Minutes of meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, at 2.00pm on 6th October 2025

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

Ms. Catherine Dobbins (Secretary).

Apologies: Mr. Colin Menton.

**Attended virtually*

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair formally welcomed Yvonne to the Board.

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 ytd, and delivery of other recruitment campaigns was at 85% (therefore meeting the target). The Board noted that the 50% delivery times achieved for General Grades needs ongoing focus in order to understand the underlying causes and see continuous improvement. The CEO noted that the Performance Sub-Group of the Executive Team continue to meet to drive improvements in KPIs and remove barriers to delivery; they have agreed a reduction in campaign timelines to 14 weeks and a reduction in the clearance process timelines for all roles.

The CEO noted that the backlog for EO and HEO roles is now cleared. She also noted that the new capability framework is working well in identifying potential in these key grades. The Board welcomed this development.

The CEO informed the Board that the number of advertisements, interviews and assignments, although down to date on 2024, have all increased since mid-year. The Board discussed the decrease in demand for general grades and P&T roles and the potential reasons for this. It was agreed that this would be an area of ongoing focus.

The CEO noted that for Garda Trainee, 1,551 names have been passed to An Garda Síochána for consideration; she informed the Board that the campaign was concluded in 4 months and a new competition launched in September (with an open-day taking place in the building today for potential new recruits). The Board welcomed the positive feedback received in terms of delivery on AGS recruitment, including the internal promotion campaigns.

The CEO informed the Board that the PO skills matching panel now in place and will be used to match candidates to client requirements. It was agreed that it will be important to review its implementation and ensure robust data collection to assess its effectiveness, in order to consider scaling up this approach.

The CEO welcomed the recognition of publicjobs as a five-star organisation by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), based on their EFQM Model making publicjobs the first civil or public service organisation in Ireland to achieve 5-star accreditation. The Board acknowledged that this was a significant achievement and was an excellent recognition of the organisation's commitment to quality and continuous improvement.

The CEO informed the Board that the second Talent Attraction campaign launched to the market on 15th September 2025 and will run for six weeks; for this iteration there is a stronger focus on the utilisation of Outdoor formats to help build visual resonance of the brand with target audience.

The CEO noted that the Strategy is with the Minister for sign off and that the strategic programme of work to support the Strategy is currently being developed.

The CEO updated the Board on initial engagement with clients in terms of the new partnership model and informed the Board that an Agricultural Officer is now being run jointly with the Department; it was noted that the CEO intends to meet with the new Secretary General shortly.

There was a discussion around workforce planning in the public service and how this informs the work of publicjobs. The ongoing engagement with the D/Housing, Local Government and Heritage around their engagement with the local authorities around workforce planning was discussed, and the Board welcomed the plans for the sharing of overall data with publicjobs to inform recruitment needs in this area. The CEO agreed to check with DPER re their plans for further workforce planning.

Financial Report

The Board acknowledged the Financial Report and the Estimates Submission. Aileen Tuliani, Head of Finance, attended the meeting to give an update on finances. Aileen indicated that the end of year figures will be positive overall but that we will need a technical supplementary to move approx. 200k to A1 but that most other areas are favourable. She noted that the non-replacement of staff has reduced the potential A1 deficit. She informed the Board that the Finance Sub-Group is meeting next week to agree potential additional projects which might be progressed in 2025 with the available funding.

Aileen informed the Board that we received an 11% increase in the estimates and that this was very welcome in order to regularise the AI situation and progress key organisational projects (including a Centre of Excellence in Reasonable Accommodations).

Aileen also provided an update on the Management Letter received from the C&AG as part of the Appropriation Account; the one low priority finding (around the counter-signing of bank reconciliations) was acknowledged.

Risk Reports

The Board acknowledged the Risk Report which had been provided with the Board papers. The CEO confirmed that there were no other areas of concern. It was noted that the client retention risk has increased since the last meeting and this would be kept under review.

Update on Identified Actions from Red C Market Awareness Research

Aine Gallagher had provided a paper in advance but could not attend the meeting due to unforeseen circumstances. It was agreed that the presentation and discussion should be deferred to the next meeting.

Update on the Audit Committee

The Chair of the Audit Committee was due to attend to provide the update but was not available; he will attend the next meeting. The Board nominee on the Committee (Mary Connaughton) provided the update. The Board noted the two reports provided in advance.

The Board noted that one high finding in the review of GDPR compliance and welcomed the plans to address this finding and the Audit Committee's close monitoring of this key area. It was noted that the DPO is due to attend the next meeting of the Audit Committee to provide an update on implementation, particularly in relation to the ROPA recommendation. It was noted that issues with the ROPA were in part related to the changeover to Oleeo.

The Board discussed the External Quality Assessment conducted by Crowe. It was noted that the assessment was against the new Standards which have to be fully in place by year end. It was noted that the new standards were more strategic and had an increased level of compliance. The discussion at the Audit Committee around access to working papers from Mazars was shared with the Board. The Board welcomed that Mazars do share such papers with the organisation as required.

Nova Project Update

The Nova team (Stephen Buckley, Rosemarie O'Mahony & Sandra Cairns) attended to provide an update to the Board on this key strategic project. Stephen Buckley noted that some slippage in Q2 was caught up in Q3. He provided an update on the units now using Oleeo and on the focus group established with recruitment managers. He noted that client and publicjobs representative functions are still to be rolled out but there is a plan in place for this and trials are underway. It was noted that the HSE will be onboarded shortly, followed by clients managed by the CRM function, and training videos are being developed to support this. Stephen noted that the Oleeo success team are due to attend publicjobs in November to discuss future functionality in conjunction with Innovation Week.

Stephen noted that sanction has been received from DPER and OGCIO for STAR decommissioning with a stipulation around adherence to timelines and capital spend in 2025; he assured the Board that this is on target, with a technical and business streams in place to support decommissioning.

There was a discussion around the role of publicjobs representative and how this will change with Oleeo and other technology; it was noted that this key group is also a key risk area due to the ongoing issues around pay (which requires sanction from DPER). The Board welcomed the ongoing investigation of ways to make this role more attractive and that the changes underway should free up more staff for this role.

The Board noted that the process around the Oleeo project and the initial planning have contributed to the successful roll out.

Client Retention and the Capacity to Deliver for Clients

Eimear O'Connor presented to the Board on this topic. Eimear noted that the civil service spend on non publicjobs recruitment can be significant and that publicjobs is taking a business development approach as part of the new Strategy to attract and re-attract clients.

The Board welcomed the approach outlined by Eimear and highlighted the importance of meeting clients at both a senior and operational level. The Board agreed that it would be important to meet clients at Assistant Secretary and higher levels in addition to meeting the operational teams.

The Board noted that the re-organisation underway will impact on almost 80 staff and will require significant change management. The Board noted that the planned approach aligns well with both the roll out of Oleeo and the Talent Attraction campaigns.

Eimear informed the Board about the development of the CRM function and the identification of key staff and additional skills needed for this new approach.

The Board also suggested making use of the CSMB People Sub-Group to communicate these significant changes and how publicjobs will work in strategic partnerships with clients.

The Board welcomed this new approach and structure and noted that strategic partnership meetings with clients have already commenced.

The Board asked for an update from Eimear on this key project at the next meeting.

Capacity Review Phase II (Benchmarking) and Action Plan

The Board noted the report and the proposed action plan and welcomed the plan to implement all actionable recommendations as part of the strategic programme of work. It was noted that the report had been shared with DPER.

One of the Board members noted that there did not appear to be clear benchmarking against international best practice; that the recommendations are quite broad/general and that "best practice" was used loosely, without evidence of superior outcomes. It was noted that Indeon had found no clearly equivalent organisations to publicjobs but had highlighted good practices in areas of relevance to publicjobs from both the public and private sector. It was noted that they had shared detailed KPIs from the Belgian equivalent and that many of those consulted confirmed that they would tend to consult publicjobs around best practice.

AOB

It was noted that next meeting will take place on 13th November. A further online meeting will be scheduled for a workshop with Indecon in relation to the Board review as the 2nd December meeting will cancelled as we would not have a quorum.