotiations are at an advanced stage and are expected to be successfully concluded very shortly. A more in-depth report on this issue will be included in the Body's Second Annual Progress Report in May/June 2012.

¹ Q3 figures in Education are reduced by certain seasonal factors and will increase in Q4.

² It should also be noted that 1000+ staff of the Community Welfare Service were redeployed from the Health Sector into the Civil Service in 2011, thus impacting on the overall numbers in both sectors.

- Progress on developing a new single pension scheme with the following main features:
 - pensions based on “career-average” pay, not final salary as applies in current schemes;
 - integration with the Contributory State Pension;
 - a new pension age of 66, which henceforth will be linked to the State Pension age, i.e. rising to 67 and 68 over time; and
 - a maximum retirement age of 70 years.

The Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme) and Remuneration Bill 2011 was published on 29 September 2011 and passed Second Stage in the Dáil on 19 October 2011.

- The establishment of the new Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is a clear statement of the importance which the Government attaches to the Public Service Reform agenda. In the Programme for Government, the Government has committed itself to an ambitious programme of Public Service Reform and the new Department has been given the mandate to lead the reform programme, and to drive and enable reform right across the public service. The role of Department is not to micro-manage the delivery of change in each Department /Agency / sector but rather to integrate expenditure management and reform, to drive key cross-cutting reform initiatives and to facilitate reform in other organisations. The recent establishment of the new Reform and Delivery Office within the Department is an important development. A Programme Director has been externally recruited to lead this office, and he and his office will work closely with organisations across the Public Service, enabling them to deliver reform at a local level, as well as leading on certain key cross-cutting reform initiatives. This office will also include appropriate expertise in areas such as shared services, business process improvement, etc, and a new post of Shared Services Transformation Manager was recently advertised.
- An action-focused, overall Public Service Reform Implementation Plan has been developed by the new Reform and Delivery Office which will encompass the overarching commitments to Public Service Reform in the Programme for Government. The issues being addressed have been informed by the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure. This Plan sets out the priority actions and timelines for reform in a broad range of areas, with a focus on actions to improve performance by organisations and individuals; ensure greater efficiency, effectiveness and economy; and ensure flexibility in the deployment of people and resources. Priorities include eGovernment and more online services for citizens and business, shared services, public procurement, business process improvement and budgetary and financial management reforms, and a number of actions in these and other areas are already underway. The overall plan will be complemented by local integrated reform delivery plans.

3. Working towards a more streamlined public service

In its First Annual Progress Report published in June 2011, the Body noted that some progress had been made in reducing and rationalising the number of agencies, contributing to a smaller, more coherent and integrated public service. The Body notes that, since that Report, a number of further decisions have been taken by Government to reduce the number and structure of public service organisations. These include:

- The decision to amalgamate Limerick County and City Councils and Tipperary South and North County Councils.
- The decision to streamline the five existing employment rights organisations. (The Labour Relations Commission and the National Employment Rights Authority, the Employment Appeals Tribunal, and the Labour Court. The possibility of including the Equality Tribunal in the project is also being examined).
- The agreement in principle to merge the Irish Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority into a new Human Rights and Equality Commission.
- Further progress on reducing the number of VECs from 33 to 16.

Implementation of these decisions will be taken forward in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement, which is a key enabler for the implementation of such decisions. In addition, the Body also notes that imminent decisions in the context of the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure may have implications for the state agency sector.

4. Summary of progress reported by sector

Each sector has submitted a progress report on the implementation of its sectoral action plan for the period April to September 2011. The Body has considered these reports and a summary of the key areas of progress reported is set out below:

4.1 Education

- New redeployment procedures for second level teachers have been implemented, resulting in the elimination of a surplus of some 200 teachers with an estimated full year saving of €12m.
- Redeployment procedures at primary level have been implemented with some 850 surplus teachers redeployed with an estimated full year saving of €50m.
- The programme of rationalisation of Vocational Education Committees (VECs) (reducing from 33 to 16) has been progressed during the period with:
 - Revised configuration of VECs announced and headquarters locations decided;

- Negotiations concluded on redeployment arrangements for surplus Chief Executive Officers to facilitate the implementation of the rationalisation programme; and
- Redeployment of a number of non-academic staff using agreed protocols.
- Revised arrangements implemented to provide for increased flexibility in lecturing in Institutes of Technology which includes delivery of an additional 2 lecturing hours per week by lecturing staff.
- The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) voted to accept the Croke Park Agreement in June 2011. On foot of this, from the start of the new academic year (September 2011), universities are implementing an agreed plan which includes:
 - Provision of an additional hour per week by all academic staff, which is additional to all existing required periods of work;
 - Implementation of workload allocation models for all academic staff to facilitate a transparent and equitable distribution of work within the universities;
 - Implementation of Full Economic Costing initiative – including completion by all academic staff, on an individual basis, of the Academic Activity profile, which will enable the improved management of university resources; and
 - A number of key provisions of the academic contract have been addressed dealing with issues such as duties, flexibility and co-operation, performance management, attendance and hours of work, salary progression, annual leave, discipline and tenure.

4.2 The Prison Service

- Staffing levels are now at some 250 below previously agreed levels in the Irish Prison Service.
- Despite the reduction in staffing levels the Prison Service has coped with significant peaks in prisoner numbers during the period.
- Task Reviews are progressing at 5 prison complexes and the savings agreed to date are on target for delivery of the overall level of required savings (€21m). Reviews have now been completed at Cloverhill and Wheatfield prisons and substantially advanced at Castlerea and Loughan House prisons. The review has commenced at central service divisions such as the Irish Prison Service Training Centre.

- Agreement has been reached for the introduction of new less costly Prison Administration & Support Officer grades. These new grades will enter service in early 2012 and will significantly reduce the Prison Service staffing cost base going forward.
- Significant progress has been made with the redeployment of currently serving Clerk I & II into other frontline operational roles in the Prison Service to facilitate the introduction of the new Prison Administration & Support Officer grades.
- Agreement has been reached with the staff associations for the development of new Campus Governance arrangements and shared services at the three major prison complexes (Mountjoy Campus, Midlands Campus and West Dublin Campus). This involves the merger of governance arrangements, management grade staffing and the development of shared services for activities such as administration, maintenance, healthcare etc. Eight existing Prisons will be merged into 3 Campuses. The recruitment and appointment of Governors to manage these campuses will occur in Quarter 4 2011.
- Open Recruitment and a scheme of Accelerated Promotion/Development is being progressed.
- New Absence Management policies have been introduced and this has resulted in a reduction in Sick Leave in line with the targets of c.10%.

4.3 An Garda Síochána

- An analysis of policing demands and the impact of the Working Time Directive has been completed and progress made on the development of a new roster system which is intended to meet these two criteria in particular along with the work life balance for members. Two roster patterns have been proposed by both Garda Management and Staff Associations which will be developed further during the negotiation phase over the coming weeks. It is intended that the new roster system will be implemented on a national basis during Quarter 1 2012.
- Work continues in respect of further civilianisation in An Garda Síochána. A working group set up to examine this stream of the Public Service Agreement has agreed that civilianisation will focus on a number of key areas to include, Communications Centres, Garda National Immigration Bureau, public counter assistants and the Central Vetting Unit at Thurles. The issue of augmentation of staffing numbers at the Vetting Unit was identified as a priority with a figure of 300 extra civilian staff being proposed.

- Work has also progressed on the development of a new comprehensive performance management system for An Garda Síochána. A draft policy and guidance material has been circulated to the working group and staff associations. An IT system has been put in place to support the policy. In the interim, a training needs analysis is being conducted for each pilot area to identify requirements and training courses that will be required to support the pilot.
- All salary payments are now made by electronic funds transfer (EFT) and from 1st July 2011, payment of salaries to members by way of cheque ceased. Online payslip software was successfully tested and the suitability of the Garda Portal for placement of online payslip web link has also been confirmed.
- Agreement has been reached to have all Garda compensation claims in future dealt with by the State Claims Agency. This will reduce costs, and especially legal costs, significantly and speed up the processing of such claims. The Department of Justice and Equality are progressing the necessary legislative changes.

4.4 Defence Sector

- Proposals have been developed for a very significant reorganisation and restructuring of the Defence Forces within the reduced numbers to maintain capacity to undertake the tasks assigned by Government.
- Agreement has been reached to introduce new promotion systems for Generals, Officers and Enlisted personnel which reflect modern HR standards, including the elimination of seniority and the introduction of merit based systems of promotion at all levels.
- 710 serving military personnel have been redeployed across the organisation and to different posts within the organisation.
- Delivery of additional services with the deployment of personnel to UNIFIL (Lebanon) and takeover of Command by the Defence Forces of the EU training mission in Somalia - 459 personnel involved.
- Completion of a comprehensive review of military medical services in June 2011 which will commence implementation during November 2011.
- Completion of the revision of the Regulation and corresponding Administrative Instruction governing the grant of annual and special leave to members of the Permanent Defence Force.

- Gradual elimination of acting up and substitution across the system with the number of persons in receipt of substitution at home being reduced from 350 in 2009 to 80 and 42 in receipt of acting up as at September 2011.

4.5 Health Sector

- A reduction of a further 1,377 whole-time equivalent staff (WTEs) during the reporting period.
- The finalisation of arrangements for the legal transfer of 1,020 staff of the Community Welfare Service from the HSE to the Department of Social Protection (which took effect on 1 October 2011). This represented the culmination of a lengthy process and will enable the CWS to function as a fully integrated part of the social welfare system, with savings to the Exchequer and an improved service for citizens.
- Internal redeployment within the health service of a further 750 staff, as well as short-term redeployment/mobility, to achieve optimum deployment of available resources and improved organisation of services. Examples of specific staff redeployments (as a result of service reconfiguration/resource reallocation) which have taken place or that have advanced during the period include:
 - Louth-Meath Hospital Reconfiguration Programme - 41 Nursing and HCA staff transferred into Stroke Rehab and step-down service in Louth County Hospital;
 - North-West Dublin – redeployment of clerical administration staff based in health centres to 12 Primary Care Teams;
 - Beaumont Hospital – realignment of services between Beaumont Hospital and the North East region is continuing - the development of the Academic Health Centre between Connolly and Beaumont Hospital is progressing towards a December 2011 completion date; and
 - Further progress on the relocation by year end of Orthopaedic Services (including elective in-patient, rehabilitation, trauma and day surgery) from St. Mary's Orthopaedic Hospital to South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital (SIVUH) with building work on three new theatres at SIVUH completed and patient accommodation currently being refurbished and equipped. The transfer of service involves the relocation and redeployment of approximately 220 staff of all grades.
- Completion by 1 July 2011 of the centralisation of medical card processing in a new shared services unit in Finglas, Dublin, with staff and other savings estimated at €20m. Since 1 July, the new centralised service has received more than 123,000 applications and reviews and is handling more than 2,000 phone calls each day. Customer focused initiatives as part of this centralisation project include a new

online medical card application service, with a high uptake to date, and a 15 day turnaround time for complete applications.

- Continued implementation of service changes in line with national policy, particularly within the acute hospital system, mental health services, services for older people, and disability services. These include:

Clinical Strategy and Programmes (including Clinical Care Programmes):

- Establishment by the Minister for Health of a new Special Delivery Unit in June 2011 and the appointment of a Special Adviser with extensive experience in Northern Ireland and Manchester in dealing with long waiting times. Also a new Chief Operations Officer has been appointed to lead the work of the Special Delivery Unit. Work has commenced on systems and data improvement. The Unit has been set within the Department of Health and will work closely with the NTPF and associated teams from the HSE.

The SDU's role is to unblock obstacles that prevent patients being seen and treated quickly. The SDU and HSE will work to develop and implement a number of projects, such as the roll-out of the acute medicine and associated programmes, including an emergency medicine programme, to guide patients quickly to the service best suited to their needs and reduce Emergency Department (ED) use by those best treated elsewhere.

- Significant achievements to date include:
 - Unscheduled (i.e. emergency) care where a new system to monitor and track the patient flow through ED has been developed. This went live in some hospitals in October and will be rolled out across larger hospitals by February 2012.
 - Scheduled care where a 12 month maximum wait time (to be achieved by end 2011) was announced by the Minister in July and the work of the NTPF has been refocused towards those patients waiting longest.

The SDU is establishing an infrastructure, based on information collection and analysis, hospital by hospital, so that it will be possible to know what is actually happening, in real time. The clinical care programmes will provide the services strategy to benchmark performance.

Mental Health services

- Good progress on implementing Community Mental Health Units across all disciplines has been reported. Acute beds are being reduced, with patients and staff moving to more suitable community based locations. Examples include:
 - HSE West – 16 beds closed in St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway and patients transferred to a Community Nursing Unit (CNU).

- HSE Dublin North-East - Elderly mental care units at St. Ita's Hospital, Portrane, Co. Dublin transferred to St. Vincent's Hospital, Fairview, Dublin in April 2011 and the acute inpatient admission unit transferred in September 2011 and staff deployed.
- HSE South - 26 Acute beds in St. Senan's Hospital, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, closed.
- Reconfiguration of mental health services is also being progressed. Examples include:
 - In South Tipperary, the reconfiguration of services continues, with acute bed capacity transferring to Kilkenny, as part of development of the Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary extended catchment area for mental health services.
 - Adult acute in-patient services to be centralised in a newly refurbished 25 bed unit in Cavan General Hospital.
 - Acute units are in development in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal (opened in September 2011); Beaumont in Dublin; Galway; and Cork – all of which will be staffed by redeployed personnel.
- Enhanced child and adolescent mental health services are also being progressed with the development of a number of new campuses either approved or underway. Examples include St. Vincent's Hospital Fairview, Dublin, Inpatient Unit at St. Loman's Campus, Palmerstown in Dublin, Besboro, Co. Cork and Merlin Park, Galway.

Services for older people

- Good progress on reconfiguration of services to improve quality of service for the elderly continued to be made. For example, in Co. Meath a new Community Nursing Unit opened in June 2011 with staff and patients from St. Joseph's Hospital in Trim, transferred.
- National Guidelines for the provision of Home Care Packages were introduced and a new Single Care Needs Assessment Tool for Older People is being piloted in two sites. This will ensure equal access and standardised delivery of home help services.
- Redeployment of staff to facilitate opening of new residential units and the replacement of former units is continuing. Examples include Bru Chaoimhinn Hospital in Cork St., Dublin, which has closed and staff and patients transferred to Bellavilla and Cherry Orchard units.

Disability Services

- The report entitled *'The Time to Move on from Congregated Settings – a Strategy for Community Inclusion'* was published on 28 June 2011. This Report sets out the plan and change programme needed to move people from congregated settings into the community, in line with Government policy. These people will

get the support they need to help them to live independently in the community. It is proposed that congregated settings be closed on a phased basis over seven years.

- Implementation of the Medical Laboratory modernisation agreement continued during the review period and savings arising from this agreement are now estimated to be in the order of €7m per year – or €2m more than originally anticipated.
- The central HSE procurement unit (HSE Procurement) is now operating on the basis of a single national procurement operating model. All staff engaged in procurement activity across HSE now report into HSE Procurement. Agreement for this was facilitated under the auspices of the Croke Park Agreement.
- Work on the development of a HR Shared Services Centre in Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim continued during the reporting period with the consolidation and management of all recruitment scheduled for full completion by the end of 2011.

4.6 Local Government

- Ongoing reduction in staff numbers with a further reduction of 293 whole-time equivalents (WTEs) during the period. Since June 2008, local authorities have reduced whole time equivalent staff by 6,900.
- Ongoing restructuring and re-assignment of duties across all local authorities to take account of staff reductions in the sector and to maintain critical services. Examples include the consolidation of depots/engineering areas, outdoor, and creation of new teams to optimise the deployment of reduced staff numbers, re-assignment of administrative work to ensure front line services are maintained.
- Withdrawal from the direct provision of refuse services and subsequent redeployment of surplus staff to other essential areas of work. Examples include South Dublin, Fingal and Kildare County Councils.
- Redeployment of staff, including redeployment of staff to the Road Safety Authority and the redeployment of staff from the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport. It is anticipated that further redeployment will take place in the context of the transfer of responsibility for Driving Licences from local authorities to the Road Safety Authority.
- The reorganisation and reduction of Engineering Areas across the sector, involving the consolidation of management and indoor and outdoor service provision. Examples include Dundalk Town - North Louth/Dundalk and South Dundalk, which

were two separate areas for management and service provision, are now merged into one such area of Dundalk Town and District.

