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Working together to meet the challenges ahead

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Although virtually everybody is facing hard times at some level, the work that public servants do can be a source of stability for the public. Whether our work involves providing much-needed payments, teaching children, putting out fires, administering schemes or helping the sick – among so many diverse roles – we are an important team at the centre of society. The people who rely on us include our families and friends. They also include ourselves: public servants are citizens too and, from time to time, we will need access to services provided by the State. That gives us an important insight: as customers, we know how we'd like to be treated. As service providers, we must tap into that understanding.

Our articles on pages 6 and 7 focus on the importance of putting ourselves in our customers' shoes. Some customers might need a little more help than others and we should be ready to support them respectfully and with dignity. It only takes one bad experience to tarnish the reputation of the team and the wider organisation. We must deal with customers courteously and professionally. That is what we are paid for and that is what we owe each other, as public service colleagues.

The Minister of State for Public Service Transformation, Mr. Dara Calleary, T.D., writes for us on pages 4 and 5. He stresses the importance of remaining flexible to the success of the public service transformation agenda. On that point, he notes that the results of the National Workplace Surveys indicate that workers are more willing than ever to change. That is a very positive and encouraging finding.

The establishment of the Public Service Agreement Implementation Body (page 3) marks an important progression in the transformation agenda. Likewise, the reform of the Top Level Appointments Committee and the establishment shortly of the Senior Public Service emphasise the importance of top-down commitment to change. The ongoing Organisational Review Programme (page 8) engages staff at all levels (and its latest report has recently been published). So it is clear that we are all – every single one of us – crucial to the success of the transformation agenda and central to the success of its focus: supporting the citizen.

The composition of the new Public Service Board, to be chaired by Minister of State Calleary, will be announced shortly and will feature in the next issue of OneGov, before Christmas.

Statements of Strategy 2011 - 2013

Civil Service Departments and relevant Offices are now required to prepare a revised Strategy Statement for 2011-2013. Revised guidelines for their preparation are available on www.onegov.ie. They direct Departments/Offices to take account of four broad priorities: economic and financial stability; accelerating the return to sustainable growth; transforming the Public Service; and strengthening Ireland's relationships, including North South co-operation, and within the EU and internationally.

They also recommend that Statements should not exceed 20 pages, and should be principally published and distributed electronically.

For further information and the revised guidelines, visit: www.onegov.ie/eng/STRATEGY_STATEMENTS/



Visit www.onegov.ie

BODY OF WORK

Implementation Body for the Croke Park Agreement

LAST JULY, the Government appointed Mr. P.J. Fitzpatrick as the independent chair of the Implementation Body for the Public Service Agreement (better known as the Croke Park Agreement). This Body is responsible for driving the implementation of the Agreement across the Public Service. The nominees to the Body from the Public Service management side are Ciarán Connolly and Brendan Duffy from the Department of Finance, and Philip Kelly of the Department of the Taoiseach. The nominees from the Public Services Committee of the ICTU are Shay Cody, Sheila Nunan, Patricia King, and Tom Geraghty.

The Implementation Body has an important role in driving forward the process of change and ensuring that any difficulties which may

“The Implementation Body has an important role in driving forward the process of change and ensuring that any difficulties which may be encountered are resolved in a fair and speedy manner.”

be encountered are resolved in a fair and speedy manner. It will review the implementation of the transformation agenda for each sector with the relevant management and unions.

In addition, the Body is responsible for the measurement and verification of the transformation agenda in the Agreement. In

this regard, it will be responsible for verifying savings derived from implementation of the Agreement and its sectoral components.

The Implementation Body is meeting regularly. In addition, the Chairman has met with the Secretaries General of all Government Departments and the General Secretaries of the Public Service unions, as well as a wide range of people in different sectors on a bilateral basis. The Implementation Body has also met with other key bodies in this area, including the Labour Relations Commission and the Labour Court.

