



An Coimisiún um Cheapacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí
Commission for Public Service Appointments

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



2020 Commission for Public Service Appointments
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Contents

Introduction	5
The Commission	6
Recruitment Licences	9
Complaints	11
Audit	21
Approved Agencies	24
Excluded Positions	25
Office Operations	26
Appendixes	27



Introduction

2019 marked the Commission's 15th year as regulator of recruitment and selection in the public service. From the beginning, we have played a key role in promoting values of fairness and transparency. We have supported offices and departments in recruiting high quality employees and helped to promote confidence in services provided to the public.

Resourcing remained a priority for many public bodies in 2019, reflected in increased levels of recruitment and selection activity. This saw a slight increase in the number of complaints received and demand for services provided by the Commission.

At the time of writing, the Commission for Public Service Appointments, along with many of its public and private sector stakeholders, is dealing with the consequences of the COVID-19 public health crisis. This has resulted in considerable and unavoidable disruptions to the delivery of public services, including to the work of the Commission. In particular, the Commission's office is closed to personal callers, and stakeholders have been asked to communicate with the office via email and telephone. Secretariat staff members are working remotely in order to respect the need for physical distancing. However, the work of the Commission continues. Throughout the period of disruption and uncertainty, the Commission has worked to ensure the effective delivery of services.

Activities in 2019

The Commission continued its work in the investigation of complaints under the Code of Practice in 2019. While there was a reduction in the number of complaints examined in 2019, this was due to the rescheduling of the Commission's December meeting to January 2020 to allow for preparations for the office to move premises.

During 2019, the Office of the Commission worked to strengthen its engagement with public bodies and to ensure a thorough understanding of their obligations, as set out in the Code of Practice. A strong emphasis was placed on the review and appeals procedures to ensure complaints were dealt with appropriately by public bodies.

In 2019, the Commission launched a completely revised and updated website, providing a more user-friendly platform for visitors to find and access the information they need. A significant body of work was conducted to improve the information and guidance available. The new website uses a number of online application forms, to allow visitors to make a complaint, apply for an excluding order, apply for a recruitment license and to make an application to be an approved agency. The website, available in English and Irish, also provides information about the Commission, copies of audits and publications, as well as information on each of the Codes of Practice.

The Office also developed a new strategic plan in 2019. In December 2019, the Commission relocated to new premises on 6 Earlsfort Terrace. The Office retained a convenient city centre location and the building is accessible for visitors with physical disabilities. Despite a considerable

amount of work involved in developing a new open plan environment and significant ICT changes, the move was completed with the minimum amount of disruption to the Commission's work and services.

The Commission

The Commission was set up under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act in 2004. The Commission's members during 2019 were:

- Seán Ó Fearghail TD, Ceann Comhairle
- Peter Tyndall, Ombudsman
- Martin Fraser, Secretary General to the Government
- Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Mr Justice Daniel O'Keeffe, Chairperson of the Standards in Public Office Commission

The Commission is supported in its operations by staff of its Secretariat. During 2019 the Secretariat was led by Ms Elaine Cassidy, as its Director and Mr Liam Duffy as Secretary to the Commission. In September 2019, Mr Sean Garvey took over the role as Secretary to the Commission. The Commission were supported by Ms Maire Ni Fhiachain, Assistant Principal, and a team of dedicated and committed staff members.

We would like to express our appreciation to all staff members of the Secretariat for their continued dedication and hard work throughout 2019. We would also like to thank staff of the shared services units in the Office of the Ombudsman for their ongoing support.

Departure of Commission member

In February 2020, the tenure of Mr Justice Daniel O'Keeffe as Chairman of the Standards in Public Office, ended at the conclusion of his six-year term. This in turn ended his tenure on the Commission for Public Service Appointments. The Commission thanks him for his dedication and service, and wishes him well. At the time of writing, a new appointment to the Commission has not been made. However, the four remaining members of the Commission continue to constitute a quorum.

Our role

Our role is to make sure appointments to the civil and public service are fair, transparent and merit-based. We aim to support the effective delivery of public services by continuously promoting best practice in recruitment and selection.

In our Codes of Practice, we set out the key recruitment principles and standards for appointments. We have an oversight role in ensuring public bodies within our remit adhere to these standards when carrying out a selection process.

We also outline how a candidate can review and appeal an appointment, if they believe it was unfair or wrong.

Our key responsibilities include:

- Setting out and promoting good recruitment practice
- Publishing Codes of Practice
- Issuing recruitment licences
- Outlining how to review and appeal an appointment
- Examining complaints about alleged breaches of the Codes
- Ensuring public bodies comply with the Codes
- Auditing recruitment and selection processes of public bodies
- Helping and guiding public bodies

Codes of Practice

One of our primary functions is to set out the principles and standards that should be followed by a public body when carrying out a recruitment process. These are set out in our Codes of Practice. Our key recruitment and selection principles are:

1. Probity
2. Merit
3. Best practice
4. Consistency
5. Transparency

The Codes give guidance on the meaning and application of these principles in everyday practice. They also set out the standards which should be followed at each stage of the selection process.

