

CLIENT CONNECT

January 2024



PROFESSIONALISING
RECRUITMENT

TRANSFORMING
THE APPROACH
TO REASONABLE
ACCOMMODATIONS



CLIENT E-LEARNING
MODULES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
RECRUITMENT
UPDATES



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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.

Looking ahead, we have a busy 2024 and I am delighted to share some other key initiatives, including our digital transformation to replace our current recruitment system as well as an update on the Official Languages (Amendment) Act. There are also our regular updates on Local Government recruitment competitions and the E-Learning programme that is available to our client organisations.

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



Local Government: Recruitment Updates

Update on New Competitions

The pipeline for new competitions continues to be busy. In 2023, we received 86 requests for a new competition, this represents an increase in 69%, in comparison with 2022.

A total of 83 posts have now been advertised in 2023 – this represents an increase in 48%, compared to 2022. There are also a further 20 roles (approx.) that are in the pipeline awaiting final documentation to be submitted from clients.

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 Officer

- A new SEO 2023 competition was advertised on the 28 June 2023.
- Panels established from this competition 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.
- The new panel is expected to be in place in March 2024.
- Vacancies may be filled from the existing nationwide panels for the SEO 2020 competition, until the new panels are established. If you have a requirement to fill vacancies from the current competition, please contact CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie

Senior Executive Planner

- Following the stage 2 (main interviews) process, panels are in place for locations: Leitrim, Sligo, Tipperary, Limerick, Galway City, Galway County, Cavan, Clare, Cork County, Cork City, Donegal, Kerry, Kilkenny, Monaghan, Offaly, and Northern and Western Regional Assembly.
- To date, 47 sanctions have been received, with 38 candidates currently recommended and 9 at the clearance stage. Since the first panels formed in September 2021, 81% of vacancies have been filled.
- New competitions were advertised in 2023 for the Senior Executive Planner in Kildare, Fingal, Louth, Meath and South Dublin County Council, and panels are due to be formed.
- If you have a requirement to fill vacancies from the current 2021 nationwide competition, please contact CRMMailbox@publicjobs.ie

Senior Executive Engineer

- The Senior Executive Engineer (SEE) nationwide competition launched in March 2022, and the first batch of candidates for all locations have now completed stage 2 (main interviews).
- Batches two to six of candidates have now completed stage 2 (main interviews).
- Current panels are in place for: SDCC, Westmeath, Longford, Leitrim, Cavan, Louth, Monaghan, Laois, Galway County, Tipperary, Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Cork County, Donegal, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Waterford, Offaly, Wicklow, DCC, Fingal, Galway City, Meath and Roscommon.
- There are 22 vacancies currently on hand, of which 22 are being filled from panels in place.
- Further candidates will be invited to complete stage 2/main interview throughout 2023, 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 27 locations: DCC, SDCC, Fingal, DLR, Laois, Meath, Kildare, Galway City, Galway County, Offaly, Westmeath, Cork City, Cork County, Kerry, Longford, Louth, Roscommon, Monaghan, Sligo, Wexford, Clare, Kilkenny, Donegal, Mayo, Limerick, Tipperary and Wicklow.
- 57 sanctions have been received, with 54 candidates recommended and three at the clearance stage.
- Further candidates will be invited to complete stage 2/main interview throughout 2023, when vacancies are notified. If you have a requirement to fill vacancies from the current competition, please email 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.

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.

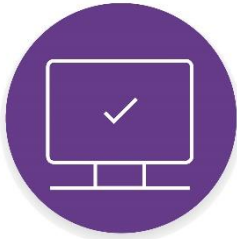
Upcoming Irish Language Panels

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.

Successful Delivery

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



77
New Campaigns
Advertised



2,871
Applications
Received



2,944
Assessments
Conducted



872
Interviews
Conducted



66
Campaigns Completed /
Panel in Place



249
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 and stateboards.ie and follow us on our social platforms:

