

CLIENT CONNECT

April 2024



LOCAL GOVERNMENT
RECRUITMENT
UPDATES

UPDATE ON
PROJECT NOVA



PUBLIC SERVICE
RECRUITERS NETWORK

PUBLICJOBS 100 –
OUR CENTENARY



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A Welcome from our CEO

Margaret McCabe,
CEO, Public Appointments Service

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

As we move into quarter two, we are delighted to update you on progress against a number of strategic priorities.

Following the outcome of the procurement process for a new recruitment solution, we are pleased to advise that we have signed a contract with **Oleeo**, one of the market-leading recruitment software companies, who have a broad client base that includes the public sector in Ireland and the UK. Our project team are working in collaboration with Oleeo and are currently in the mobilisation phase of implementation. We are excited to be moving into the delivery of a comprehensive, end-to-end recruitment solution with modern recruitment functionality that will enhance the way we deliver our services now and into the future, including detailed reporting and insights that provides oversight of what is working and what we can improve.

Under the Civil Service Renewal Strategy for 2030, we were tasked with reviewing the Competency Framework used for recruitment, selection and development of our people. Following extensive research, benchmarking, job analysis and consultation, we developed a **Capability Framework** that reflects the requirements of an agile, innovative, professional and diverse civil service. The framework has been successfully trialled in the Public Appointments Service and we are implementing this for suitable competitions on a rolling basis, from February 2024.

And last but by no means least, I am delighted to share our upcoming centenary as we celebrate the history, 100-year journey and evolution of the Public Appointments Service as the recruiter for the civil and public service – we hope that you can join us to mark this important milestone.

We look forward to sharing and collaborating with you on these throughout the year.

With warm wishes,

Margaret McCabe
Chief Executive Officer,
Public Appointments Service

Corporate Updates



Project NOVA Update: the Road to Digital Transformation



Following on from our previous update, we have now completed the procurement stage of our digital transformation journey to procure a new recruitment solution. We are delighted to formally announce the successful vendor is **Oleeo**.

Oleeo is one of the biggest global market-leading recruitment software companies, based in London and they have featured in the Gartner Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) report.

They have considerable public sector experience working with the Government recruitment services in the UK Cabinet Office, UK Police Force and the National Health Service (NHS). More recently in Ireland, they have worked with the Courts Service and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform. The Oleeo platform is also used by Marks & Spencer, Amazon and Dunnes Stores.

Oleeo submitted an excellent tender response and provided the evaluation team with the assurance that they met all specified requirements. They will work in partnership with our teams to deliver the best service to our candidates and clients. Oleeo provides comprehensive, end-to-end recruitment solution with modern and ever-changing recruitment functionality that will enhance the way we deliver our services now and into the future.

The system also offers the opportunity to streamline processes supported by new and emerging technologies and to utilise data to enhance evidence-based decision-making and drive results.

We will now begin the implementation stage of our journey, which is expected to last 12 months. This stage will include several different phases, including mobilisation, analysis and design, configuration and testing, training, stabilisation and finally project closure.

NOVA is one of the largest digital transformation projects that we have undertaken, 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!



2024 - Our Centenary!

In 2024, we reach an important milestone with the **100th anniversary** of our first recruitment campaign!

As we embrace new frameworks (Capability Framework) and technologies (Oleoo), it is important to celebrate our evolution, whilst ensuring a focus on innovation, delivery and providing a diverse, highly talented and committed workforce across the civil and public service.

To mark our centenary and explore our 100-year journey as recruiters for the civil and public service, we will be running several events over 2024 and holding a temporary exhibition of archival material. Further updates will be provided in the coming weeks.

In June, we will also be hosting an in-person networking event of the Public Service Recruiters Network in Chapter House that will explore our evolution and key priorities for future delivery.

We also have an exciting announcement in June that will be of great interest to our clients.

We hope that you can join us in the celebrations to mark this milestone.

National Diversity & Inclusion Awards: Public Sector Organisation of the Year



The National Diversity and Inclusion Awards took place on the 08 February 2024 at the Royal Blue Dublin Convention Centre. We were once again proud to sponsor the 'Public Sector Organisation of the Year' award.

The National Diversity & Inclusion Awards are an opportunity to celebrate and champion individuals and organisations that go above and beyond in their commitment to providing excellence in key areas of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I).

The awards were hosted by the Irish Centre for Diversity and judged by a panel of leading experts in D&I. The awards acknowledged those organisations that are creating positive change in all areas of D&I in workplaces across Ireland.

The finalists in the Public Sector Organisation of the Year award included the Central Bank of Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Houses of Oireachtas Service, Irish Rail, SEAI and Solas.

Congratulations to all the finalists and to the overall winner of the category, the Central Bank of Ireland!

Better Public Service – Shaping the Workforce of the Future



Thanks to colleagues in the Department of Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform for an insightful conference on **Better Public Service- Shaping the Workforce of the Future**. Minister O’Donoghue’s opening remarks emphasised the importance of creating a public service workforce that is agile, inclusive and innovative.

The agenda was dynamic and included future skills, the value of public service apprenticeships, and the drive to meet the public service needs of Irish speakers. There was also a focus on the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on our workforce. An overarching theme was the equality, diversity and inclusion imperative. The master of ceremonies was our Innovation Fund partner, global educator, campaigner, and CEO of Tilting the Lens, Sinéad Burke.

We were delighted to lend our support to the event with key contributions from individual staff, as well as wider teams. The Public Jobs stand highlighted our contribution to the workforce of the future and discussions with attendees included inclusive recruitment processes, the new capability framework, inclusive routes to employment and the drive to increase the recruitment of Irish speakers.

Neurodiversity and the Changing Workplace

Sinéad Burke moderated a panel discussion **‘Wired Differently’** that focused on neurodiversity and the changing workplace. Our head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Siobhán McKenna, discussed inclusive recruitment practices and the need for reasonable accommodations to better support neurodiverse candidates and colleagues. Founder of As I Am, Adam Harris, urged better understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace and highlighted the benefits that neurodivergent employees can bring to organisations. Sandra Healy, founder, and CEO of Inclusio, discussed the emerging findings from an international research project with the University of California on neurodiversity in the workplace that focuses on belonging and its impact on productivity.

Upskilling and Reskilling via Apprenticeships

Michelle Noone, our head of senior executive recruitment, moderated a panel discussion on **‘Upskilling and Reskilling for the Future of Work via Apprenticeships’**. This panel provided insights into the recently launched Public Service Apprenticeship Plan, exploring the potential of apprenticeships in shaping a skilled workforce with practical examples and innovative approaches from public service employers. Michelle was joined by Andrew Brownlee (CEO SOLAS), Peter Davitt (CEO Fastrack to IT), and Mary O’Donoghue (Director, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer).

A video was also shared on the Public Service Apprenticeship Plan that featured insights from our CEO, Margaret McCabe, on the value of the plan in responding to skills deficits by providing an innovative approach to upskilling and reskilling the workforce and preparing our organisations for the future. The video also features Julie Hoey, from our Pre-Employment Checks team, who recently completed an apprenticeship BA (Honours) in Recruitment Practice that provided a valuable opportunity for upskilling and career advancement.



Recruitment Corner



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 our clients with an update on key provisions relating to recruitment and other relevant information.

Survey on Irish language Competency

Over 34,000 public sector employees took part in the first ever sector-wide survey on Irish language competency during Seachtain na Gaeilge (01-17 March 2024). The survey was carried out on a sample of public bodies as part of research underway by a team in the University of Galway, which will form the basis of the first National Plan for Irish language Public Services.

This Plan is being prepared by the Irish Language Services Advisory Committee, which was established by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under Section 18(C) of the Official Languages Acts 2003-2021. Specific reference has been made to the implementation of this Plan in *the Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy 'Building on our Strengths'* and it is to be published later this year.

In drafting this Plan, the Advisory Committee will have particular regard for the Act's ambitious recruitment target - that 20% of recruits to the public sector will be competent in the Irish language by the end of 2030, as well as looking to increase services provided by public bodies through the medium of Irish – particularly those provided in Gaeltacht Language Planning areas, Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks.

The research team and the Advisory Committee are delighted with the response rate to the competency survey and are extremely grateful to those organisations and employees who took part. The survey has proven to be a great motivator for the work of the Advisory Committee under the Act and in respect of the language in general.

Analysis of the competency survey is now underway and further updates will be provided in the coming months. Further information on the Act, the Committee and the Plan can be found on the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media's website: ([GA/EN](#)).

