

Minutes of meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, at 2.00pm on 8th May 2025

Present (Board): Mr. Tom Moran (Chairperson), Ms. Margaret McCabe, Ms. Mary Connaughton, Mr. Colin Menton, Ms. Valerie Lawlor, Ms. Sinead Burns, Ms. Anne Marie Hoey, Ms. Fiona Quinn*, Ms. Yvonne Cooke*.

Ms. Catherine Dobbins (Secretary).

**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 59% for Q1 but the organisation wishes to seek further improvements in this; noting that the median time to fill general grade posts was 8.1 weeks, with TCO at 3.9 weeks.

The CEO noted that the delivery of other recruitment campaigns was at 75% within target for Q1 (target 85%); she noted that all recruitment areas are working towards achieving this target (with TLAC, Local Government & P&T all above target) and the median delivery duration was 11.9 weeks. She informed the Board that the main reasons for delays continue to be the availability of client nominees or external experts; the Board noted that it can be particularly difficult to schedule around the availability of key specialists for campaigns where the field of potential specialists is limited.

The Board welcomed the focus on TLAC delivery and noted that there has been no negative feedback in relation to this area of delivery. The Board noted the increased demands on those at Secretary General level to service these Boards and acknowledged that it may be necessary at times to use those at Deputy Secretary level on some such Boards, particularly at preliminary interview stage.

The Board noted the drop in demand for Medical Consultants and acknowledged the need to focus on timelines with the decrease in demand.

The Board noted that a Performance Sub-Group of the Executive Team has been established to drive improvements in KPIs and remove barriers to improvements. The Board also noted that the Management Board has now been renamed as the Executive Team.

The Board noted the updates on WAM, OWL and the T&R Internship. The CEO updated the Board on the planned ED&I Advisory Board meeting on 13th May and actioning the Reasonable Accommodations (RA) blueprint report, including the working group established with its first priority of assessing the feasibility of an RA passport. The Board noted that changes to the Equality Monitoring questions have been approved by the Executive Team and the updated questions are now being used for Oleeo campaigns. The Board welcomed the news that Inclusio has selected publicjobs to receive their Excellence in DEI Award, which recognises leading organisations committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and celebrates outstanding leadership in fostering an inclusive culture.

The CEO updated the Board on the Red C Research & Marketing Ltd nationally representative market research about publicjobs brand awareness, as a follow-on to the brand refresh and talent attraction campaigns in 2024; she noted that the report is due shortly.

The CEO also provided an update on Phase II of Capacity Review – Benchmarking; she noted that Indecon gave a preliminary presentation to the Executive Team in April with the full report due to be discussed in May; it will then be circulated to the Board and DPENDR.

The Board noted that Indecon have been procured to carry out the Board Evaluation (as set out in the Risk Report) and they will be contacted in relation to engagement with this review.

The CEO updated the Board on her recent meeting with the Revenue Commissioners, aimed at piloting a strategic partnership approach; she informed the Board that a similar engagement may take place with the Department of Social Protection. She also informed the Board that there is engagement with the Department of Defence in relation to their potential recruitment needs. The Board agreed that as the volume of recruitment is down it is timely to reach out in relation to supporting other public service recruitment. The Board agreed that public service bodies should be using publicjobs where possible as the organisation has the facilities, brand, systems and professional expertise needed; the Board noted that the improving metrics around delivery would support this. The Board also noted that the partnership model has worked well with the HSE.

Financial Report

The Board acknowledged the Financial Report and the CEO informed the Board that there are no financial issues to date.

Risk Reports

The Board acknowledged the Risk Report which had been provided with the Board papers. The Board discussed the Oleeo risk in terms of dependence on them and noted the measures implemented to reduce this risk; the Board discussed the potential impact of any decision in relation to UK data processors and welcomed the plans by Oleeo to store data in the EU. The Board agreed that it would be helpful to include the previous risk rating in addition to the increasing/decreasing/static flag on the Corporate Risk Register.

The Board noted the Internal Control Report and agreed that it would be useful to use more bullets where numerous issues are arising in place of text. It was agreed that this would be amended for the 2025 Report.

Update on the Audit Committee / Presentation of the Audit Committee Annual Report

Kevin Smyth, Chair of the Audit Committee attended the meeting to present the Annual Report. He informed the Board that the Audit Committee are happy with the programme of work and the support from the Executive. They also welcomed the appointment of a new member with legal expertise which will add to the skills set of the Committee. The Chair

informed the Board that he had accepted another three-year term. He outlined the highlights from the Committee, including the level of attendance and engagement. He welcomed the agreement on the role of the Audit Committee in relation to risk (including that ownership for risk lies with the executive) following a review which included benchmarking. He outlined the new arrangements where the Committee aim to meet in advance of Board meetings, attendance by the Finance Officer at each meeting, and attendance on a rota basis by Heads of Function for a slot at each meeting. He noted that the Committee are kept well updated on Nova and the finances appear to be in reasonably good shape, which is difficult due to the demand level nature of the business. He noted that the Committee had supported keeping STAR running until Nova was fully rolled out. He noted that in general recommendations are implemented as soon as possible, that they are taken seriously by the Executive and that Mazars are providing an effective internal audit service (with the quality of delivery very good and an openness to engage with suggestions from the Committee). He did highlight the number of low-level findings which could be a flag of non-adherence to procedures and to a lack of focus on the detail, and the Board agreed that this should be reviewed by the Executive.

The Board welcomed the risk-based approach to the development of the Strategic Audit Plan and that it can be adapted and re-prioritised at any stage.

The Board Chair thanked him for Chairing the Committee and the Committee for their work on behalf of the organisation and for providing the appropriate assurance to the Board.

Nova Project Update

The Nova team attended to provide an update to the Board on this key strategic project. Rosemarie O'Mahony provided an update on the project governance matters and Stephen Buckley and Sandra Cairns focused on deployment. The team noted that publicjobs went live on 20th March with Medical Consultants and now this area and TLAC are using the system for all campaigns. The Board welcomed the sign-off process for go-live in each area and the ongoing review of lessons learned. The team outlined the proposed business-as-usual support model and the longer-term governance arrangements. The plans to decommission STAR were also noted. The Board welcomed the positive feedback on the use of Oleo to date by staff and their positive engagement with the system. The team outlined the approach to communications with all stakeholder groups, including the phased approach to onboarding board members and publicjobs representative. The team noted that the system will continue to be rolled out to P&T, SER, LA and then to mid and large volume campaigns. The team informed the Board that the plans to decommission STAR by Q1 2026 are still on track.

Development of New Strategy

The Strategy Development Team (Rosemarie O'Mahony, Michelle Noone, Stephen Buckley and Catherine Dobbins) attended to discuss the draft priority areas with the Board and how these had been identified.

The Board discussed the areas presented. The Board gave feedback on individual areas and also discussed some key areas to be reflected in the report, which are outlined in Appendix 1.

The Board noted that the Statement of Strategy is due by end July, and the team agreed to incorporate the feedback into the draft; a further draft would be prepared for the meeting in June and final sign-off can be done remotely if required.

AOB

The Board agreed to consider dates for the June meeting.

Appendix 1

- publicjobs is the go-to organisation for public service recruitment – with the skills, capacity and professionalism needed to deliver.
- publicjobs should be the public service preferred recruiter, with clients coming to us because they want to.
- The strategy should reflect the concept of growth; as we release capacity, we can grow the business to match.
- It should be ambitious (we have modernised and transformed our service and improved timelines, and we should build on this).
- It should reflect being responsive to client needs and meeting future workforce needs.
- It should include accessing the broad market of potential employees and widening the pool of potential candidates.
- It should reflect our role as Trusted Partner and as experts in selection and recruitment.
- publicjobs should be the go-to place for candidates, user friendly and accessible.
- It should specify what is different about the candidate experience, including matching people with purpose (link to brand campaign) and mirror what is there for the clients with a candidate focus (including the trust of candidates).
- Focus on meeting candidate needs and how they feel in the recruitment process.
- Focus on innovative solutions and be acknowledged and seen as drivers of change – reaching out to a changing Ireland.
- Role in ensuring public service is seen as a great place to work and a preferred career choice.
- Link in with DPENDR Strategy in the Workforce of the Future and highlight what is special about working for the State.
- Highlight high standards, timeliness and efficiencies.
- Professional board members and partners ensure we deliver a professional service.
- Include investment in our recruitment model.
- Consistently meet our KPIs around professional and timely delivery; delivery should continue to be the key focus.
- Best in class national lead.
- Modern and progressive selection methods.
- Include more of what we do for staff and focus on our culture.
- Further develop our recruitment and advisory service in order to enhance our relationship with clients, share insights and inform policy.
- We are a data rich organisation, and we interpret this and use it intelligently and share learnings.