

CLIENT CONNECT

January 2024



FOCUS ON
GRADUATE
RECRUITMENT

TRANSFORMING THE
APPROACH TO
REASONABLE
ACCOMMODATIONS



PROFESSIONALISING
RECRUITMENT

PUBLIC SERVICE
RECRUITERS NETWORK



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A Welcome from our CEO

Margaret McCabe,
CEO, publicjobs.ie

Welcome to the latest edition of our Client Newsletter, which is designed to keep you informed of activity and upcoming priorities across our work.

We are coming towards the end of our project on transforming the approach to reasonable accommodations. Working in collaboration with Sinéad Burke, global disability advocate, educator, and CEO of Tilting the Lens, the project takes a universal and creative design thinking approach to transforming the experience of reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities during the recruitment and onboarding process into a new job in the civil/public service. In 2024, we are excited to be moving into a phase of piloting some of the recommendations to improve the process for both disabled candidates and for the hiring departments alike. We are grateful for the funding secured from the Innovation Fund to deliver this project.

We were delighted to welcome so many colleagues to our recent in-person Public Service Recruiters Network event in Chapter House. We had an enthusiastic response to the session and indeed the overall Network, with a broad spectrum of members from across the civil and public service. As well as delving into core recruitment themes, there was the sharing of experiences, valuable learnings and new connections. With thanks also to colleagues from the Commission for Public Services Appointments and the Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform for their support on the day.

Looking ahead, we have a busy 2024 and I am delighted to share some of our other key initiatives, including the roll out of the new Civil Service Capability Model, our digital transformation to replace our current recruitment system and a spotlight on Graduate competitions. We look forward to sharing and collaborating with you on these and much more throughout the year.

With warm wishes for a fruitful 2024.

Margaret McCabe
Chief Executive Officer,
Public Appointments Service



Corporate Updates



Transforming the Approach to Reasonable Accommodations for Disabled People

PAS, along with our delivery partners Tilting the Lens, are continuing work on a project, funded by the **Public Service Innovation Fund** that is aimed at transforming the approach to reasonable accommodations for disabled people.

The project was launched in July 2023 and has taken a universal and creative design thinking approach to transforming the experience of reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities during the recruitment and onboarding process into a new job in the civil/public service.

Virtual Townhall with Sinéad Burke

A key part of the project was to raise awareness around all aspects of disability in the workplace. With this in mind, Sinéad Burke, global disability advocate, educator, and CEO of Tilting the Lens hosted a virtual Town Hall on disability allyship in November 2023.

There was an enthusiastic response to the session with over 350 people attending from across the civil and public service. Sinéad discussed what it means to be an ally in the workplace, and how we can all take steps to make our workplaces more inclusive and supportive.

A recording of the session is now available on One Learning ([Link Here](#)) - you need to enrol to access the content. Alternatively, you can access it on Vimeo [Link Here](#)

This is the second virtual Townhall that was held during the project – the first, on disability awareness, is available to view on One Learning ([link](#)) and Vimeo [Link Here](#).

Ideation Sessions

As part of the project there was eleven ideation and validation sessions held with a range of stakeholders, including PAS recruitment and operations teams, disabled employees (from the civil service and other sectors), employing departments and local HR recruitment units. In the sessions, participants were presented with problem statements that had been created through extensive background research and were asked to explore potential solutions. The focus then moved to how the solutions could be implemented, and attendees were asked to identify the key players and resources required. The potential solution were then prioritised, and put through a validation workshop. A total of 60 people attended the ideation sessions, and through their expertise and lived experience, we were able to identify key recommendations.

Consultation

Throughout the project, consultation took place with Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs), Disabled Persons Representative Organisations (DPROs), relevant government departments, disability advocates and experts in accessibility, to ensure that their insights were reflected in the discussion points and recommendations.

Advisory Group

The project is guided by an Advisory Group who brought key expertise in co-design, accessibility, reasonable accommodations, inclusion and public sector recruitment. It included representatives from the National Disability Authority, Ahead, As I Am and the Irish Design and Craft Council.