Since its establishment, the Body has concentrated on the implementation of the Agreement, including putting in place strong structures at sectoral level to assist in this regard. Chairpersons have now been appointed to the sectoral bodies in Health (Pat Harvey) and Local Government (Dan Murphy) and arrangements for other sectors are being advanced.

It has also sought and received, from Public Service management in each sector, their action plans for the implementation of the Agreement. These Plans set out a clear agenda for change within each sector; they detail the specific actions it is proposed will be taken, the timescale for these, and the periods within which they will be achieved. Management will be engaging with staff representatives through the relevant fora on the proposals submitted to the Implementation Body. These Plans will develop in a dynamic way over the four year period of the Agreement, in the context of Government policy on budgetary and other matters. All Action Plans will be made available to the public.

The Government is determined that Public Service management will be proactive and ambitious in delivering on the full range of productivity and change measures envisaged in the Agreement, and accepted as necessary by all parties to it. Strong oversight by the Implementation Body is an important and crucial factor in this. In the meantime, significant work on the transformation programme is ongoing in all sectors and savings continue to be delivered against a background of falling numbers.



P.J. Fitzpatrick, Chair of the Implementation Body

Embracing Change

Findings of the NESDO National Workplace Surveys

*By Dara Calleary, T.D.,
Minister of State for Public
Service Transformation and
Labour Affairs.*

IRISH WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS in the public and private sectors will find much of interest in the findings of the recently published National Workplace Surveys. While the Surveys reflect the full impact of the recession, they also show that:

- workers are more willing to change than ever;
- workers are more committed to their jobs and the organisations in which they work; and
- workers are ready to take on more responsibilities and are open to embracing new skills and new technologies.

However, a cautionary note must be entered – the Survey findings also demonstrate evidence of inertia, reduced morale and considerable frustration among workers in sectors that have been hit hardest by the economic downturn. The negative effects of staff cuts, pay cuts and downsizing on employee morale is also in evidence.

Never has the need for workplace innovation and business process re-engineering been greater – both in the public and private sectors – and, ironically, never have our workers been under as much pressure – both personal and professional – as they are in the current climate. The challenge for public and private sector employers is, therefore, to harness the resilience, commitment and creativity of their workforce through collaborative working practices in order to translate ideas into valuable processes, products and services.

Having surveyed over 5,000 employees and over 3,000 employers in the public and private sectors in mid 2009, the *National Workplace Surveys 2009* detail the actual experiences and stories of Irish workers and employers in this unique and difficult time in our history.





The findings are therefore critical in framing appropriate responses to the current crisis facing our country and in countering any negative effects on productivity and performance.

Workplaces in recession

It has to be acknowledged that the effects of the downturn are pervasive. The impact is being felt in all sectors of the economy and the public sector is not immune from the harshest of these effects. Volumes of business have decreased substantially in the private sector, as have profits. Access to credit is an issue and, compared to 2003, there is a big increase in the numbers who say that their business prospects are bad. Public service employers are also feeling the impact of the recession. They are feeling under increased pressure as they grapple with uncertainty about the future, budgetary restraints and recruitment restrictions.

For employees, the Surveys record reductions in staff numbers, a decline in hourly pay for many employees and increased perceptions of job insecurity. The negative impact of staff cuts and company re-organisation is also reflected in reduced morale among workers in these organisations. This negative effect must be addressed by introducing practices which increase the well-being of workers – practices such as team-building and collaborative working.

Public Service Transformation

The results of the Surveys underline how difficult the past couple of years have been for public sector workers and managers. Reductions in staff numbers, pay cuts and even increased perceptions of job insecurity have impacted severely on public sector workers and made the job of public sector

“Senior managers and employees are highly committed to change and the achievement of improved performance.”

managers extremely difficult. The negative impact of staff and budget cuts is also reflected in reduced morale among public sector workers. That said, however, it is heartening to note in the Survey findings that senior managers and employees are highly committed to change and the achievement of improved performance. In short, the public service is ripe and ready for transformation.

The implementation of the Croke Park Agreement coupled with the Government’s Transforming Public Services programme requires commitment, energy, and flexibility on behalf of all in the Public Service. We have to make urgent progress towards our shared vision of a Public Service which is leaner, more effective, and more focussed on the needs of citizens. In line with the Croke Park Agreement, public servants will have to change, redeploy, retrain, take on more responsibility, adopt new work practices, and work across professional, technical and sectoral boundaries.

The Implementation Body, chaired by P.J. Fitzpatrick, has been given a key role in driving forward the transformation process and facilitating the resolution of any difficulties which may be encountered. The Government has instructed senior management across the entire Public Service to accord the highest possible priority to working with the Implementation Body and ensuring that the agenda for change set out in the Agreement is achieved.

The valuable work already carried out by the Implementation Body in the short time since its establishment is to be welcomed. During September, the Implementation Body wrote to Secretaries General asking them to submit their Action Plans for effecting the changes set out in the relevant sectoral agendas contained in the Agreement. Responses were subsequently received from all Sectors, Departments and Offices, and are being reviewed by the Implementation Body. At the same time, significant work on the transformation programme is ongoing.

I am confident that the implementation of these Action Plans will deliver the type of changes which are required to secure cost savings, minimise the impacts of current resource constraints on service quality and availability, and improve services through the use of technology and other means.

In conclusion, the National Workplace Surveys suggest that if we tap into the creativity of our workers, their increased willingness to change, and their commitment to innovation, we can create a strong platform on which to build our national recovery. This will necessarily require managers in both the private and public sectors to employ workplace practices which improve the motivation and well-being of their employees as well as creating a positive climate for change and innovation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The National Workplace Surveys 2009 are available to download on www.nesdo.ie

For the People

The importance of remaining customer focused

By Bryan Andrews, Chief Executive, Public Appointments Service
& Chair of the QCS Officers' Network

YOU DON'T NEED me to tell you that these are very challenging times for all of us who work in the Public Service. Our image, and indeed the brand of the Public Service, has taken some knocks over the past number of years and we are struggling to regain our credibility with the citizen. As the media lurches on a daily basis from one seemingly negative story to the next, it is as if the Public Service has become the national soap opera for the entertainment of all.

In my role as Chair of the Customer Service Officers' Network (QCSON), I work with many fine people from across Government Departments and Offices, whose commitment to excellence and focus on the customer are inspiring. Through our network, we share experience and best practice and generate new and important ideas for improving our services. There is a real willingness, and this is borne out by the initiatives acknowledged through the Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Awards, to mobilise all of our efforts for the improvement of services from the perspective of the citizen.

I know, of course, that these people on the network are representative of the sterling work going on in many organisations and that there are many more people grafting at the coalface. The experience of many citizens, as consistently borne out through the results of customer satisfaction surveys, is very positive in relation to the empathy, courtesy and knowledge displayed by frontline staff in their dealings on a day to day basis. We need, however, to ensure that our services are fit for purpose and that staff in frontline positions continue to receive the necessary training and management support so that the "moment of truth" for each citizen is one of efficiency and effectiveness.

Management and colleagues at all levels of the organisation have vital roles to play in our drive for more effective citizen centric services and the training we deliver must be supportive and relevant. The QCSON has consistently

given careful consideration to the subject of customer service training and a recent seminar and workshop event in Dublin Castle provided a platform to examine this issue in some depth. A useful working document on making customer service training meaningful emerged from the event and is the basis for ongoing discussion between the TPS Programme Office and the CSTDC (Civil Service Training & Development Centre) on the way forward. Keep an eye on these pages for updates on developments on that front.

"If we are to regain our credibility with the citizen then now more than ever, we public servants must ensure that we put ourselves in our customers' shoes, see things from their perspective and use the opportunity of that "moment of truth" to enhance the image of our services."

If we are to regain our credibility with the citizen then now more than ever, we public servants must ensure that we put ourselves in our customers' shoes, see things from their perspective and use the opportunity of that "moment of truth" to enhance the image of our services. We should ask ourselves if we are making life more difficult than it needs to be for the citizen. Could we, for example, simplify processes and improve things not only for our customers but for ourselves and our colleagues? The article on the facing page, "Simply put", presents much food for thought in relation to our 'long winded, complex style of writing' that passes as our effort to communicate with the citizen.

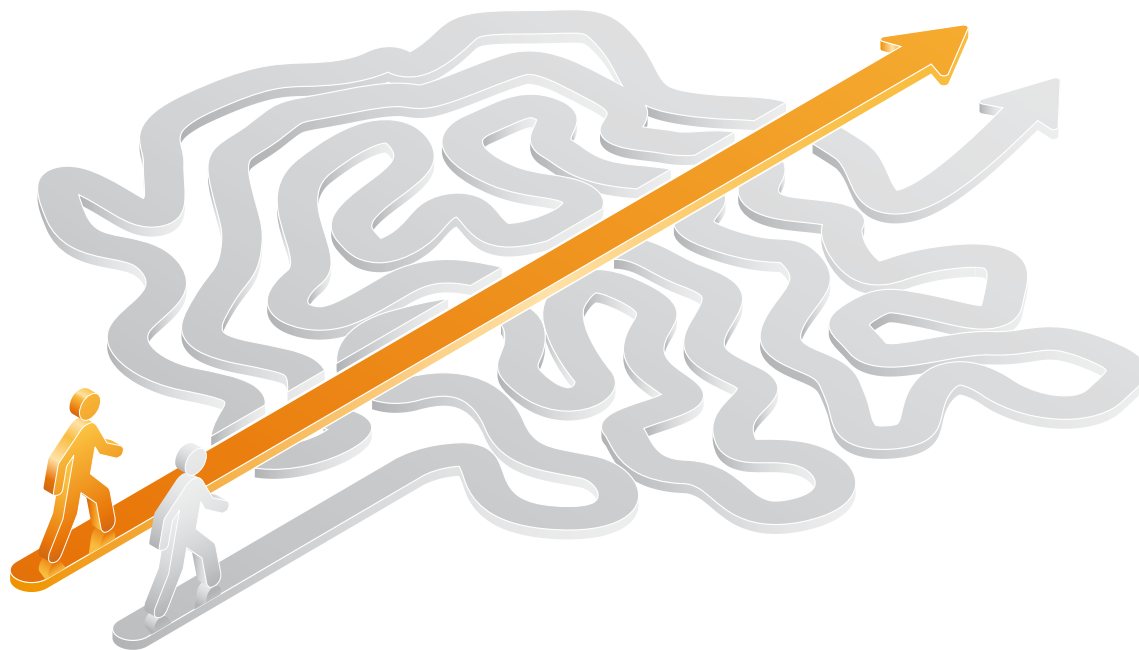
One thing I must stress is that this citizen-centred ethos is not just the responsibility of working groups, committees, networks or individual QCS officers. It is a priority for

all of us – from the most senior management right through every grade and it should be the end purpose of all our efforts in the delivery of government. It is through making this a key focus that we can restore our pride in what we do and regain the credibility of the citizen for the role and value of public services in society today.



Simply put

Clear, direct language makes good business sense



RECENTLY, a European politician broke into fits of giggles in the middle of a speech about a bill to regulate imports of cured meats. A clip of his parliamentary address has become something of an internet hit. And the cause of the laughter? The minister cracked up as he read a stream of unintelligible bureaucratic language in his script. We can't pretend that we're immune to that kind of language here.

Sometimes, it seems that our bureaucratic culture almost *encourages* poor writing. How many of us are wedded to a long-winded, complex style of writing, perhaps mistaken in the belief that it is expected? How many of us look at existing documents and copy those styles? Unfortunately, this means that people – who ordinarily communicate very well – can pick up the bad writing habits of others. Similarly, some people hold on to the writing styles they developed at college or previous jobs, where impressive vocabulary and hefty word-counts seemed desirable. In a customer-oriented business environment, however, short and clear documents make life much easier. And yet – *frustratingly* – some people regard writing simply as “dumbing down”.

According to research, 1 in 10 children leave our primary school system with a literacy difficulty (this rises to 3 in 10 in disadvantaged areas). Research also shows that half the adult

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population have literacy and/or numeracy difficulties in facing day-to-day activities. That is a huge chunk of our customer base.

So, the information we put together for our customers – whether on websites or notice-board memos – must be easy to understand. The forms we design should be clear and to the point. If we have to constantly explain them to our customers, we're adding to their frustration and our own workload.

NALA (the National Adult Literacy Association) recently launched “simplyput.ie” – a useful web resource for anyone who wants to make their writing more accessible. Providing a range of helpful tips and suggestions, it recommends that we think of the person we are writing to and why we are writing. The site contains helpful checklists

for documents and forms, and some simple alternatives for the kinds of unhelpful phrases we use too often.

A number of Departments and Offices are using NALA's Plain English workshops to support staff who write for their customers. The challenge for everyone is to maintain those skills and to use them to help develop a clear writing culture back in the office. It is important, however, that managers who have not taken the training avoid the temptation to rewrite the new, clearer style back into the more traditional “management-speak”.

Plain language is an important customer service issue. Confusing, unhelpful language has no place in the Public Service. Most of us are so used to our own writing style and so familiar with our jargon, that we have no idea why others find our documents difficult to read and understand. The next time you pick up a form or document, look hard to see how it could be made simpler and more user-friendly. It is not “dumbing down” – it is wising up.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit www.nala.ie or www.simplyput.ie

Fit for purpose

Taoiseach publishes the second ORP report



Michael Scanlan, Secretary General, Department of Health and Children, at the ORP seminar in Farmleigh on 21st October.

ON MONDAY, 4th October, the Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowen, T.D., published the *Second Report of the Organisational Review Programme*.

Review

The ORP was established to review the capacities of Government organisations in three key areas: strategy; managing delivery; and evaluation. Within each of these areas, 10 attributes of organisational practice and behaviour are comprehensively explored.

The attributes include, for example, an examination of the capacity of leadership, internally and externally, whether a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation permeates the organisation, how well resources like HR and ICT are managed, whether responsive customer service is an organisational strength, and if performance is monitored and measured. The core aim of the ORP is to ensure that Government Departments and major Offices are fit for purpose in terms of the challenges they face.

It is important to note that the ORP reviews do not make any recommendations as to the statutory remit of organisations; this is a matter that is more appropriately dealt with at political level. Equally, the reviews are undertaken on a "resource neutral" basis, recognising that Departments and Offices rarely have all the resources they believe

necessary to fulfill their mandates. However, identification of areas where there are significant issues between commitments and available resources are not precluded. Regarding the conduct of the ORP reviews, they are carried out by a Team comprised of civil servants, with consultants being used solely for the administration of staff surveys and the analysis of the results. This provides significant value-added. As civil servants, the Team has a good understanding of public service organisations, their cultures and their practices and, in that way, support and buy-in to the process by management and staff is promoted and strengthened.

Second report

The *Second Report of the Organisational Review Programme* contains the findings of reviews of the Department of Health and Children, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Central Statistics Office, and the Property Registration Authority. It also includes follow-up Action Plans prepared by the management of each of these organisations.

On 4th October, the Taoiseach noted that "while the report identifies good practice in a number of areas, for example customer service and utilisation of ICT, it also identifies particular challenges in human resource management and performance evaluation". In these challenging times, Departments and Offices need consciously to make more

effective use of resources (both people and technology) to enhance productivity levels. The Report highlights that there is significant potential for new efficiencies to be gained. The Taoiseach indicated that he will ask the Public Service Board, which is to be appointed shortly, to advise him on of a robust "look back" process to ensure that the specific commitments made by organisations in their Action Plans are fully delivered.

Seminar

A very well attended seminar on the second report was held in Farmleigh House on 21st October. Presenters included the Mr. Michael Scanlan, Secretary General, Department of Health and Children, Mr. Liam Ryan, Head of ICT, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, and Dr. Richard Boyle, Institute of Public Administration. Overall, there were very open and constructive exchanges on the ORP process generally and on the second report specifically.

The next issue of OneGov Newsletter - in December - will feature an external perspective of the ORP process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the Organisational Review Programme is available at www.orp.ie

Have your say

Staff participation in ORP workshops

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION is an important part of the Organisational Review Programme (ORP). Those stakeholders include a very important group of people: the staff.

In every organisation that is reviewed, staff at all levels are invited to express their views on how business is done. The ORP workshops provide a secure and anonymous forum that allows people to express more candid opinions than they might otherwise feel comfortable doing. The open and honest nature of these structured workshops is central to the success of the organisational reviews and this feedback helps to complete the overall picture of an organisation's performance.

So, when your organisation is being reviewed, remember to make your voice heard by attending and participating at these workshops. It's important.

Healthy developments

New programmes by the HSE's Quality & Clinical Care Directorate

THE HSE's Quality and Clinical Care Directorate has been established to help improve patient care throughout the health system. The Directorate is charged with defining how health services are delivered, measured and resourced.

As part of the Directorate's work, a total of 20 Clinical Programmes have been established over recent months. The programmes are defining the ideal care for patients so that it can be implemented across the country. Specifically, they are focusing on solutions which will improve patient care, remove waiting lists and save money. The

areas targeted for improvements include; Primary Care, Out Patients, Emergency Services, Surgery and Chronic Disease.

Each of the programmes is led by a team of national experts, selected by their peers through the academic colleges and professional bodies. The teams include consultant, GP, nursing and allied health professional, management, and regional representatives, who bring together experience and expertise from services around the country. The programmes are currently in the planning phase with implementation due to commence in early 2011.

The programmes are bringing a systematic approach to changes in how services are delivered to improve outcomes for patients.

The Quality and Clinical Care Directorate is also introducing clinical governance to ensure that patients get the right treatment. It is establishing a national clinical audit programme and developing guidelines to support service use involvement in the health services. These standards will be measured and audited to ensure that they are delivered across the system.

Cool for CAT

Revenue and the Courts Service collaborate on service improvements

CAPITAL ACQUISITIONS TAX – or "CAT" – includes both gift tax and inheritance tax. A joint initiative between the Courts Service and the Revenue Commissioners saw important changes to the legislation, operation and administration of Probate and CAT take place this year. These changes have led to greater efficiencies and improved services for customers.

CAT administrative processes have been radically overhauled to simplify the process for the citizen. The pay-and-file date is now in line with the other self assessed taxes: 31st October. The more complicated returns can now be filed electronically through the Revenue's Online System (ROS). Changes to the process have also allowed Revenue to dispense with a complex and elaborate clearance system.

Before introducing the changes, Revenue and the Courts Service hosted a nationwide series of eleven information seminars. The events were attended by over 1,800 people, who had the opportunity to raise questions and concerns. The seminars were very successful,

with the proposed changes receiving widespread support.

The Benefits

The project has delivered immediate benefits. Up to 75% of CAT-related documentation has been eliminated, freeing up customer service staff. Procedural arrangements between the Probate Office and Revenue have also been streamlined.

Revenue, which has seen greater use of ROS, has also integrated its CAT compliance and audit programmes into its overall risk evaluation and analysis system.

These changes have already met with a positive response, with customers and agents filing CAT returns online well in advance of the 31st October deadline.

"Up to 75% of CAT-related documentation has been eliminated, freeing up customer service staff. Procedural arrangements between the Probate Office and Revenue have also been streamlined."



Think BIG for small business

Initiative to improve SME access to public contracts

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT is an essential element of delivering better public services in Ireland. The State purchases billions of Euros worth of goods and services each year and it is important that the procurement process is transparent, provides value for money and that the playing field is level for smaller businesses wishing to compete for contracts.

Underlining the Government's commitment in this area, Department of Finance Circular 10/10: *Facilitating SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) Participation in Public Procurement* was published in August. The central message from this Circular is that public bodies are required to run their tendering processes for public contracts in a manner that facilitates increased participation by SMEs, while continuing to ensure that all public sector purchasing is carried out in a manner that is legal, transparent and secures optimal value for money.

The new guidance from the Department of Finance sets out policy to facilitate SMEs in competing for public contracts and focuses on further opening up opportunities to bid for State business; simplifying and streamlining the public procurement process; and reducing the administrative burden on businesses who want to tender.

The guidelines outline measures such as the use of frameworks that enable SME participation, dividing contracts in smaller lots where feasible, appropriate advertising, possibilities for innovation etc. They also highlight practices that are to be avoided because they can unjustifiably hinder small businesses in competing for public contracts.

Of course, procurement is a complex and sensitive process. A range of practical supports are available to organisations involved in procurement. The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Innovation's document *Buying Innovation: The 10 Step Guide to SMART Procurement and SME Access to Public*

Contracts is a handbook designed to support and inform those officials right across the public sector who are engaged in public procurement of goods and services. It contains practical steps to encourage innovation in procurement for the State and to increase access to public contracts for SMEs.

These various strands represent an overarching initiative to revolutionise public procurement for both the buyer and the seller. The aim is to stimulate innovative business activity in Ireland, while improving the

purchase, delivery and efficiency of public sector goods and services. It is important to ensure a level playing field for all companies tendering for public contracts.

The public sector is a very important market for small and medium-sized businesses – especially in the current environment. Also, increasing the numbers of SMEs tendering for public contracts should help increase competition. This, in turn, should lead to greater efficiencies and improved value for money for contracting authorities.



WEB RESOURCES

The Circular discussed in this article can be downloaded at www.etenders.gov.ie.

The National Procurement Service web page also provides a useful information and guidance on the procurement process. The page can be accessed through the "Our Business Units" section of the OPW website: www.opw.ie.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Innovation's *Buying Innovation: The 10 Step Guide to SMART Procurement and SME Access to Public Contracts* can be found at www.deti.ie/publications

Transforming Public Services – Seminars & Conferences

IN RECENT MONTHS, the TPS Programme Office has organised a series of seminars and conferences on key aspects of the TPS agenda. These events – provided free of charge – have addressed issues such as business process improvement, public procurement and making customer service training meaningful.

The latest such event was The HR Challenge – a conference on the challenges and opportunities facing the Public Service – held in Dublin Castle on Thursday 14th October. Speakers from across the Public Service took part, including: Philip Kelly, Department of the Taoiseach; Ciarán Connolly, Department of Finance; Sean Aylward, Department of Justice and Law Reform; Sean McGrath, HSE; Pat Burke, Department of Education and Skills; and Paul Dunne, Local Government Management Agency.

There was huge interest in this conference, which focused on the need to maintain and improve service standards in the current economic environment, while also implementing change in organisations across the Public Service. The issues discussed were all the more pertinent in the general context of the TPS Programme and, more specifically, the Croke Park Agreement. This event provided delegates with a range of information and insights that will be important in this period of significant change in the Irish Public Service.