We have five Codes of Practice. These are the:

- Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service
- Code of Practice for Emergency Short-term Appointments to Positions in the Health Service Executive
- Code of Practice for Appointment of Persons with Disabilities to Positions in the Civil Service and Certain Public Bodies
- Code of Practice for Atypical Appointments to Positions in the Civil Service and Certain Public Bodies
- Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions where the Garda Commissioner has Statutory Responsibilities

Most appointments are made under the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service. However, in some cases, appointments are made under one of the other specified Codes.

In 2019, the Commission agreed to conduct a review of the Codes of Practice.

Recruitment Licences

For an appointment to be made under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointment) Act, 2004, the selection process must be carried out by an approved licence holder.

In many cases, the Public Appointments Service will carry out a recruitment process on behalf of a public body. In these cases, a recruitment licence is not needed. However, if a body wants to carry out its own recruitment, it must apply to us for a recruitment licence. A recruitment licence is a permit allowing a public body to carry out its own recruitment.

Licences are granted either generally, in relation to all positions within an organisation, or specifically, in relation to one or more positions. They are issued with a number of terms and conditions attached that must be strictly adhered to at all times.

While we have the power to terminate a licence in certain circumstances, this power has not been invoked to date.

Recruitment licences issued

We granted four new general recruitment licences in 2019. These were to the:

- Department of Health
- Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman
- National Council for Special Education
- Office of the Planning Regulator

We also engaged in a number of information and training sessions with new and existing licence holders and staff members within their HR units. This gave them an overview of their obligations as licence holders as well as guidance on our Codes of Practice and their application.

To date, 43 general licences have been issued to public bodies within our remit. A full list of licence holders is attached at Appendix 3.

Recruitment activity

A total number of 13,989 appointments were reported by licence holders during 2019. Of these, 4,352 were new appointments, made following a selection process carried out by the Public Appointments Service and 6,503, following an open selection processes carried out by individual offices/departments.

In addition, 2,370 appointments were made by way of internal promotion and 764 people were appointed to acting-up positions within licence holder organisations. A detailed breakdown of the recruitment and selection activity reported by licence holder is attached at Appendix 1.

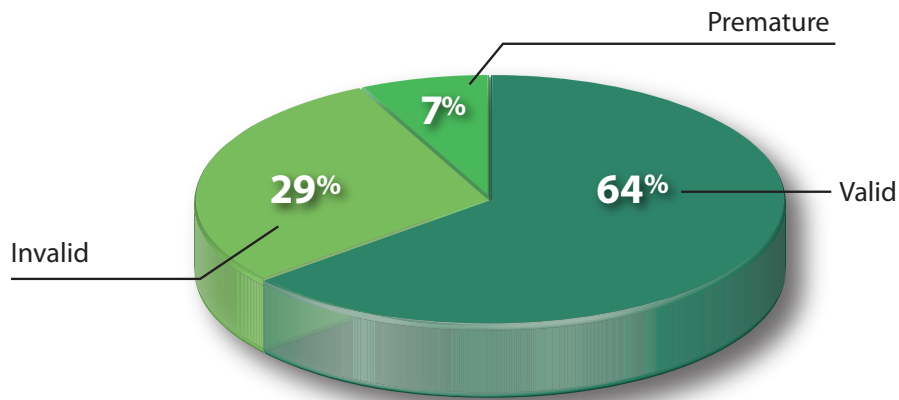
Complaints

Our Codes of Practice set out the review and complaint mechanisms open to a candidate if they are unhappy with a selection process. They can either ask for a review of a decision made during the selection process, under section 7 of the Codes, or make a complaint about the process itself, under section 8.

If a candidate wants a decision to be reviewed, they ask the public body directly. If they believe that the selection process was not carried out fairly, they make an initial complaint to the public body and if they are still unhappy, then they can appeal to us for a review.

In total, 464 requests for a review under section 7 were made to licence holders during 2019. In addition to this, 83 complaints were made to licence holders under section 8.

Complaints received 2019



Complaints received

During 2019, the Commission received 70 complaints on appeal. Of these, 45 were considered valid and accepted by the Commission, two were then subsequently withdrawn. Of these complaints, two were accepted under exceptional circumstances having been examined under Section 7 by the public body. Of those complaints not accepted, ten were previously reviewed under Section 7 but the issues raised were not considered to warrant exceptional circumstances. Of the remaining invalid complaints, most related to selection processes carried out by bodies not within the remit of the Commission. In five cases where the complaints were premature, candidates had raised valid concerns but had not yet raised the matter formally with the public body.

The breakdown of complaints received per public body is below.