Local Government: Recruitment Updates

Update on New Competitions

The pipeline for new competitions continues to be busy. To-date, in 2024, we received 24 requests for a new competition. A total of 18 posts have now been advertised in 2024. There are also a further 22 roles (approx.) that are in the pipeline awaiting final documentation to be submitted from clients. **This information is correct as of 05 April 2024.**

Update on Nationwide Campaigns

To better support your planning and resourcing strategies, we have provided an update on our current and upcoming nationwide recruitment campaigns.

Senior Executive Engineer

- The Senior Executive Engineer (SEE) nationwide competition launched in March 2022, and the first and second batch of candidates for all locations have now completed stage 2 (main interviews).
- Current panels are in place for: Westmeath, Leitrim, Cavan, Louth, Monaghan, Laois, Tipperary, Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Cork County, Donegal, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Limerick, Sligo, Waterford, Offaly, Wicklow, Dublin City Council, Fingal, Galway City, Meath and Roscommon.
- There are 19 vacancies currently on hand, of which 18 are being filled from panels in place.
- Further candidates will be invited to complete stage 2 main interview throughout 2024, as and when vacancies are notified. If you have a requirement to fill vacancies from the current competition, please contact CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie, as we may need to interview further candidates for a particular location before all vacancies can be filled.

Senior Engineer

- Following the completion of stage 2 (main interviews), panels are in place for 24 locations: Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Fingal, Laois, Kildare, Galway City, Galway County, Offaly, Westmeath, Cork City, Cork County, Kerry, Longford, Roscommon, Monaghan, Sligo, Wexford, Clare, Kilkenny, Donegal, Mayo, Limerick, Tipperary and Wicklow.
- 57 sanctions have been received, with **57** candidates recommended and one at the clearance stage.
- All panels for the Senior Engineer are due to expire on 31 May 2024, If you have a requirement to fill vacancies from the current competition, please email CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie

Senior Executive Officer (SEO)

- A new SEO 2023 competition was advertised on 28 June 2023.
- The new panels were established from this competition in February 2024 and will be used to fill vacancies arising for open posts in any Local Authority during the lifetime of the competition, i.e., in the next eighteen months to two years.
- If you have a requirement to fill vacancies from the current 2023 nationwide competition, please contact CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie

Senior Executive Planner

- Following the stage 2 (main interviews) process, panels are in place for the following locations: Sligo, Tipperary, Limerick, Galway County, Cork City, Donegal, Kilkenny, Monaghan, Offaly, and Northern and Western Regional Assembly.
- To date, 49 sanctions have been received, with 46 candidates currently recommended and 2 at the clearance stage. Since the first panels formed in September 2021, 94% of vacancies have been filled.
- New competitions were advertised in 2023 and 2024 for the Senior Executive Planner in Kildare, Fingal, Louth, Meath, South Dublin County Council, Waterford, Southern Regional Assembly, Wicklow, Kerry, Clare, Westmeath and panels are due to be formed. New competitions for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown and Leitrim are due to be advertised in early April.
- If you have a requirement to fill vacancies from the current 2021 nationwide competition, please contact CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie

Process for Vacancy/New Competition Requests

When requesting a new competition, please submit the following information: Sanction; Statutory Request; Job Specification; Candidate Profile Form; name of the nominee (including contact details).

Please ensure that your stated nominee (who will participate in the selection process), has been informed of this in advance and of the potential time commitment required for sitting on a selection board.

Once all supporting documentation is submitted, we will provide an indicative timeline for your competition. If you require a job specification template from a previous competition or have any other queries, please contact CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie

Workforce Planning

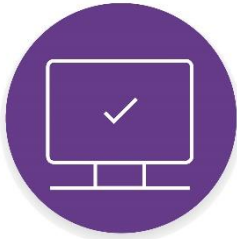
For many of our larger volume competitions, we follow a demand-led model of recruitment and only call candidates forward for interview as we are notified of need – this is a more efficient model and helps to manage candidate expectations.

Throughout the year, the CRM team will ask you to provide details of your **projected requirements** at specific grades – it is important that you engage in this process. The projections will be used for planning - we understand that the information reflects anticipated requirements at a point in time. In this regard, we will only act to fill a vacancy following the submission of a formal request.

We will continue to work closely with you on workforce planning to ensure that key vacancies in priority areas such as 'Housing for All' and the Active Travel scheme are successfully met.

Successful Delivery

Since January 2024, we have successfully delivered the following outputs to our Local Government clients (figures presented are up to end of March 2024).



19
New Campaigns
Advertised



875
Applications
Received



774
Assessments
Conducted



374
Interviews
Conducted



14
Campaigns Completed /
Panel in Place



62
Candidates
Assigned

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I)



Untapped Resource: A Co-Designed Blueprint for Welcoming and Supporting Disabled Employees

Funded by the Public Service Innovation Fund, our project on **Transforming the Approach to Reasonable Accommodations for Disabled People** took a co-design approach to making the process of assignment and onboarding more equitable and accessible for candidates with disabilities.

As part of the project, over 100 people, from 30 organisations across the civil and public sector, as well as other stakeholders, participated in a collaborative methodology – this included clients, candidates, disability advocates, support organisations and unions.

Our delivery partner, Tilting the Lens, have provided a co-designed blueprint for action, that addresses key challenges for disabled candidates identified at the assignment and onboarding stages. The blueprint includes nine recommendations that are designed to help public bodies implement and report on transparent actions to achieve long-term positive change in assignment and onboarding.

The recommendations are wide-ranging and set out under the pillars of: People and Culture; Process and Systems; Governance and Policy. Some of these are specific to recruitment processes, whilst others require service-wide changes and the support of colleagues from across the public sector to deliver on these.

Amongst the recommendations is a call for better disability awareness and training, the provision of accessible communications and better planning for assignment and onboarding. There is also an identified need to create expertise across the service in assistive technology and to increase support in the development and delivery of reasonable accommodation across the public sector. This is underpinned by the need to enshrine data collection on disability and reasonable accommodations.

It is acknowledged that many of the recommendations will require collaboration with partners, stakeholders and clients. In the next phase, we will share the findings of the blueprint across the public service and identify the relevant partners to discuss and plan for action to progress the recommendations.



Inclusive Routes to Employment

Work is continuing to develop 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 some of the current initiatives is provided below:

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.

In September 2023, there was a new intake of eight trainees who are progressing through the programme. Upon successful completion, they will have an opportunity to apply for a confined competition for a civil service role as Clerical Officer, Services Officer or Catering Assistant.

In February 2024, the OWL programme was nominated for the Irish Centre for Diversity's 'National Diversity Awards'. The programme won the award for '**Advancing Disability Equality**' which was a real testament to the programme and its leadership, as well as the partner organisations and trainees. The Programme was also recently awarded a Good Practice Certificate as part of the European Public Sector Award (EPSA).

In February, one of the OWL programme partners WALK, featured in an article in the Irish Times, highlighting the impact of their work, including the OWL programme: [Walk into a better career](#)



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.

This is the second year that a route to permanency is available for WAM graduates at the end of their placements in the civil service. There are currently 22 graduates who are in placement across the civil service – they had an opportunity to apply to a confined Executive Officer competition in February 2024 and interviews are due to take place in May.



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

The Embassy of Ireland, Finland

In January, the Embassy of Ireland Finland, Enterprise Ireland Nordics, and the Irish Finnish Business Council hosted a panel discussion in Helsinki, Finland, on the topic of diverse and inclusive work practices. Our Head of ED&I, Siobhán McKenna, was joined on the panel by Sandra Healy, founder of Inclusio, and a several HR and recruitment experts based in Finland.

Key discussion points included how Ireland and Finland can share experiences of migration. How workplace expectations are changing, with people increasingly looking for employers whose values match their own. As well as how inclusive approaches to hiring people for their skills and potential, can contribute to ensuring innovation, creativity and productivity in the workplace and society.



Charities Institute Ireland

Charities Institute Ireland partnered with LinkedIn to celebrate International Women's Day and work towards a shared mission of creating a more inclusive world, by hosting **Impact Salon: Preparing Your Workforce for the Future.**

Siobhán took part in an engaging panel discussion with Jenny Darmody (Editor at Silicon Republic), Áine Myler (CEO of Charities Institute Ireland) and Ahmed Fadl, (Public Sector Account Director, LinkedIn), that discussed positive strategies for organisations to navigate the dynamic shifts in the world of work and the evolving labour market. There was a focus on how organisations can remain committed to driving positive change in the workforce with a continued emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusion.



Client Information And Resources



Public Service Recruiters Network

On 11 March 2024, we hosted the Public Service Recruiters Network, with a theme of **Running Your Own Recruitment Competition – practical steps, key learning and outcomes**. The session took place online with 75 participants, across the member organisations.

The group was welcomed by Eimear O'Connor, Head of Recruitment Operations and Service Delivery, who emphasised harnessing the power of the network as a community of members to share experiences, learning and insights. We were delighted to deliver the session in collaboration with colleagues from:

- **Department of Social Protection (DSP)**
- **An Garda Síochána**
- **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)**

The session focused on specific recruitment competitions recently undertaken, each with its own unique features – it was engaging and interactive with lots of interest from members.

Catherine Bermingham from **DSP** kicked off the session with an overview of an innovative route to permanency at **Clerical Officer** level, for existing **Temporary Clerical Officers**. The competition was prompted by a need to retain existing staff, including those from a diverse background, as well as cost savings in terms of training. Catherine set out the key stages of the process including eligibility, applications and interview. The competition was not without its challenges, it involved using a new recruitment platform, and delivering the competition in an extremely tight timeframe. Ultimately, the competition addressed key resourcing challenges faced by DSP and provided a supply of staff (already trained in knowledge/skillset) in a very short time.

Monica Carr from **An Garda Síochána** provided valuable insights on managing a nationwide competition for **Clerical Officer** and **Temporary Clerical Officer**, which was prompted by vacancy and retention levels.



The competition was grounded in inclusivity, with no education requirements, and was promoted across social media. Following a successful advertising campaign, the competition generated a huge and unanticipated volume of applications. Monica spoke to the real challenges of managing such a large volume this included - candidate management system, the steps in the process, the need for additional staff to process applications, additional vetting. There was also a focus on how the challenges were overcome and the key learning.

From **DCEDIY**, Eimear Cowan and Amie Quinn provided an overview of their direct recruitment for **Executive Officer** which was prompted by the exponential growth of the Department and multiple crisis responses (Ukraine) under their remit. It included the stages in the process and the practicalities of working with an external recruitment partner. There was also discussion on the challenges in terms of cost, supporting the recruitment partner, timelines and securing approval. From an opportunity perspective, the tailoring of the Information Booklet to the types of EO roles available, including hybrid working, was key to attracting potential candidates and minimising attrition levels. The involvement of the HR team on the interview board was key to facilitating better skills matching at assignment.

The session was followed by a Review Clinic on board member training, hosted by our Compliance team.

The purpose of the Recruiters Network is to facilitate greater collaboration in recruitment across the public service - commitment to sharing best practice, identify common challenges and work together to attract the best people. The Network meets quarterly and is hosted by the Public Appointments Service, with contributions from the CPSA. If you want to find out more, please contact: recruitersnetwork@publicjobs.ie

Professionalising Recruitment: Celebrating Success



In December 2023, we celebrated thirty graduates who completed the **Professional Certificate in Resourcing and Recruitment**. This is our third cohort of learners, from across the civil and public sector, who enrolled in the programme. Professional development in recruitment is a growing area, particularly as recruitment tools and the entire recruitment landscape and labour market continue to change at such pace and operate in challenging conditions.

The conferring ceremony for our graduates marked a special day in their professional development journeys and there was a real buzz with family and friends and lots of photos. We are very proud of all those who participated in the programmes to-date and excited to see what is in store for them next!



Graduates at the recent IPA conferring ceremony - Sean Scully, Oonagh Perrem and Claire Connolly from the Public Appointments Service, together with Rosslyn May, An Garda Siochana, and Caitriona O'Leary and Fionnuala O'Riordan from the Central Statistics Office

In Ireland, public sector recruitment operates within a specific legislative and national policy framework, the Certificate responds to the regulatory context and the constantly evolving world of recruitment. There is a strong focus on building knowledge, developing capacity and highlighting best practice.

The Certificate is a Level-8 Special Purpose Award, accredited by the National University of Ireland, and we developed the course in partnership with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). This is aligned with our remit under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004, to provide recruitment related advisory services to civil and public service bodies aimed at maintaining the integrity and the probity of the recruitment and selection process.

This Programme aims to develop a network of recruitment professionals across the Irish public service, who serve to embed modern and progressive recruitment and selection practices across Irish public service organisations in line with best practices. The programme is comprised of three modules - Resourcing Context, Recruitment and Selection Practice and Regulatory Framework. These are delivered over 6 months, beginning each November.

Applications for the next intake of learners to the Professional Certificate will open over the summer - we will keep you updated. If you have any queries about the programme, please contact:

L&D@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:

