

## ONE YEAR ON

Progress on the Implementation of the Croke Park Agreement



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# Editorial

One Year On – How far have we come?

We have seen many changes over the past year including a new Government and ongoing reductions in public service numbers and expenditure. We will see even more changes and meet even more challenges over the coming years. We are, however, on track to meet these challenges.

The Public Service Agreement (aka Croke Park Agreement) had its first birthday last month and in line with the provisions of the Agreement, this was marked by publishing a review of progress on the implementation of the Agreement over the last year. The first progress report by the Implementation Body acknowledged that €289 million in savings in the public service pay bill were made over the last year. Some of the progress to date and savings achieved are detailed in the article on pages 4 and 5. A special conference on the implementation of the Croke Park Agreement was held in Croke Park on 30th June, with speakers from Government, Public Service Management and Unions. Details of this conference are contained on pages 6 and 7.

While the Croke Park Agreement creates a framework for a number of public service reform issues to be advanced, the Government is also undertaking a comprehensive review of expenditure. This review is detailed on page 3, including information on the consultation process which is allowing members of the public to have their say and submit ideas for savings. On pages 8 to 11, there are examples of new initiatives, projects and changes in work practices which are helping to achieve savings and improve services to the public. For example, the new online portal for public services (page 8), innovative use of ICT in schools (page 9) and sustainable energy initiative in Monaghan VEC (page 10) are prime examples of the types of changes that can be made.

Despite the many achievements made in public service reform, it can sometimes feel like these are not acknowledged or rewarded. Now is the time to change that. Every two years the Taoiseach presents Public Service Excellence Awards to public service organisations that have achieved excellence and efficiency in the administration and delivery of public services. Applications are now being sought for such projects. The closing date for applications is 21st October and details on the application process are available on page 12. An Awards ceremony will then be held in the first half of next year. If you feel your organisation's efforts deserve such an Award, then get your application in. Remember – If you're not in, you can't win!

## Comprehensive Review of Expenditure



As the establishment of the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform has made clear, the Government is serious in its aim of making the best use of the more limited public resources available now and over the coming years. The Government's fiscal targets for consolidation are challenging, but they must be met. The launch of the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure (CRE) by the Minister of Public Expenditure & Reform, Brendan Howlin T.D., was a major step in identifying the savings required to meet these targets.

However, this process is not just about reducing expenditure. It is also a key component in the Government's approach to transforming the provision of public services in Ireland. This includes the introduction of far-reaching reforms to ensure the delivery of quality public services that meet the needs of citizens. Under this new approach,

the Government will look at reforming how services are delivered, making major efficiency gains while protecting and improving essential services as far as possible.

Each Department is currently preparing a Comprehensive Expenditure Report in respect of the Department and its associated agencies, to identify expenditure programme savings, scope for savings arising from efficiency and other reforms, proposals for reducing and/or merging of agencies and associated reductions in staff numbers.

The objectives of the CRE process are to provide the Government with a comprehensive set of decision options:-

- to meet the overall fiscal consolidation objectives, both as regards spending and numbers reduction targets;
- to re-align spending with the Programme for Government priorities; and

- to consider new ways of achieving Government objectives in the context of Public Service reform.

Under the CRE, Ministers and Departments have the responsibility to evaluate every budgetary programme for which they are responsible, within both Departments and Agencies. No area where public funds are being spent will be left unscrutinised.

In parallel with the CRE, the Government is undertaking a specific comprehensive review of its capital investment programme. The aim of the review is to assess priorities for capital investment to meet critical economic and social infrastructure deficits within our tightened budgetary circumstances; to identify vital infrastructural investment as opposed to desirable but not vital; and to determine how capital programmes can best support sustainable employment.

Many users of public services – as well as public servants themselves – have a view on wasteful practices and on spending programmes and schemes that offer poor value for money. The Government, therefore, has invited suggestions and proposals for making further savings, and for introducing reforms and efficiencies in spending programmes and in the design and delivery of public services. These ideas for saving and reforms across the Public Service can be submitted at <http://per.gov.ie/comprehensive-review-of-expenditure/>.



## Croke Park Implementation Body reports €289m in pay savings

On 15th June, the Croke Park Implementation Body published its first annual report on progress under the Agreement. The role of the Body is to drive implementation of the Agreement and the Action Plans developed in each sector of the Public Service. Its Report deals with the savings generated and reform delivered over the first year of the Agreement.

The Body concluded that “solid and measurable” progress has been made by the parties to the Agreement in the first year. It found that sustainable paybill savings of €289m were achieved during the review period. These savings were driven primarily by a 5,349 reduction in staff numbers. Other factors such as reductions in overtime costs and paybill savings resulting from changed work practices, rationalisation etc. also contributed to these savings.

The Report also details examples of non-pay savings worth some €308m generated through better use of resources – re-organising work and achieving greater internal efficiencies. It also highlights examples of redeployment, reform and reconfiguration of services taking place across the public service.

While acknowledging the important progress that has been made, the Body has cautioned, however, that

there is a need for more “urgency and ambition” in the coming weeks and months, in light of the fiscal situation and it has pointed to some of the issues that need to be taken forward as a priority. The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has welcomed the progress achieved but has agreed with the Body’s assessment about the need to up the pace of implementation over the remainder of 2011.

“We need to move forward quickly to build on the important progress that has been achieved to date and accelerate the delivery and implementation of urgently needed reform.”

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr. Brendan Howlin, T.D.

## Examples of savings and progress highlighted in the Implementation Body’s report:

- A voluntary early retirement scheme and voluntary redundancy scheme for certain staff categories were implemented in late 2010, under which 2,025 people (or 1,626 whole-time equivalents) left the public health service.
- The restructuring of the Medical Laboratories working day and week, which will lead to a full year saving of some €5m.
- Reconfiguration within the prison service which has avoided the need for additional recruitment.
- Reduction of 2,000 posts of responsibility in primary and post-primary schools, with a consequential saving of the order of €10m annually. These posts broadly equate to promotion posts in teaching and their number will continue to decline in line with the ongoing moratorium.
- Substantial progress on organisational rationalisation and restructuring in the Defence Forces.
- The introduction of additional working time in schools, which will avoid in particular potential costs for supervision before and after school and which will deliver benefits for parents (many schools are using this time to hold parent teacher meetings at times more suitable to working parents).
- The National Public Procurement Office has facilitated savings of €39m in procurement costs across Departments and Offices.
- Major redeployment into the Department of Social Protection, including 507 staff from Government Departments, in response to the increased demands created by the increase in the Live Register and the transfer of almost 1,000 staff in the Community Welfare Service from the HSE by the end of 2011. This is one of the first major cross-sectoral redeployment initiatives under Croke Park and will mean a better, more integrated service to clients and will generate savings for the Exchequer. In addition, work is underway to transfer up to 700 staff into the Department from Fás.
- Outsourcing of safety camera operations in An Garda Síochána with full roll out of the Safety Camera project (6,000 hours of speed monitoring carried out by GoSafe every month) freeing up Gardaí for other critical frontline duties.

## Solid progress made...but a lot more to do!



The Implementation Body will be conducting another round of reporting in October and this represents another important milestone in the

context of delivery under the Agreement. Public Service bodies will be required to submit reports setting out the very latest state of play on the various

commitments in their Action Plans. It is hoped that substantial progress can be reported on the remaining priority issues by this point and this will be important if the Agreement is to be judged as being on track. Another important development on the horizon is the Government’s Comprehensive Review of Expenditure which will be concluded by the autumn. The framework of the Croke Park Agreement will be critical to delivering the further restructuring and reform that will flow from this process and Action Plans will need to be reviewed towards the end of the year to take account of this.

The First Progress Report and supporting documentation relating to the annual review are available on the Body’s website: [www.implementationbody.gov.ie](http://www.implementationbody.gov.ie)

# Conference on Croke Park Agreement – One Year On

Building on the series of highly successful Public Service reform conferences over the past year, a half-day conference on “The Croke Park Agreement - One Year On” took place on the morning of Thursday, 30th June.

The conference was fittingly held in the Croke Park Conference Centre and featured senior speakers from Government, the Croke Park Implementation Body and Public Service management and trade unions. P.J. Fitzpatrick, Chair of the Implementation Body, chaired the proceedings and the opening address was given by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin, T.D.

Shay Cody, General Secretary of IMPACT and member of the

Implementation Body, gave a staff side perspective on the implementation of the Agreement and discussed the staff contribution to reform across the Public Service. Robert Watt, Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and also a member of the Implementation Body then set out the next steps in the reform process.

In the second session of the morning, Michael Scanlon, Secretary General of the Department of Health, and Niamh O'Donoghue, Secretary General of

the Department of Social Protection, discussed changes in the health sector and the Department of Social Protection respectively.

With almost 400 delegates in attendance, interesting discussions took place involving the audience and speakers during panel discussions.

Details of this and future events can be seen at: [www.per.gov.ie](http://www.per.gov.ie)



Left to Right: Mr PJ Fitzpatrick (Chair of Implementation Body), Mr Charles Collier, Ordnance Survey Ireland and Ms Geraldine Murphy, Ordnance Survey Ireland



Mr Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform



Delegates at the Conference



Mr Raymond Philpott and Ms Pauline Treanor from the Rotunda Hospital



Left to Right: Mr PJ Fitzpatrick (Chair of the Implementation Body), Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr Brendan Howlin, TD, Mr Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr Shay Cody, IMPACT



Ms Elaine Cassidy and Mr Richard Troy, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform



Mr Michael Scanlon, Secretary General, Department of Health and Ms Niamh O'Donoghue, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection



Left to Right: Ms Eilish Hardiman, National Paediatric Hospital Development Board, Mr Tim Duggan, CMOD, Ms Ginny Hanrahan, Health & Social Care Professionals Council

# New Online Portal for Public Services

A new portal which provides details of and access to over 300 public services that are available online was recently launched by the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform, Mr. Brendan Howlin T.D. The portal, [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie), provides a list of all Government websites and other information for citizens as well as more than 300 services which are provided online.

On launching the portal, developed by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Minister stated “The Government is committed to transforming the way in which services are delivered and to provide ease of access to public services. In this day and age, people

expect to be able to organise most of their affairs on the internet, and to be able to tailor those services to their needs, at a place and time that suits them. This portal is a one stop shop that allows people access to a broad range of services, both informational and transactional, and it provides a useful overview to people of the extensive amount of public services available online.”

The Minister added “The use of technology and moving to a more online focused Public Service offers us an excellent opportunity to radically rethink the delivery of services, and to maximise

our resources. It is essential that we continue to do more with less and at the same time, we must also ensure that services to the public are maintained and improved to the greatest extent possible.”



# New Family Law Services

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has also launched a new Databank website that provides comprehensive information on every aspect of Government expenditure over the years. Users can easily create tables and spreadsheets showing how spending on current, capital, or pay has evolved since 1994, whether for the whole of Government or for individual Departments, and the Databank even generates graphs automatically. This website is available on <http://databank.per.gov.ie/>

A joint project between the Legal Aid Board, the Family Mediation Service and the Courts Service providing integrated family law services on a single co-located site was recently launched by the Chief Justice. The initiative involves provision of in-house mediation and legal advice services in the Family Law Courts in Dolphin House.

The welfare of children is paramount in our family law courts. It is a key objective of this initiative to seek to engage parties in a mediation process prior to issuing court proceedings as,

in the majority of cases, issues arising from family breakdown are most likely to be best resolved through mutual agreement.

On site practitioners from the Family Mediation Service can advise parties as to the purpose of mediation and its advantages in the family law setting. This enables consenting parties to be fast-tracked by the Courts Service and access to on-site Legal Aid Board services. The main requirement is that the case relates to a custody and/or access and/or guardianship matter. This initiative

has brought three vital services under the same roof for the first time.

A welcome related development is a new section on the Courts Service website which is designed to help those interested in family law to find information about this most personal of legal areas. The public, family law lawyers, other professionals and lay litigants can access information on the topics which generate the bulk of business in family law across all the jurisdictions including links to necessary information and forms.

# Smart Schools

## Innovative use of ICT in education

A single teacher will be able to deliver Applied Maths lessons via video link to pupils in several second-level schools run by Meath VEC.

Meath VEC provides a centrally managed network for all technology and learning resources where all teachers and students have access to and can share the same materials.

Two schools in the network are already using the video-conferencing technology to deliver Chemistry lessons to pupils in classrooms 35km apart. From next September, students in the nine schools will be able to link into the same Applied Maths lessons, a subject which is currently not available in some of the schools. It is hoped to provide additional help to Leaving Certificate students in Maths, Physics, Chemistry via video conference (Lync) outside of school hours in a pilot student support programme.



Using this technology enables students in smaller schools to have more subject options available to them.

This centralised network also allows computers to be switched off automatically in the schools every evening, with an estimated saving of €10,000 in annual electricity costs.

Further use of the network for VOIP (voice over IP) could add additional savings of €20,000 or more.

Meath VEC also supports the use of laptops by students in many of its schools. To date, students in five of the Meath VEC schools have their own Tablet PC with textbooks loaded on them.

## Centralisation of Medical Card Processing

The most recent development in this initiative, came with the announcement by the HSE, that, as and from 1st July 2011, all new Medical Card applications and reviews will be dealt with by their central office in Finglas, Dublin.

The HSE's centralisation project involves the modernisation of medical card processing to improve the service to the public and reduce the associated administration and associated costs to the Executive. It should also bring about a greater consistency and transparency in the processing of applications.

Other developments in the health sector include:

- An on-line medical card application service launched in 2010. Since its introduction, the central site at Primary Care Reimbursement Services (PCRS) received more than 5,000 on-line applications each month.
- The development of a new website - [www.medicalcard.ie](http://www.medicalcard.ie) - which allows any individual who has applied for a medical card to the national office to view the status of their medical card application online.
- Medical card applicants who provide a mobile number are provided with SMS acknowledgement and application updates.
- All Local Health Offices now have full visibility of the national database to enable queries to be addressed locally.
- General Practitioners (GPs) have access to weekly updates of their panel listings – over 75% of GPs use this service.
- Ongoing development of systems integration with GPs and Pharmacists so that medical cardholders can have eligibility confirmed at point of service, to avoid undue delays.

## Sustainable Energy Initiative Monaghan VEC

As part of a key initiative aimed at delivering better value for money through sustainable methods, the design for County Monaghan VEC's New Education Campus incorporates both passive and active sustainable design features.

In cooperation with the Design Team and the Department of Education and Skills, County Monaghan VEC has defined its sustainable design priorities and these have been

incorporated within design which is currently out to tender.

Sustainable priorities such as the maximisation of natural daylight, natural ventilation, high standards of building fabric design and maximisation of solar gain to reduce plant heat-up periods are passive in nature, and are in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills Technical Guidance which reflects the overall sustainable approach to the project.

A key component of the design is the incorporation of central biomass boiler plant to augment the benefits of the passive sustainable design features. Detailed design studies indicate expected fuel costs savings in the order of 50% over conventional oil or LPG systems plus an associated reduction of approximately 450 Tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum.

County Monaghan VEC is the first VEC to embrace this proven technology on such a large scale within the Irish Educational Sector.



## Leadership and Change in Teagasc

Teagasc launched its new HR Strategy - the People, Leadership and Change Strategy (PLC Strategy) recently. Through the strategy, actions and implementation plans linked to people, leadership and change initiatives have been developed which will give Teagasc the greatest possible chance to realise the

ambitious plans as set out in the Teagasc Change Programme 2009 – 2013. The Change Programme will leave Teagasc as a smaller, leaner and fitter organisation, supporting science-based innovation in the agri-food sector and wider bio-economy to underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability.

Teagasc's commitment to the implementation of the Croke Park Agreement and to Public Service reform is demonstrated in the changes which have occurred within the organisation to date including a significant reduction in resources. Despite these changes, Teagasc has managed to achieve an increase in productivity through the commitment and hard work of its staff. This sentiment is echoed by Teagasc Director, Prof Gerry Boyle, who says that "the dedication of Teagasc staff to their clients and their industry is the driving force behind the continued high level of service delivery in the organisation, despite the challenges presented by the current economic difficulties".

The PLC Strategy sets a framework for driving these critical people, leadership and change management programmes.



Back row, left to right are: Dr Noel Cawley, Chairman, Teagasc; Mr PJ Fitzpatrick, Chairman, Implementation Body; Mr Eddie Molloy, Advance Organisation; Mr Alan Phelan, Head of HR, Teagasc. Front row, left to right: Ms Helen McInerney, RTE Broadcaster; Prof Gerry Boyle, Director, Teagasc; Ms Valerie Farrell, HR Manager, Teagasc.

## Procurement in Local Government

Local authorities are committed to maximising the potential savings in the area of public procurement as identified by the Review Group on Local Government Efficiency.

In this context, the County and City Managers Association (CCMA) has taken a view that the sector needs to develop a Public Procurement Strategy and a capacity at central level to lead its implementation. Each City and County Council has appointed an officer with specific responsibility for coordinating work in the area of procurement with procurement groups already established for the Western Region and the South Eastern Region.

At national level, the National Procurement Service (NPS) has established a Local Authority Liaison Network. There has also been extensive engagement between the CCMA and the NPS. A number of framework agreements have been prepared or will shortly be finalised by the NPS covering the areas of Energy, Mobile Phones, Fixed Voice Telephony, Stationary, Advertising, Office Equipment, Janitorial Services/Cleaning, Security, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Plant & Machinery, Managed Print Services, Legal Services and Fuels.

Measures are also being considered in relation to the delivery of expert training in the area of procurement for the local authority sector with a view to improving the professional procurement competence of the sector.

The challenge for the sector is to deliver further savings by implementing smart procurement policies at National, Regional and Local Level whilst also ensuring that local businesses and SMEs are not excluded from procurement process.

## Competition

Prize: Lumix Compact Digital Camera

Answer the following:

1. What year were the first Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Awards held?  
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2. What was the reduction in Public Service numbers during the first year of the Croke Park Agreement?  
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3. Who provided the opening address at the Conference on the "Croke Park Agreement – One Year On?"  
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4. What is the website address for the new online portal for Public Services?  
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5. When was the online medical card application service launched by the HSE?  
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**How to enter:**

Send your answers to [competition@per.gov.ie](mailto:competition@per.gov.ie). Send your hard copy entries to ONEGOV Newsletter, 7-9 Merrion Row, Dublin 2. The closing date for the receipt of entries is Friday 9th September 2011.

Name: -----

Address: -----

Telephone: -----

Email: -----



**OneGov issue 7 Winners:**

1st prize: Stephen Cox, Courts Service

2nd prize: Stephen Fallon, Department of Social Protection

3rd prize: Georgina Conboy, Department of Social Protection

# Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Awards 2012

*The Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Awards are organised as part of the Government's focus on Public Service Reform. One of the central aims of this agenda is to ensure that the citizen – the customer – is at the centre of the Public Service.*

The Awards were first launched in 2004 and are held every two years to recognise and reward examples of excellence in the delivery of public services and/or administration, by public servants.

The purpose of the Awards is to seek out improvements and innovative activities from the Public Service

Applications are invited from public servants who have initiated or designed one or more of the following:

- Improvement to services delivered to the citizen and business customers, including through engagement with customers;
- Innovative and creative activities, through flexibility, teamwork, cross-organisational co-operation and eGovernment;
- Increased effectiveness and efficiency, including better use of resources, business process improvement and shared services.

## Who can Apply?

Applications are invited in Irish or English, from all organisations within the Public Service. This includes organisations such as:

- Civil Service (Government Departments and Offices);
- Education Sector (Schools, VECs, Third Level Institutions, Bodies such as State Examinations Commission, etc.);
- Health Sector (HSE, Emergency Services, Public Hospitals, etc.);
- Justice Sector (Garda Síochána, Irish Prison Service; Courts Service, Probation Service, etc.);
- Local Government Sector (County and City Councils, Town Councils, etc.); or
- Other Public Service (Defence Forces, Utility Regulators, Non-Commercial State Bodies, etc.).

The above list is not exhaustive and you can confirm your eligibility by contacting the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (details below). All applications should ultimately be approved for entry by the head of the public body in question.

The application form is available to download at [www.per.gov.ie](http://www.per.gov.ie). The deadline for receipt of applications is Friday, 21st October, 2011.



**To request a hard copy of the application form, please contact the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform by:**

- e-mail [Awards2012@per.gov.ie](mailto:Awards2012@per.gov.ie)
- telephone 01-6045328 or
- write to **Natasha Cray** at:

**Department of Public Expenditure and Reform  
7-9 Merrion Row, Dublin 2**

A selection committee will be established to agree the specific assessment criteria and evaluate all applications received. This committee will have an independent chair and will include members with experience of the Public Service.

The Award recipients will be announced early in 2012. All 20 Award recipients will have an opportunity to present their projects in Dublin Castle in 2012, to coincide with the presentation of the Awards by the Taoiseach.

## ANY QUESTIONS?

For clarification on eligibility/suitability or for further information on any aspect of the Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Awards 2012, please contact Natasha Cray, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 7 - 9 Merrion Row, Dublin 2. Telephone: (01) 604 5328; email: [Awards2012@per.gov.ie](mailto:Awards2012@per.gov.ie)

**CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 21st October 2011**