Licence Holder	Valid	Invalid	Total
Public Appointments Service	12	4	16
Health Service Executive	13	4	17
An Garda Síochána	6	2	8
Irish Prisons Service	10*	2	12*
Dept of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	1	-	1
Dept Transport, Tourism and Sport	1	-	1
Dept of Employment Affairs and SP	1	-	1
Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	1	2	3
Bodies/positions outside remit	-	11	11
Total	45*	25	70*

*two withdrawn

Complaints examined

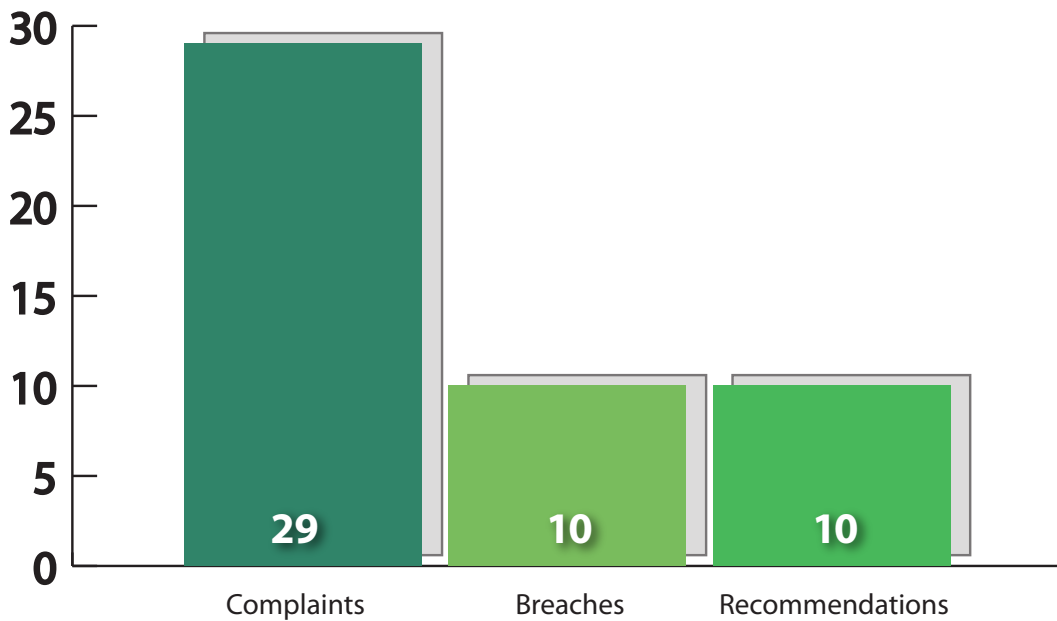
The examination of complaints makes up a large part of our day-to-day activity. An in-depth examination is carried out into the selection process followed, in order to identify whether any breaches of the Codes of Practice occurred. Where breaches are identified, instructions and/or recommendations are made to the public body to amend its processes to make sure they do not re-occur.

We completed examination of 29 complaints during 2019. Of the complaints examined, nine cases had no breaches of the Codes. In ten cases, breaches were found.

In ten other cases the Commission found that, although the actions taken did not amount to a breach, some aspects of the process fell below the standards we would like to see. In these cases, recommendations were made to the public body to amend its processes.

During 2019, we noted a considerable increase in the engagement with public bodies and their willingness to improve recruitment processes and the review and complaints procedures. In addition, we noted an increase in queries from public bodies to ensure they are adhering to best practice.

Complaints Examined 2019



Breaches of the codes

Of the complaints examined, in ten cases, breaches of the Codes of practice were found to have occurred. In a number of these, several breaches occurred during the same selection process.

These included:

1. No provisions in place for candidates to disclose a disability or for making reasonable accommodations in relation to a disability.
2. Failure to advise candidates of the review and appeals procedures.
3. Failure to document key decisions relating to the recruitment process.
4. Failure to have appropriate mechanisms in place to identify connections between board members and candidates and manage potential conflicts of interest.
5. No eligibility sift conducted to ensure candidates met the agreed eligibility criteria.
6. Failure to provide information on the determination process that led to its inclusion of eligibility criteria or that the requirement was appropriately agreed as a requirement for the role by experts within the field.
7. Failure to investigate allegations of breaches appropriately under of the Code of Practice received under section 8.
8. Unnecessary restrictions applied to applications, which resulted in potentially qualified candidates being restricted from applying for particular posts.

Recommendations

In ten other cases the Commission found that, while the actions taken did not constitute a breach of the Codes, some aspects of the selection process fell below the standard we would like to see. In these cases, recommendations were made to the public body to amend its processes.

These included ensuring that:

- All interview board members are fully trained in the tone and manner which should be used when questioning candidates.
- Competency examples are not to be time-restricted.
- Internal candidates are notified in a timely manner, which allows them sufficient time to complete the application process. Procedures should include an oversight mechanism by the HR unit to ensure line managers are notifying their staff appropriately.
- Ensure that any eligibility criteria applied are clearly defined and sufficiently objective to be able to assess candidates fairly and consistently.
- The removal of the use of manager's assessments in future competitions.
- All future requests for section 8 reviews are managed appropriately in line with the Code of Practice.
- Staff members are fully aware of the review and appeals mechanisms in place under section 7 and section 8 and their responsibilities in relation to each stage.
- Appropriate procedures are in place to identify and manage any connections and/or potential conflicts of interest between candidates and board members.

Case studies

The complaints examined in 2019 covered a number of different aspects and stages of the selection process. In many cases, similar themes and concerns were evident. In these cases, the decisions made by the Commission can serve as useful learning tools for public bodies carrying out selection processes in the future.

A summary of some of the complaints received in 2019 and our decisions on them is set out below.

Reasonable Accommodation

Complaint

The complainant, who advised they were formally assessed with dyslexia, applied for a position in a public service body. They were unsuccessful at interview. In their feedback, reference was made to spelling errors in the application form. They believed that the selection process was in breach of the Code of Practice for the following reasons:

1. The process did not have appropriate provisions in place for candidates with a disability. It did not allow candidates to apply for reasonable accommodation nor was there any avenue to inform board members of a disability prior to interview.
2. The board made no accommodation for the complainant after he informed them of his disability.

Findings

Prior to interview, the complainant inquired about provisions to disclose a disability. In addition, at the end of interview he disclosed his disability to the interview board. The complainant failed the competency for written communication.

During the investigation, it was clear that there were no provisions in place for candidates to disclose a disability in this case. It was also clear that no procedures were in place for making reasonable accommodations in relation to a disability.

Commission Decision

The Commission considered the absence of appropriate procedures in this case was a serious breach of the Code of Practice. It instructed the public body to immediately revise its recruitment procedures for all competitions so that appropriate provisions are in place for accommodating

candidates with a disability. These should include:

1. Provisions that allow candidates to disclose if they have a disability, in advance of the process
2. Guidelines on what is defined as a disability and what a reasonable and appropriate accommodation is in each case
3. The provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodation, where a disability is disclosed
4. Guidelines to all persons involved in the selection process on their obligations

Notifying Internal Candidates

Complaint

The complainant applied for an internal competition. At the time the competition was advertised she was on maternity leave. She believed that she was not treated equally to other candidates, as she received no notification of the competition from the office. She was only made aware of the selection process through a colleague, six days after its advertisement.

Findings

On this occasion, when the office notice was originally issued the complainant was not informed. She was subsequently told by a colleague. The matter was raised and the deadline was extended. While the complainant had more than sufficient time to complete the application it is clear that the procedures were not followed for candidates to be informed appropriately.

Commission Decision

While there was no evidence to suggest the complainant was placed at a disadvantage, it was evident, from the failure to inform her of the competition that a breach of the Code of Practice occurred. In order to ensure that this did not reoccur, the Commission instructed the public body to review its procedures for notifying staff. Where line managers will be responsible for notifying staff, the revised procedures should include an oversight mechanism by the HR unit to ensure line managers are carrying out their duties appropriately.

Conflicts of interest

Complaint

In this case, the complainant was considered not to have met the qualifying mark at shortlisting. The complainant had previously lodged a grievance procedure against a member of the shortlisting board, which was upheld by an external review. The complainant believed that the selection process was in breach of the Code of Practice. He alleged that a clear conflict of interest existed with the inclusion of the board member and that their inclusion facilitated biased decision making against him.

Findings

While there is no evidence of any bias against the candidate in the shortlisting process in this case, the public body did not have procedures in place to manage the risks of connections between candidates and board members, appropriately. While the board member disclosed working connections with some candidates, they did not disclose any specific connection to the complainant in relation to complaints made under the grievance procedures.

Commission Decision

The Commission considered that the connection between the complainant and the board member in this case was substantial and presented a potential conflict of interest in the selection process. It considered that a breach of the Code of Practice occurred.

In order to ensure that this did not reoccur it instructed the body to take immediate action to put in place revised procedures for dealing with potential conflicts of interest. The procedures should:

- Identify the different type of connections that can exist between candidates and board members, their related risks and the appropriate actions to take in each case
- Ensure all connections between candidates and board members are disclosed to the persons carrying out the selection process, in advance
- Require conflict of interest declarations to be signed by all board members
- Provide candidates with the names of selection board members in advance (this allows them an opportunity to identify any connections or perceived conflicts of interest)
- Ensure that decisions on any action to be taken are made only by persons responsible for administering the selection process

Eligibility Criteria

Complaint

The complainant applied for a medical position. Included in the eligibility criteria for the post was a requirement to have a specific qualification or equivalent. The complainant was deemed not have met the eligibility criteria during the shortlisting process. She believed that a number of breaches of the Code of Practice occurred during the selection process. She alleged that the qualification or equivalent was not an essential requirement for the post.

Findings

In this case, the Commission could not find that the requirement to hold the qualification was unduly restrictive. However, it was not satisfied that the public body had appropriately demonstrated that qualification, or an equivalent, was an essential requirement in this case. The public body could also not provide information on the determination process that led to inclusion of the requirement to hold the qualification or the persons involved in that determination process.

Commission Decision

The Commission considers that failures in this regard amount to a breach of the Code of Practice. In order to ensure that any eligibility criteria applied in the future are appropriate and not unduly restrictive it instructed the body to conduct a review of the eligibility criteria for the position.

In determining these requirements, there is an obligation on public bodies to ensure that they are done so:

- In a clear and transparent manner
- By persons appropriately qualified to do so
- On foot of clear evidence for their inclusion
- Within the context of the current environment
- At an appropriately senior level within the organisation

Public bodies must also be mindful of the inclusion of any overly restrictive criteria, which could deny candidates, that would otherwise be able to show their ability to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the role, from applying.

Review Procedures

The Commission found a number of breaches from various public bodies relating to the complaints and review procedures set out in the Code. Over a number of reports, it made a number of instructions to public bodies to implement or amend procedures for processing reviews and complaints under the Code of Practice. These instructions set out that:

- Procedures are set out in advance, are communicated clearly to candidates and understood by all staff involved in the process
- Staff members are fully aware of the review and appeals mechanisms in place under section 7 and section 8 and their responsibilities in relation to each stage
- Procedures should include clear information on:
 - The role of the reviewer
 - How a review should be conducted
 - The relevant information required
 - Steps that should be taken when a breach of the Code of Practice is found by a formal reviewer
- Complaints from candidates are initially considered informally before any decision to exclude them purely on a time basis is taken
- Training should be arranged for all personnel involved in the review process

Manager Assessments

In a number of complaints, the Commission made recommendations with regards to the use of manager assessments in a selection process.

It noted with some concern that in some competitions only candidates who had a recommendation of suitability for promotion by their manager were admitted to the competitions. In addition, these forms were provided to the interview board prior to interview. In one case, it noted that there were no procedures in place for the decisions made on these forms to be reviewed under the Code of Practice.

The Commission is mindful that it is difficult for a public body to ensure that line managers are carrying out assessments in a fair and consistent manner, and there is a higher risk of the influence of bias in decision-making. In this regard, it does not support the use of managers' assessments as part of the selection process and has instructed a number of public bodies to remove the use of manager assessments in any future selection processes.

Audit

As part of the Commission's oversight role, audits are undertaken annually of licence holder recruitment and selection activity. This serves as an essential learning tool, setting benchmarks for good practice and highlighting areas for improvement.

In 2019 an audit was carried out into the use of restrictive eligibility criteria in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

Audit into the use of restrictive eligibility criteria in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners

Background

Section 2.6.4 of the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions within the Civil and Public Service outlines the standards that are expected when setting the job and person specifications for a role.

In 2011, the Commission carried out an audit of eligibility criteria for promotion to positions in the civil service. It states that eligibility criteria for positions in the civil service should only reflect the duties and responsibilities of the role. On foot of this, a sub-committee of General Council agreed that promotion to grades within the civil service would not be restricted to staff serving at the grade immediately below the grade to which promotions were being made. Instead, eligibility criteria would be unrestrictive and candidates would be eligible to compete for any post once they had two years' general service.

During examination of a complaint received under section 8 of the Code of Practice against the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (Revenue) in 2019, the Commission's attention was drawn to an agreement that had been made in that case to bypass the revised rules for promotion outlined above. The Commission was advised that the decision to restrict the criteria in that case came about as a direct result of adjudication findings resulting from industrial relations disputes. It was also told that the findings in this case had regard to precedents established in a number of previous selection processes arising from similar disputes.

Findings

The audit focused on the following selection processes carried out from 2011 to date:

- Promotion to staff officer (2016)

- Promotion to higher executive officer (2018)

- Promotion to assistant principal (2018)

- Promotion to assistant principal legal executive officer (2018)

These were processes where Revenue confirmed that restrictive eligibility criteria had been applied, on foot of agreements with industrial relations bodies, in order to settle historic disputes. The audit considered the planning and decision-making processes surrounding the setting of the eligibility criteria and essential requirements in each case. It also considered the general processes and procedures in place in Revenue for the setting of the criteria and requirements.

As a general rule, in setting eligibility criteria, Revenue conforms to the prescribed criteria of two years' service and a positive rating in previous PMDS reports. The selection processes under consideration in this case were those not initiated by Revenue, but those carried out specifically as a result of adjudication findings resulting from industrial relations disputes.

On foot of the recommendations made at adjudication, a special competition was run for each of the above grades. Each of these competitions included eligibility criteria that candidates should have between 10 and 25-years' service. The criteria for each competition was set to resolve historic disputes.

Conclusions

In each of the selection processes examined, restrictive eligibility criteria were applied, confining candidates to those having served a specified number of years within the civil service and/or at a specified grade. This was in contravention of the standards set out in section 2.6.4 of the Code of Practice and of the revised policy for application of eligibility criteria for promotion within the civil service.

The selection processes examined were those not initiated by Revenue, but those carried out as a direct result of adjudication findings. While the restriction was not specifically provided for in each case, the decisions made were clearly based on an understood responsibility to finalise the matter in dispute. It should be noted, that each of the decisions made in these processes were individual, specific decisions, with no general applicability in the future. This alleviates the majority of concerns the Commission would have in relation to use of restrictive eligibility criteria in future.

The Commission is satisfied that Revenue, in setting eligibility criteria and essential requirements, is generally operating in accordance with the Codes of Practice.

However, the Act sets out the legal basis on which a public body must adhere to the principles of merit-based appointment. In addition, the terms and conditions of a recruitment licence oblige a licence holder to comply at all times with the provisions of the Act. If a body is found not to have complied, its recruitment licence may be revoked.

While a decision might be made, in good faith, through dispute resolution mechanisms, this does not remove the licence holder's legal obligations. Where it is recommended that a body restrict the eligibility criteria or essential requirements for a role, that is in essence an instruction to the body to contravene legal obligations and risk revocation of its recruitment licence. There is also a danger that a precedent could be established that would result in restrictive eligibility criteria being employed to address industrial relations disputes.

The Commission considers that dispute resolution mechanisms, in recommending actions that result in a licence holder contravening its legal obligations, are acting as a barrier to fair, merit-based appointment. It is recommended that, in future, all relevant parties are made fully aware of Revenue's obligations under the Act and the high level risks associated with it breaching the terms and conditions of its recruitment licence.

Approved Agencies

In most cases a licence holder will carry out all aspects of the selection process. However, it is open to a licence holder, where relevant, to seek the assistance of a private sector recruitment agency with some of the tasks associated with the recruitment process.

We publish a list annually of 'approved recruitment agencies'. These are agencies that have applied to the Commission and where, on examination, we were satisfied that they have appropriate processes in place to support public bodies in carrying out fair and merit-based selection.

All approved agencies are listed on the register of licenced employment agencies maintained by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and have given statements of compliance confirming that they will adhere to the standards and principles outlined in the Codes of Practice.

During 2019 the Commission approved the following agencies:

- Conscia
- Amrop

To date, 18 agencies have been included on our list of approved agencies. A full list of approved agencies is attached at Appendix 4

Excluded Positions

Civil service bodies should be in a position to plan their staffing needs, including the filling of temporary posts, through workforce planning activities. However, in some cases, it can be necessary to appoint someone to an unestablished position on a temporary basis, outside of the requirements of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004.

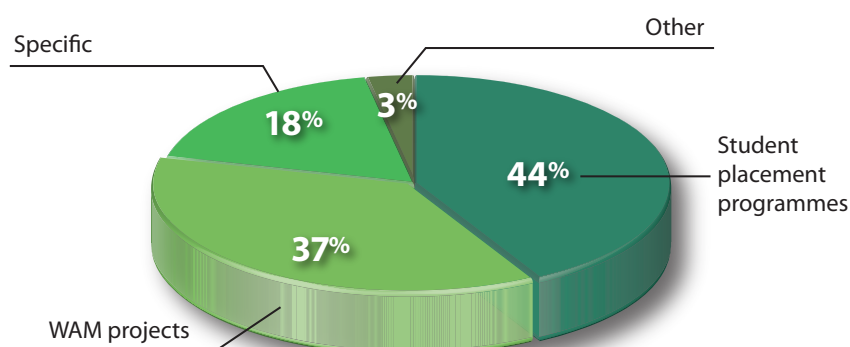
In these cases, a body can apply to us for an excluding order. If we grant the order, the appointment is temporarily excluded from the Act. This means that they can make an appointment without a full selection process under the Codes of Practice.

We only grant excluding orders for temporary, unestablished positions within the Civil Service. They are usually only granted when appointing someone as part of a specific short-term initiative or as ministerial office staff. Apart from this, we will only grant an order in exceptional circumstances.

The table below details the orders which were made or extended in 2019.

Category	Orders
Student placement programmes	26
WAM projects	23
Ministerial private staff	0
Specific skills	11
Other	2
Total	62

The remaining 11 orders enabled the engagement of staff to short-term appointments, where the timescales involved did not allow for the running of an open competitive selection process.



Office Operations

Move to New Premises

After a number of years on Lower Leeson Street, the Commission for Public Service Appointments moved to new premises in December 2019. The Secretariat is co-located with the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Information Commissioner, the Office of the Environmental Information Commissioner, the Standards in Public Office Commission and the Referendum Commission (when established). All of these statutory functions are supported by staff provided by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Despite a considerable amount of work involved in developing a new open plan environment and significant ICT changes, the move was completed with the minimum amount of disruption to our services. The new offices, located at 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, are energy efficient, and wheelchair accessible. The Commission Secretariat continues to maintain its previous office hours and all other contact information, including telephone and email addresses, remain unchanged.

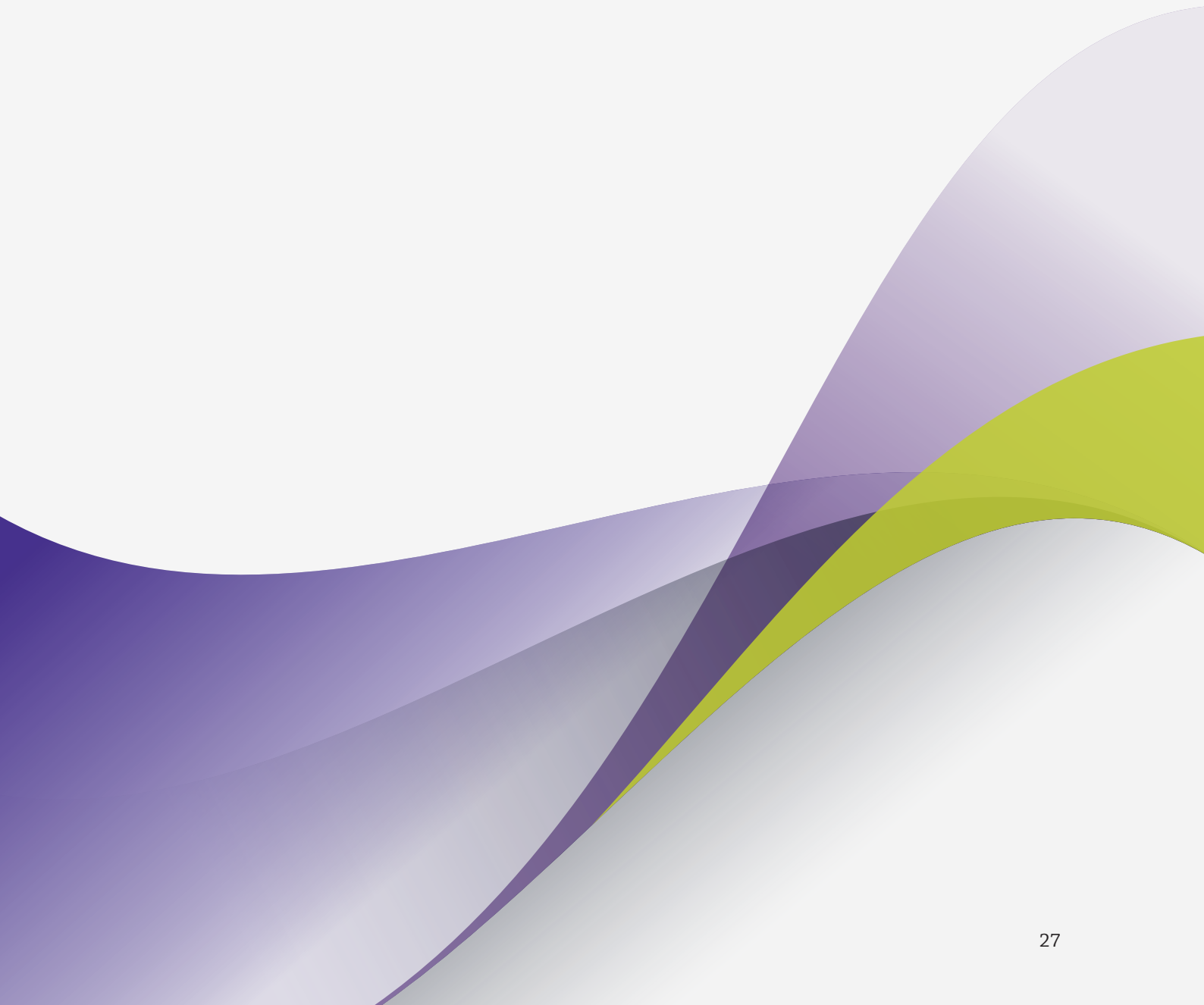
Irish Human Rights and Equality

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 introduced a positive duty on public bodies to have due regard to human rights and equality issues. The Office of the Ombudsman, which provides secretariat support to the Commission, is committed to providing a service to all clients that respects their human rights and their right to equal treatment and has adopted a proactive approach to implementing this duty. The Office's approach is underlined by its core organisational values of independence, customer focus and fairness, which are evident in both the culture of the Office and its internal policies and procedures. In undertaking its statutory functions, the Office will ensure that any failure to respect human rights is considered.

In 2018, the Office established a working group on the public sector duty. The group assessed the human rights and equality issues relevant to the Office's functions and identified the policies, plans and actions needed to address these. On foot of this, a Public Sector Duty Committee was established. During 2019, a considerable amount of progress was made by the Committee in delivering the actions it set out. This included ensuring that all communications used by the Office were accessible and clearly understood by all users.

In support of the Office's move, a considerable amount of work was carried out in ensuring the accessibility of the office for both staff and visitors alike. This included the development of a revised internal communications strategy which focused on ensuring staff members were aware of the availability of needs assessments and the assistive technologies that might be required. In addition to this, an e-learning module on human rights and equality was introduced for all new staff members.

Appendixes



Appendix 1

Licence holder recruitment and selection activity

Licence Holder	Internal	Open	Open (PAS)	Acting up	Total
Adoption Authority of Ireland	2	9	0	0	11
An Garda Síochána	193	1	0	39	233
Central Statistics Office	52	106	88	9	255
Chief State Solicitor's Office	3	15	22	0	40
Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)	258	522	0	97	877
Courts Service	61	56	111	32	260
Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine	111	30	501	1	643
Department of Children and Youth Affairs	7	0	44	2	53
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	25	12	63	1	101
Department of Education and Skills	7	0	180	77	264
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	209	1	1211	323	1744
Department of Finance	13	0	40	2	55
Department of Foreign Affairs	103	5	304	17	429
Department of Health (Specific)	18	0	58	0	76
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	28	16	91	1	136
Department of Justice and Equality	68	12	551	21	652
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	16	0	49	1	66
Department of Rural and Community Development	15	0	13	2	30
Department of the Taoiseach	3	0	26	1	30
Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman	7	33	0	0	40

Licence Holder	Internal	Open	Open (PAS)	Acting up	Total
Houses of the Oireachtas	12	27	44	2	82
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	8	8	11	2	29
Irish Prison Service	103	14	53	6	176
Law Reform Commission	2	6	0	0	8
Legal Aid Board	11	39	4	2	56
National Council for Special Education	1	0	28	5	34
National Shared Services office					0
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland	3	11	0	4	18
Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General	7	8	9	0	24
Office of Government Procurement	14	0	31	3	48
Office of the Director for Public Prosecutions	4	3	10	5	22
Office of the Ombudsman					0
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	817	260	537	29	1643
Ombudsman for Children	0	7	1	1	9
Policing Authority					0
Property Registration Authority	18	0	75	5	98
Public Appointments Service					0
State Examination Commission	7	107	22	13	149
State Laboratory	1	4	7	0	12
Tax Appeal Commission	3	0	15	2	20
Valuation Office	12	0	25	1	38
Total	2370	6503	4352	764	13989

Appendix 2

Review and complaints activity

Licence Holder	Section 7	Section 8	Total Appointments
Adoption Authority of Ireland	0	0	11
An Garda Síochána	26	10	233
Central statistics office	2	0	255
Chief State Solicitor's Office	0	0	40
Child and family agency (TUSLA)	31	1	877
Courts Service	54	0	260
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	6	1	643
Department of Children and Youth Affairs	0	0	53
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	1	1	101
Department of education and skills	0	0	264
Department of employment affairs and social protection	23	1	1744
Department of Finance	0	0	55
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	0	0	429
Department of Health (Specific)	0	1	76
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	0	0	136
Department of Justice and Equality	9	1	652
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	0	0	66
Department of Rural and Community Development	0	0	30
Department of the Taoiseach	0	0	30
Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman	0	0	40
Health Service Executive	125	34	5448
Health information and quality authority	1	0	63
Houses of the Oireachtas	1	0	85
Irish human rights and equality Commission	0	1	29
Irish Prison Service	63	28	176
Law Reform Commission	0	0	8

Licence Holder	Section 7	Section 8	Total Appointments
Legal Aid Board	0	0	56
National Council for Special Education	1	0	34
National shared service office			0
Nursing and midwifery board of Ireland	0	0	15
Office of the comptroller and auditor general	0	0	24
Office of the director of public prosecutions	0	0	22
Office of Government Procurement	2	3	48
Office of the Planning Regulator	0	0	14
Office of the Ombudsman			0
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	18	0	1643
Ombudsman for Children	0	0	9
Policing authority			0
Property registration authority	0	0	98
Public Appointments Service			0
State examination commission	1	1	149
State Laboratory	0	0	12
Tax Appeal Commission	0	0	20
Valuation Office	0	0	38
Total	364	83	13989

* This figure includes appointments where the selection process was carried out by the Public Appointments Service, where review and complaint processes were carried out by the Service, but candidates were appointed to another licence holder.

Appendix 3

Recruitment licence holders

Adoption Authority of Ireland	Health Service Executive
An Garda Síochána	Irish Human Rights Commission
Central Statistics Office	Irish Prison Service
Chief State Solicitor's Office	Law Reform Commission
Child and Family Agency	Legal Aid Board
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	National Shared Services Office
Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General
Department of Education and Skills	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas
Department of Finance	Office of the Ombudsman
Department of Foreign Affairs	Office of the Revenue Commissioners
Department of Justice and Equality	Ombudsman for Children's Office
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Policing Authority
Department of Rural and Community Development	Property Registration Authority
Department of the Housing Planning and Local Government	Public Appointments Service
Department of the Taoiseach	State Examinations Commission
Health Information and Quality Authority	Tax Appeals Commission
	The Courts Service
	The State Laboratory
	The Valuation Office

Appendix 4

Approved recruitment agencies

FRS Recruitment Society Limited

Lex Consultancy Limited

Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Limited

IT Force Ltd

Recruitment Plus

Grafton Recruitment Ltd

Osborne Recruitment

Cpl Ltd

Servisource Recruitment Limited

Hays Specialist Recruitment Limited

Orange Recruitment Limited


Mazars

InterSearch Ireland

SThree Staffing Ireland Limited

PEGlobal

GatenbySanderson



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