- Elimination of duplication of services within Town/Borough Councils and County Councils by moving to single function of services in County Councils across the sector. Examples include Ennis Town Council, whose HR function transferred to Clare County Council.
- Work on a detailed revision of the sectoral action plan has commenced. Issues of a national nature which require progression at sectoral level have been identified. The new action plan, which will be presented to the unions shortly, focuses in particular on initiatives in the areas of shared services, e-government and procurement. It will be finalised following the Budget later this year.
- Measures have been implemented across the sector to ensure better management of sick leave, together with the uniform application of sick leave arrangements and enhanced attendance management policy.
- Progress is being made on implementing standardisation of payment systems, methods etc. for Retained Fire-fighters to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources, in accordance with a Labour Court recommendation on this issue which provided for standardisation of payments to the nearest 15 minutes of time worked.

4.7 Civil Service

- Further reductions in staff numbers of around 200 in the Civil Service during the period – numbers remain on course to reach the end 2011 target.
- Further progress was reported in the area of redeployment, including on the redeployment of 700 FAS staff to the Dept. of Social Protection. There have also been extensive redeployments and reassignments within the sector during the period as changes to Departmental boundaries have been implemented and the new Departments of Public Expenditure & Reform, Children & Youth Affairs and Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht have been established.
- Further progress has been made on reducing office requirements:
 - The OPW secured €1.5m in rental reductions to date in 2011;
 - Dept. of Social Protection is progressing the co-location of the Community Welfare Service in 10 locations;
 - Revenue are continuing to review smaller offices with one further office closed during the period; and

- Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Marine has now closed 42 offices to the public (10 fully and 32 partially) and put in place 16 enhanced offices in May 2011.
 - In the Courts Service, two District Court offices have been amalgamated with offices in different locations in the same county and one further amalgamation is planned by the end of 2011.
- While complying with the Employment Control Framework, Departments and Offices have reported progress on increasing specific skills levels, including with the assistance of the Public Appointments Service. Examples include Revenue, the Dept. of Finance and the Dept. of Public Expenditure & Reform.
 - Departments have reported further progress in the area of reconfiguration and business process re-engineering and the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform has established a Business Process Improvement unit to assist Departments in this area. Examples of progress include:
 - Dept. of Social Protection has developed new software to enable sharing of social welfare payment information with the HSE for medical card applications;
 - Revenue has reformed systems and processes in the CAT, e-stamping and VRT areas, freeing up 136 staff for other core Revenue work and maintaining services with fewer staff. Revenue have also introduced sector specific audit and investigation projects. For example, cash businesses, PAYE, white collar, streetscape markets services and special investigations into target shadow economy activity. In addition, a Debt Management Unit has been established following efficiencies gained by the implementation of continuous improvements initiatives to business processes. It is anticipated that this project will realise a significant debt yield; and
 - Dept. of Foreign Affairs & Trade introduced a new balanced fee regime in April 2011 to make it more cost effective for citizens to use the Passport Express Service.
 - The Courts Service established the first three combined Court offices in Naas, Monaghan and Ennis in May 2011 and full roll-out of these unified multi-jurisdictional offices in each county is scheduled to be completed by early 2013.
 - Significant progress was achieved in the area of procurement by the National Procurement Service which now has in place 45 national framework agreements and contracts in place for high spend requirements with a total value in excess of €450m. These frameworks cover such areas as ICT, office supplies, energy and vehicles. Also, the Dept. of Social Protection has negotiated a deal with a telephone service provider for the application of the Telephone Allowance under the Household Benefits Package to over 289,000 customers. The deal yielded €17m in annual savings and also provides citizens with additional value of €55 per month.

- Departments and Offices report further progress on expanding the range of services provided online and the uptake of such services. Examples include:
 - Commencement of the phased introduction of the Public Services Card;
 - Testing by the Dept. of Social Protection of an online “sign-on” service for Jobseeker’s payments and an online system for Redundancy & Insolvency payments;
 - An eForm for Employment Appeals Tribunal claimants is now available online; and
 - A facility for local authorities to submit online requests to the Valuation Office was put in place in August 2011 and online forms for Ratepayers in May 2011.
- Also in the area of ICT, solutions have also been developed to reduce the cost of 18XX phone services and a Cloud Computing Strategy for the public service is being developed, with trials in this area continuing and possible business cases being assessed.
- In the area of shared services progress was reported on the HR Shared Service project where contract negotiations are ongoing with the preferred bidder. Departments and Offices have also reported measures they have taken to put in place shared service arrangements in relation to IT, Finance and other services. Examples include:
 - Dept. of Finance report progress is ahead of schedule on taking over the administration and processing of VEC pensions payroll from Local Authorities with 13 payrolls and 3000 payees now on the paymaster general (PMG) system;
 - Dept. of Transport & Tourism are progressing the centralisation of driving license functions;
 - Core IT services for Dept. of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources are now being provided by the Dept. of Agriculture Food and Marine since June 2011;
 - ICT and Accounts/Finance services for the new Dept. of Children & Youth Affairs will continue to be provided by Dept. of Health; and
 - The new Dept. of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht have implemented shared training and IT services with the Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Government and the OPW.
- The Top Level Appointments Committee has been reconstituted with an external chair and a majority of external members. There is now open competition for positions at the highest levels in the Civil Service, including at the levels of Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General.
- All Departments were asked to consider what they need to do to strengthen the management of underperformance within their Department, to include the delivery of training on underperformance and related policies based on guidelines issued

earlier in 2011. Actions and progress of Departments in this area will be reviewed by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform in November 2011.

- Shared service arrangements for the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service have been progressed with the appointment of a shared service manager in July 2011 and a panel of Employment Assistance Officers was put in place during October 2011.
- The Dept. of Public Expenditure & Reform is working with Personnel Officers/ HR managers on reform of the sick leave scheme and its management in the Civil Service. The calculation of sick leave has been standardised and returns are to be made to the Dept. of Public Expenditure & Reform.

Further progress was reported by Departments in the area of cross functional reporting and teams. Examples include:

- The Dept. of Agriculture, Food & the Marine where cross-stream reporting arrangements have been implemented in Divisions dealing with environmental work and a multi-disciplinary, cross-Division 'Trade Team' has also been established and a similar team for Procurement is in train;
 - The Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Government where multi-disciplinary teamwork and enhanced cross stream reporting initiatives have been developed, including the introduction of cross-stream reporting in the Building Standards area of the Housing Division; and
 - The Dept. of Education & Skills where a review of staffing resources, cross functional issues and duplication of work/business practices has been undertaken.
 - The Courts Service, where progress has been made on expanding the role of County Registrars with 5 County Registrars having received their warrants of appointment as Vice Chairs of Employment Appeals Tribunal.
- Further work has been undertaken to reorganise Inspectorates to ensure more efficient and effective delivery of services. The Dept. of Agriculture, Food & the Marine has re-organised the Agricultural Inspectorate, where staff numbers have reduced by 21% since 2008. Also, the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) has entered into structured and formalised inspection arrangements with the Dept. of Social Protection and the Revenue Commissioners.

4.8 State Agencies

- Staff numbers continued to fall in the sector over the reporting period. Serving numbers in the sector have reduced from 11,875 at the end of March 2011 (Q1) to

11,709 at the end of September 2011 (Q3). Further departures can be anticipated ahead of the end-February 2012 deadline.

- The programme of agency rationalisation and restructuring is continuing. For example, Teagasc is implementing a Change Programme which includes reducing the number of its advisory offices. Also, the National Building Agency ceased operation in June 2011 and its operations were transferred to the Housing Agency.
- In July 2011, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation announced the decision to undertake a major reform of the State's employment rights and industrial relations procedures and institutions. A core element of the proposals is the streamlining of the current industrial relations and employment rights bodies into a rationalised, integrated two-tier structure. The objective will be to establish a simpler structure for workers, citizens and businesses while building upon the recognised strengths of the first instance functions currently performed by the Labour Relations Commission, the Rights Commissioners Service, National Employment Rights Authority (NERA), the Equality Tribunal and the Employment Appeals Tribunal. Preparatory work has already commenced.
- There has been further evidence of redeployment within state agencies and within the sector during the period. For example, the Citizen's Information Board has redeployed 52 staff internally and 16 staff from the National Building Agency were redeployed. It is anticipated that further significant redeployment of staff will be required, both within and outside the sector, following the implementation of decisions to be taken in the context of the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure and anticipated retirements by February 2012.
- Some agencies have reported increased use of shared services approaches and better approaches to procurement. For example, an implementation group with representatives from each agency under the aegis of the Department of Health has been established to identify opportunities for cost savings through enhanced collaboration and greater use of shared services. The Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government has undertaken a detailed survey to examine the potential for, and barriers to, shared services.
- Some agencies are reporting the development and introduction of new technology and online services which is a key enabler for doing more with less. For example, the National Transport Authority reports the launch of the Dublin Bus web and app service for all Dublin Bus stops.

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