Recommendations

As part of the project, a series of recommendations have been drafted that will support the development of a codesigned blueprint for a universally accessible process. The process will enable recruitment teams in PAS to better support candidates who require reasonable accommodations throughout the process. As well as local HR teams and hiring managers to place the right people in the right roles, ensuring the best possible outcome for all.

Throughout the engagements with the various stakeholders a good degree of knowledge transfer has taken place – these rich insights have informed the recommendations. This includes the barriers faced by disabled candidates at onboarding and assignments; the issues faced by clients and the system as a whole; potential solutions to these barriers, and on the co-design process itself.

Based on the sustained level of engagement during this co-design process and attendance at the Town Halls, there is a strong appetite from across the service to improve the process for both disabled candidates and for the hiring departments alike.

Next Steps

It is intended that we will develop a number of pilots in 2024 to test the recommendations and processes. Further updates will be provided as we work through this phase.

Co-Designing Equitable Opportunities

As part of Irish Design Week 2023, our head of ED&I, Siobhán McKenna, and disability advocate, Sinéad Burke, held a fireside discussion on co-designing equitable opportunities @ Tangent, Trinity's Ideas Workspace. It involved a discussion on reasonable accommodation and how employers, public spaces and businesses can make small but meaningful changes that make a massive difference to people's lives.

A recording of the session is available here: [HERE](#)



2024: Our Centenary

In 2024, we reach an exciting milestone with the 100th anniversary of our first recruitment campaign. To mark this historic occasion, we will be running several events during the year and holding a temporary exhibition of archival material. As we embrace new frameworks and technologies in 2024 with the Civil Service Capability Framework, Talent Acquisition Technology, it is important that we celebrate our history and evolution while ensuring a focus on the future delivery of best in class for the civil and public service.

Through focusing on key themes including diversity, the Irish language and assessments methods we will explore our 100-year journey as recruiters for the civil and public service. An initial look through our archives has already uncovered some gems including previous restrictions on civil service roles –

- [Did you know there was a maximum waist measurements for female Clerical Assistants?](#)
- [Or that the assessment questions for Clerical Officers required the candidate to draw a representation of the Shannon Estuary!](#)

We will keep you updated on upcoming events and hope that you can join us in Chapter House to mark this momentous occasion.



National Travellers - Education Achievement Awards 2023

The National Travellers Service, Exchange House Ireland, recently hosted the Annual National Education Achievement Awards for members of the Traveller community. For the fourth year running, we are proud to sponsor these awards that play an important role in supporting this vital work.

Senator Eileen Flynn was the guest of honour at this year's event. There were 60 people nominated for the awards who had recently completed and achieved success in a range of education courses, from Junior Cert, up to Bachelor degrees. Accompanying the recipients to the event were their families, friends, teachers, and others who have supported them in their education.



Project NOVA Update: the Road to Digital Transformation

We are now coming towards the end of the procurement stage of our digital transformation journey to procure a new Recruitment Solution that will underpin our recruitment service delivery. Once the procurement procedures have been completed, we will move into the implementation phase of the project with the successful vendor.

The move to the new system provides the opportunity to enhance and optimise our recruitment service delivery, and to enable better outcomes for clients and candidates. It offers the opportunity to streamline our processes across various recruitment and support teams, supported by new and emerging technologies. It will also provide better prospects to utilise data to enhance evidence-based decision making and drive results.

We again would like to thank our colleagues in the Office of Government Procurement and the Chief State Solicitors Office for their continued and invaluable support and guidance throughout the procurement process.

NOVA is one of the largest digital transformation projects ever undertaken by PAS and we would like to thank you for your continued support.

Stay tuned for updates on this exciting new development and get ready to experience a whole new level of recruitment excellence with Project Nova!



Recruitment Corner



Public Service Recruiters Network: In-Person Event



On 05 December 2023, we were delighted to host our first in-person meeting of the Public Service Recruiters Network and warmly welcome many of our colleagues to Chapter House

The purpose of the Recruiters Network is to facilitate greater collaboration in recruitment across the public service - there is a strong commitment to sharing best practice, identifying common challenges and working together to attract the best people to our organisations. The Network meets on a quarterly basis and is hosted by the Public Appointments Service, with key contributions from the CPSA.

The Network was established in 2022 and to-date all of the sessions have been held online. It was great to finally meet in person and make those valuable connections! Also, to share our challenges and see how we can work together to attract the best people and who reflect the diversity of our communities.

The session included inputs and networking on key recruitment themes: the New Civil Service Capability Framework; Talent Attraction; ED&I – A Forward Look. As well as the sharing of experiences, valuable learnings and new connections.

We were delighted to be joined by colleagues from the Commission for Public Services Appointments (CPSA) and the Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform who were on hand to answer questions and discuss Codes of Practice, Compliance, Better Public Services and the Workforce of the Future.

We also had colleagues from our recruitment teams on hand to meet & greet, and answer queries.

Here is a flavour of what was covered:

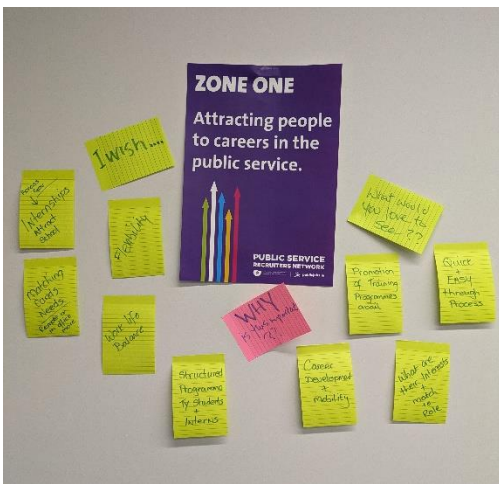
Civil Service Capability Framework

Our session on the new Civil Service Capability Framework provided an overview of the new model that is currently being piloted. This framework was developed by psychologists in the Public Appointments Service, under the guidance of an expert steering group. The framework aims to reflect the skills and behaviours required for performance in the civil service grades from Clerical Officer to Principal Officer but also explores the strengths, motivations and interests of candidates. The model also allows for an assessment of potential as part of the selection process. There was great engagement from attendees with a huge range of questions on the roll-out of the model and the definition of potential. The session also provided for broader reflections on recruitment in general and the issue of merit and many more!



Talent Attraction in the Civil and Public Service

This was an interactive session that explored the hurdles that recruiters encounter in relation to talent attraction. Attendees were divided into groups and guided through brainstorming sessions on key sub-themes that underpin talent attraction. There was a focus on transparency and how we can foster collaboration to tackle these challenges together. During the session, we delved into key topics, identified barriers, generated ideas, and probed and devised solutions. There was lots of energy and discussions, with valuable insights and ideas to address some of the key talent attraction challenges for the civil and public service. Thanks again to attendees for their active participation and engagement!



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – A Forward Look

In the session we reflected on key achievements in 2023 and how they contribute to the pillars of our ED&I strategy with regards to better data, better processes and leading by example. There was discussion on recent initiatives including the change in citizenship eligibility, the launch of our co-design project to reimagine reasonable accommodations at assignment/ onboarding and programmes that promote inclusive routes to employment. There was also good engagement from the Network on how they can support our work in 2024 and drive ED&I across the civil and public service, this includes supporting inclusive routes programmes and nominating staff to further diversify our interview boards.

Find out More

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact: recruitersnetwork@publicjobs.ie



Focus on Graduate Recruitment

We are delighted to provide you with an overview of our AO Graduate recruitment competitions.

AO General

The 2023 AO General competition was launched on 15 September 2023 and advertised across Publicjobs.ie and social media channels, as well as third-level college and university career sites. In promoting the competition, we hosted an exhibition stand at Grad Ireland Live, the premier graduate event at the RDS - and spoke with prospective candidates about career opportunities in the civil service and the specifics of the AO role. In 2023, over 2,200 candidates applied, which remains consistent with the level of applications in the 2022 competition.

Across the civil service, demand for AO General candidates is high – in 2023, we assigned 233 candidates. Feedback from AO candidates continues to be positive towards the selection stages being carried out remotely and this has informed our approach. On foot of feedback from clients and candidates, we continue to build on the positive changes that have been implemented for the AO programme, including:

- **Eligibility:** candidates in their final year of study are now eligible to apply for AO competitions - this has helped to maintain a consistent level of applications. Following a review of the AO General, candidates who hold a Master's degree (Level 9), or both a higher diploma (Level 8) and primary degree (Level 7) on the NFQ, are now eligible to apply.
- **Sequencing:** changes in timelines for the AO General vs AO Specialist, has reduced competition between the general and dedicated streams.
- **Skills Matching:** we continue to implement a process to support skills matching, across a number of specialised areas, for the AO General. This allows us to more effectively address skills matching requests, where possible.

The first batch of the AO General competition is now available, and candidates are undergoing pre-employment checks. Further batches are scheduled over 2024, on a regular basis.

AO Specialist Streams

The AO specialist streams play a key role in policy and strategy formulation across the spectrum of finance, economics, environmental, climate, human resources and health. Over the course of 2023, we assigned 137 candidates from the AO specialist streams.

We will be launching the AO specialist competitions in January 2024, which includes dedicated streams on: Energy, Environment & Climate; Business & Finance; Health Policy Analyst; Human Resources.

We have worked closely with lead Department's to conduct a comprehensive review of each stream, so that we can maximise the number of potential applicants whilst balancing this against some changes to the essential requirements. There was a strong emphasis on identifying issues and providing greater clarity so that we can remove potential roadblocks that may inhibit a candidate from applying. This will broaden and diversify our pool of candidates and alleviate potential delays during eligibility checks at assignment.

It is anticipated that the first batches for the AO specialist streams will be available in April 2024.

Update on the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 was signed into law on 22 December 2021, and since then the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media have been working to implement the provisions on a phased basis. This input provides an update on key provisions relating to recruitment.

Establishment of the Irish Language Network

In December 2023, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin T.D., and the Minister of State for the Gaeltacht, Patrick O'Donovan T.D. celebrated two years of the Act by announcing the approval of a grant of over €1m, over a 3-year period (2024-2026), to enable Oireachtas na Gaeilge to establish an Irish Language Network for public sector employees.

With the establishment of the Network, opportunities to speak the language will be offered on a more formal basis to those in the public sector who wish to develop, maintain or use their Irish in a work context – from learners to those with a high level of competence, and everything in between.

The Network will involve four major events each year, as well as other regional /special interest events for various levels of ability. The events will be open to civil servants; employees of the wider public services; and professional/technical grades. The intention is to reach approximately 8,000 people per year and the network will support those:

- who use the Irish language as part of their role;
- who wish to develop their competence in the language and/or wish to attain a role through Irish in the public sector in the future;
- who wish to meet other people in the public sector who speak Irish and/or wish to be in the company of other Irish language speakers on a regular basis.

The Irish Language Network is an important element in the implementation of the Act and in reaching the ambitious targets of:

- 20% of recruits to public bodies will be competent in Irish by the end of 2030;
- all public services in the Gaeltacht and for the Gaeltacht will be provided in Irish; and
- every public office in the Gaeltacht will operate through the medium of Irish.

Last year, the Department, working in partnership with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, made progress on the Irish language courses provided by Gaelchultúr, for civil service employees - with Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) now certifying these OneLearning courses. Whilst the courses have grown in popularity, the main feedback is the need to practice the language with peers outside of the classroom - establishing the Network is a direct response to this feedback. Expressions of interest in membership of the Network will be sought shortly.

Upcoming Irish Language Panels

In Q4 2023, our General Grade recruitment teams advertised competitions for Clerical Officer, Executive Officer and Higher Executive Officer, with fluency in the Irish language.

Panels for Clerical Officer are in place for multiple locations, nationwide. It is anticipated that interviews for EO and HEO (with fluency in Irish language) will take place in early Q1 2024 – updates will be provided in the fortnightly Panel Availability Report.

Upcoming Competitions for 2024

COMPETITION – CURRENTLY UNDERWAY	TIMEFRAME: PANEL EXPECTED
Graduate Policy Analyst/Economist	Q1 2024
Higher Executive Officer 2023 with fluency in Irish	Mid Q1 2024
Executive Officer 2023 with fluency in Irish	Mid Q1 2024
Clerical Officer 2023 with fluency in Irish	January 2024
EO ICT Networks	Q1 2024
Senior HR Manager (PO)	Q1 2024
Head of Communications (PO)	Q1 2024
HEO ICT Digital Business Engagement	Q1 2024
HEO ICT Software Development	Q1 2024
Accountant Grade II	Q1 2024

Please note that these are approximate dates and depending on numbers of applicants and capacity, these may be extended/pushed back.

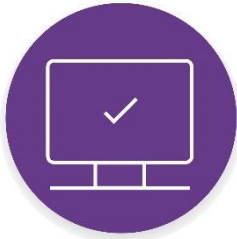
COMPETITION - TO BE ADVERTISED	TIMEFRAME: ADVERTISING
Administrative Officer Specialist Streams 2024 – Business/Finance; Health; HR; Climate	Early Q1 2024
EO Communications	Mid Q1
HEO Communications	Late Q1
Legal Researcher	Mid Q1
HEO ICT Infrastructure & Operations	Mid Q1
HEO ICT Networks & Cyber Security	Mid Q1
Project Manager (AP)	Late Q1

Please note that these are approximate dates and may be extended/pushed back.

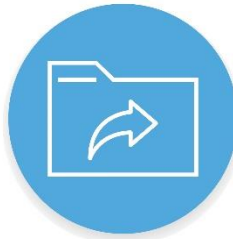


Successful Delivery

Since January 2023, we have successfully delivered the following outputs to our civil and public service clients (figures presented are up to end of December 2023).



658
New Campaigns
Advertised



65,151
Applications
Received



53,712
Assessments
Conducted



18,080
Interviews
Conducted



519
Campaigns Completed /
Panel in Place



11,467
Candidates
Assigned

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I)



Inclusive Routes to Employment

Work is continuing on developing more inclusive routes into the civil service. There is a growing evidence base that underrepresented groups can benefit from additional pathways that lead to permanent career paths, for example, internships, traineeships, apprenticeships, and work placements. An update on the current initiatives is provided below:

Willing Able Mentoring (WAM)

The WAM programme is a ten-month paid internship programme aimed at graduates with disabilities that is run in partnership with Ahead. The programme allows graduates to gain work experience, develop their careers, learn new skills, train, and receive support during a paid placement.

Since 2022, there has been a route to permanency for candidates at the end of their placements in the civil service. With an 80% success rate from the first cohort, we are hoping for an equally high success rate from the 22 candidates who are currently in placements throughout the civil service.

Traveller and Roma Internship

The Traveller and Roma Internship is a twelve-month internship, aimed at CO and EO level. The programme was launched in 2022 and involved interns being placed in the Public Appointments Service, Department of Justice, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Houses of the Oireachtas. The programme's first intern is due to be completed in January 2024. The process is currently being reviewed and updates will be provided on the next programme launch shortly.



Oireachtas Work Learning (OWL)

The OWL programme is an applied learning development, and socialisation programme for adults with an intellectual disability that takes place over an eleven-month period. The programme is facilitated by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service in collaboration with KARE and WALK.

This is our fourth year supporting the recruitment for the OWL programme. In 2023, ten people successfully completed the OWL placement and the route to permanency for role in the civil service (at CO grade). Seven of these have now secured permanent positions. Information about the 2024 programme will be available shortly.



Out & About – with our ED&I Team

Here is a round-up of some of the recent events that our ED&I team have participated in – from awareness raising, to active discussion, to promoting a career in the civil service to people from diverse backgrounds.

