Minutes of meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, at 2.00pm on 23rd June 2025

Present (Board): Mr. Tom Moran (Chairperson), Ms. Margaret McCabe, Ms. Mary Connaughton, Mr. Colin Menton, Ms. Valerie Lawlor, Ms. Fiona Quinn*.

Ms. Catherine Dobbins (Secretary).

Apologies: Ms. Sinead Burns, Ms. Anne Marie Hoey.

**Attended virtually*

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Reports for the Board

The Board noted that they had received the CEO's Report, the Operational Report, the Super10 Report and the Report on Risk Management (in addition to the supporting documentation).

The CEO informed the Board that there is a continued focus on delivery times from request to assignment for General Grades and this was 50% for Q1; noting that the median time to fill general grade posts was 9.1 weeks, with TCO at 4.5 weeks. The Board noted that this was falling back and it was agreed that it required ongoing focus.

The CEO noted that delivery of other recruitment campaigns was at 82% for Q1 (target 85%), with all recruitment areas working towards achieving this target (Local Government & P&T currently above target), with median delivery duration of 11.3 weeks. The main reasons for delays continue to be the availability of client nominees or external experts.

The CEO noted that the Performance Sub-Group of the Executive Team continue to meet to drive improvements in KPIs and remove barriers to improvements.

It was noted that a total of 70 competitions have gone live on Oleeo, and one of those first competitions, advertised by Medical Consultants, has been successfully completed and the selected candidate is currently in clearance. The CEO informed the Board that there are still some aspects of the process which have not moved to Oleeo (such as Board Member payments) but that all parts of the recruitment process will be on Oleeo once we are sure that the functionality has been adequately tested.

The CEO informed the Board that the Garda Trainee competition, which launched in February 2025, is drawing to a close, with 3,000 candidates invited to interview, and up to 23 interview boards each day. She noted that 20 of those candidates who were successful at interview in April/May were included in the most recent intake, noting that this turnaround has never been possible previously. She informed the Board that the Clearance units within publicjobs cleared all candidates in a short space of time, which is a hugely significant piece of work, and will ensure that names can be sent over to AGS as quickly as possible. She also noted that this has had a knock-on effect on garda vetting for other recruitment campaigns with delays seen. The Board noted that there have been learnings from this campaign, and a review would be conducted before the next campaign in September.

The Board welcomed the two recent awards for the '*Passion to Profession'* talent attraction campaign and the Capability Framework and congratulated the teams involved.

The Board had a discussion around the apparent increase in clients doing their own recruitment and had a discussion around timelines and quality. It was agreed that the CEO would discuss this with some relevant Secretary Generals, and it was also agreed that it would be reviewed by DPER. The Board agreed to discuss this topic in more detail once additional information was received and would have a discussion around the level of service being delivered and expected by clients. It was noted that it is a very competitive recruitment market, and the quality of candidates may be declining due to this factor. It was noted that the CSMB People Management Group might have a view on this in relation to the strategic implications for civil service recruitment.

It was noted that the activity levels are down in most areas of recruitment, that additional resources have been allocated to implement Oleeo and there have been improvements in delivery times. The CEO updated the Board on the organisation restructure which is underway. It was agreed that activity and staffing levels will form part of the discussion in relation to client retention and how best to use capacity to deliver for clients.

The Board discussed the current PO campaign which will attempt to achieve better skills match, and an update was provided on a recent legal case which is following on from a Protected Disclosure on which the Board had been previously briefed.

<u>Financial Report</u>
The Board acknowledged the Financial Report and the CEO informed the Board that there are issues with A1 funding as it will not meet the cost of staff despite the staff numbers being well below sanctioned numbers. It was agreed that the Board will receive an update from the Head of Finance on this area at the next meeting.

<u>Risk Reports</u>
The Board acknowledged the Risk Report which had been provided with the Board papers. It was agreed that client retention risk would be increased.

Key findings from Red C Market Awareness Research

Aine Gallagher and RedC representatives attended the meeting to present to the Board on this research, discussing both the qualitative and quantitative research. The Board noted the importance of operationalising the findings from this research and that there is capacity to increase awareness further. It was noted that there would be further research conducted in 2026 which would focus in more detail on some of the findings from this research.

The Board discussed the research and findings. It was noted that the level of awareness of publicjobs is low despite the significant increase achieved. The Board discussed whether the attraction factors differ across demographics and career stage. It was noted that the demand for flexibility is high across all cohorts. The Board acknowledged that there were key areas identified where the public service could better sell what it offers to potential candidates. It was noted that this research has identified key metrics for our new strategy and the importance of communications at all stages of the candidate journey and reviewing all aspects of this journey. It was also noted that there is a need to review how we support private sector workers to compete effectively in our recruitment process.

It was agreed that the Board will receive an update on identified actions from this research at the next meeting.

Update on the Audit Committee

Mary Connaughton provided an update on the Audit Committee meeting held last week. She noted the very positive CPSA Compliance Report with only one low level finding and substantial assurance received. It was noted that the Audit Committee welcomed the review of actions from the previous such audit which demonstrated all of the recommendations had been implemented. The Board noted that previous recommendations from other audits are being implemented, with a delay in asset management recommendations which are now progressing. The Board noted that the Audit Committee had received an informative update on Oleeo implementation and a briefing on areas identified in their Skills Matrix.

Nova Project Update

The Nova team attended to provide an update to the Board on this key strategic project. Stephen Buckley provided an update on the project governance matters and the move from implementation phase to business as usual. The Board noted the green RAG status received from the External Advisory Committee. The team assured the Board that support will still be provided for the roll out of larger campaigns on Oleeo. Ciaran Oman updated the Board on the number of campaigns on Oleeo and noted that no difficulties have arisen and candidates seem to have had a positive experience. He also provided on update on the plans for larger volume campaigns. It was noted that STAR is still operational and that the organisation is working to a timeline of Q1 2026 to decommission STAR. The Board noted that the Executive Team are reviewing the decommissioning plans in detail and any risks or costs involved in this stage.

Development of New Strategy

The Strategy Development Team (Rosemarie O'Mahony, Michelle Noone, Stephen Buckley and Catherine Dobbins) attended to discuss the updated draft with the Board (which had been emailed in advance of the meeting).

The Board agreed the new strapline and welcomed the updated strategy and noted that their feedback had been incorporated into this draft. It was agreed to review all of the commitments under each key area to ensure the order was appropriate. It was noted that there may be some additional objectives needed under the candidate area. The Board welcomed that timeliness and delivery continue to be central to the Strategy and agreed it was a good strategy. The Board noted that KPIs are in development and design has yet to be incorporated. The Board agreed that clients need to see their needs reflected in the KPIs. It was agreed that the version with the KPIs and the redesign would be issued to the Board.

Annual Report

The Board agreed the annual report; it was noted that any further feedback can be provided over the next three weeks.

AOB

It was noted that the date for the next meeting will have to be changed. The Chair will provide some suitable dates for circulation.

It was noted that five Board Members had completed the survey and that it was open until Friday for the remaining members to complete it.

The CEO informed the Board that she plans to retire at the end of the year. The Board congratulated Margaret and agreed that she had done a very good job in her time in the role. It was noted that the CEO vacancy would be advertised in the coming months and the Job Specification would be discussed with the Chair. She informed the Board that the Executive Team and the DPER Secretary General have already been informed and she will inform staff shortly.