Further TPS events to take place in the coming months include seminars on Business Process Improvement and eGovernment.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Other events on key issues are planned for the coming months. Details will be published in forthcoming coming issues of OneGov Newsletter, and on the Programme Office website – www.onegov.ie. If you have any suggestions for future TPS events, please contact the TPS Programme Office, Department of the Taoiseach.

COMPETITION

1st prize: iPod Touch
2nd and 3rd prizes: iPod Nano

Answer the following:

1. When did the recent TPS conference on “The HR Challenge” take place?
.....
2. What is the new pay-and-file date for Capital Acquisitions Tax?
.....
3. What period will be covered by the new Statements of Strategy?
.....
4. Name the Chair of the Implementation Body for the Croke Park Agreement.
.....
5. Which new website was set up by NALA to help organisations make their writing more accessible?
.....
6. When was the Second Report of the *Organisational Review Programme* published?
.....

How to enter: Send your answers to competition@taoiseach.gov.ie. Send your hard-copy entries to ONEGOV Newsletter, TPS Programme Office, Department of the Taoiseach, Dublin 2. The closing date for the receipt of entries is Friday, 26 November 2010.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

OneGov issue 3 Winners:

- 1st prize: Errill Fox, Department of Justice
- 2nd prize: Thomas McDonnell, Office of the Revenue Commissioners
- 3rd prize: Bernadette Fearon, Department of Health & Children

OneGov issue 4 Winners:

- 1st prize: Rosemarie O'Regan, Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry
- 2nd prize: Nason Fallon, Department of the Taoiseach
- 3rd prize: John Hickey, Office of the Revenue Commissioners



Courtesy of Apple

Making *moves*

The redeployment of public servants to priority areas

Maximising resources

Our public finance situation is such that we must absolutely maximise the use of scarce resources – including human resources. The Public Service needs flexibility in matching staffing resources to priority areas through redeployment. The targeted reduction in Public Service numbers over the coming years makes effective redeployment arrangements all the more important.

Priorities

Redeployment will allow staff to be moved from activities of lesser priority (or which have been rationalised, reconfigured, or restructured) to areas of greater need. This is necessary to sustain the ongoing delivery of services.

The redeployment arrangements for each sector take account of that sector's specific concerns. Across the board, redeployment will take precedence over recruitment, transfers and promotions except, for instance, where special skills are required.

Redeployment opportunities will generally be sought firstly within the individual organisation, then within its relevant sector (e.g. the Civil Service; or another Local Authority). If this is not possible, then redeployment between sectors will be considered. Also, monitoring arrangements will be put in place in each sector.

Where surplus posts are identified (e.g. where an activity or programme has finished) volunteers to redeploy will be sought. If there are too few volunteers, the “Last In, First Out” principle will generally apply. The Public Appointments Service (PAS) will have a role in operating Resource Panels of staff available for redeployment. These panels will be used to fill priority posts.

The sectoral arrangements all have very similar provisions in relation to geographic mobility. In general, the redeployment of a member of staff may be to another post in the same organisation or sector within 45km of

work or home, whichever is the shorter. Account will be taken of a reasonable daily commute. Where no suitable post is available, options will be sought in other areas of the Public Service, initially within the same distance.

Redeployment is crucial to deal with prioritisation of scarce resources and the consequences of reorganisation of services. In the case of the Civil Service, the Minister for Finance can redeploy civil servants to meet priority needs – this includes “levies” of staff where necessary. Where functions are transferred within or between areas of the Civil or Public Service, staff associated

with those functions will normally transfer, as needed. Circular 08/2010 on Redeployment deals with these issues in more detail, and can be seen on the Department of Finance website – www.finance.gov.ie

Check it out

The redeployment arrangements account for a significant proportion of the text of the Croke Park Agreement (or the *Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014*, to give it its proper title). Naturally, it would be virtually impossible to do it justice in one article. The full text of the agreement is available online and is definitely worth a read. Visit www.onegov.ie to download the document.