Black History Month

In October, we were involved in events to celebrate Black History Month. Our head of ED&I, Siobhán McKenna, was part of a panel discussion on *'Black to the Future'* with Sandra Healy (Inclusio), and Mamobo Ogoro (Gorm Media) on how to make our workplaces more inclusive for people from diverse backgrounds. Siobhán also took part in a panel on **Celebrating Our Sisters** that was hosted by Bank of Ireland. The session also featured Tafadzwa Mandiwanza (Paediatric Neurosurgeon), Joy-Tendai Kangere (Barrister), and Francesca Harte (Joint Head of Enforcement Investigations, Central Bank of Ireland).

We also collaborated with the **Multicultural Working Group** in the Department of Foreign Affairs to present to a group of potential candidates with a migrant background about the change in eligibility criteria.

Public Service Transformation Conference

Our head of ED&I, Siobhán, took part in a panel on *Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace* at the Public Service Transformation Conference. Siobhán, was joined by colleagues from An Garda Síochána and the Courts Service to discuss the challenges that women in the civil/public service face in progressing their careers. There was also a focus on what employers can do to remove barriers and support women in the service.



Careers Event: African Professional Network

LinkedIn recently hosted a careers event with the African Professional Network in Ireland.

Our teams from ED&I, Marketing and State Boards were on hand to talk to attendees and answer their questions about working in the civil and public service and the opportunities that are available. We also promoted the diverse range of careers that are across the civil and public sector. A big thanks to colleagues from the Department of Justice who joined us at the event.

Client Information And Resources



Professionalising Recruitment: Celebrating Success

In November, we celebrated three of our colleagues who graduated from the first ever professional programme in Recruitment Practice worldwide. Upskilling and gaining a professional qualification in the recruitment field can be challenging and we want to highlight the programme and celebrate their success.

The National College of Ireland, in collaboration with the Employer and Recruitment Federation, developed a three-year apprenticeship degree **BA (Honours) in Recruitment Practice** at level 8 on the NFQ. The programme was launched in September 2020, and this is the first cohort of students to graduate.

The programme includes modules that reflect the needs of recruiters as they continue to undergo massive change in their quest to be competitive. It includes: talent planning; business development; marketing; negotiation; candidate strategy; customer relations; career management; equality & ethics etc.

Throughout the course there is a focus on students developing the skills to carry out complex tasks, critically analyse industry data, identify skill gaps and implement solutions, all in the context of the recruitment industry.



We invited Julie Hoey, who leads our Pre-Employment Checks/Assignments teams to tell us more about her experience on the programme.

Julie noted that completing the qualification has completely changed her approach to how she operates professionally. She has developed a stronger understanding of barriers and impact including, attraction, the labour market, selection, and client relations, to name a few. This holistic approach to recruitment provides a solid foundation, which has enabled Julie to make informed decisions.

As well as building knowledge, there was a focus on networking with professionals and students. Julie noted that the exchange of approaches/solutions with private sector colleagues was very informative, and they had a greater understanding of the challenges of public sector recruitment!

Reflecting on other benefits, Julie highlighted that her skills in research, writing, access and interrogation of data have all developed over the three-year part-time study. In recognition of her achievement, Julie was awarded a distinction on the NCI Directors Honours List.

We would like to congratulate all three of our recent graduates: Sorcha Parker, Paul Rutledge and Julie Hoey.



Client E-Learning Programme



As part of our commitment to sharing our knowledge and expertise with clients, we have developed an e-Learning programme on how to develop a recruitment and selection process that is informed by best practice.

The modules are hosted on a Learning Management System and include:

1. **Developing a Job Description & Person Specification**
2. **Shortlisting**
3. **Unconscious Bias**
4. **Disability Awareness**
5. **Designing Quality Selection Processes**
6. **Core Interviewing Skills**
7. **Role of the Chairperson**

The feedback on the e-Learning modules have been very positive from our clients, with approx. 786 people from 70 organisations signing up.

To access the modules, you are required to enter your unique username and password – these were issued when you originally registered.

If you have not previously registered for the e-Learning modules, please contact the CRM Team: CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie



We are here to support our clients. You can contact the CRM team via telephone or the CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie

You can also keep up to date on [publicjobs.ie](https://www.publicjobs.ie) and [stateboards.ie](https://www.stateboards.ie) and follow us on our social platforms:

