



Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment People Strategy 2021-2024 Promoting a High-Performance Organisation



Contents

CONTENTS.....	3
DEVELOPING OUR DETE PEOPLE STRATEGY.....	5
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	6
GOAL 1: FOR DETE TO BE AN ‘EMPLOYER OF CHOICE’	8
GOAL 2: DEVELOP A RESILIENT WORKFORCE.....	10
GOAL 3: BUILD A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE.....	12
APPENDIX 1: CHANGES TO HR IN THE CIVIL SERVICE	14
APPENDIX 2: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING	16
APPENDIX 3: HR SERVICES IN DETE.....	18

Developing our People Strategy

1. Staff Consultation: Key things you wanted to see



2. Review of People Data: What we learned



Intake of nearly 200 new entrants in two years



75 promotions in two years - nearly 10% of all staff



60% of staff in their current post less than four years



Positive gender balance at all levels- including near 50/50 in senior management



Over 45% of our staff are over 50, and our average age is 47. However, our 20-29 cohort is now increasing year on year

3. People Strategy Goals: What do we want to achieve?



4. What will this mean for you?

- ✓ New career development support
- ✓ More developmental opportunities
- ✓ Supports for Blended and Remote Working
- ✓ More options for filling vacancies
- ✓ More opportunities for engagement and ways to have your say
- ✓ New strategy and policies for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- ✓ Closer partnering of HR with business teams to problem-solve and meet team needs

Introduction and Context

Our Department

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has a broad range of responsibilities including developing economic policy, stimulating employment creation, assisting enterprise with research and development needs, business regulation, promoting fair competition, protecting consumers and safeguarding workers. We have a global reach and work closely with international partners including at EU, European Court of Justice and International Labour Organisation level on high-priority areas such as Brexit, international trade and investment, business regulation, and employment and labour market standards. With this broad, outward-facing and challenging remit we see our Department as an attractive employer where staff have a wide range of options to progress and develop their Civil Service career.

In 2020, 40 staff were promoted, 70 staff moved to new posts, and nearly 100 new entrants joined the Department. We funded the enrolment of 21 staff in academic courses and continued assisting 28 staff in their studies from Diploma through to Doctorate level in disciplines such as Economic Science, Policy Analysis, Employment Law and Business Administration. Over 300 staff undertook further learning in 2020 related to the Department's remit. We see ourselves as a Department that prioritises and invests in the development and progression of its staff.

What is a 'People Strategy'?

For any organisation of any size, people are the driving force behind what that organisation is capable of achieving. For our Department to deliver on its commitments and continue to grow, the goals of the HR team must be fundamentally connected with our overall goals. Our 'People Strategy' sets this out – how, in HR, we support senior leadership to secure, develop and retain staff in order to best deliver the mission of our Department.

What do we want to achieve?

Goal six of the Department's Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 sets out a vision for our workforce: *'Build an innovative and agile department with a strong public service ethos driving effective and responsible policy implementation'*. This Strategy sets out what our contribution in HR will be to meeting this goal over the next three years. Our Strategy is built around three objectives:



1. For DETE to be an 'Employer of Choice', where staff choose to progress their careers, and others would like to work



2. To develop a resilient workforce with the agility and strength to withstand future change and challenges



3. To build a supportive and inclusive workplace where all staff can progress their career aspirations and feel valued, regardless of their background or circumstances

Details on what we will do to meet these objectives are outlined in this plan. These will be broken down into yearly targets and deliverables in our annual HR Business Plan.

HR Values and Principles

Our approach to everything we do in HR aligns with our Civil Service values of independence, integrity, impartiality, equality, fairness and respect; values which underpin the public service ethos we all share.

Our core **Values** in HR are **Trust**, **Accessibility**, and **Openness**. Interactions with HR are treated with care and in confidence, and we are available to support and advise all staff equally. We are an experienced and qualified team who work openly and honestly with staff to find the best solutions. These are the core principles that are most important to us in delivering our services.

When it comes to decision-making, our **Principles** are based on **Balance**, **Fairness** and **Equality**, using best practice, experience, and assessment of impacts. Our ideal outcome is one that creates the best balance between the business needs of the Department, the team, and the individual.

HR Service and the Employee Lifecycle

The service HR provides is built on the employee 'lifecycle', and the different stages all staff go through as they progress their career in the Department. During each of these stages, we work closely with individuals and senior leaders with the aim of providing a proactive service that is responsive to the needs of the Department and its Business Units.



This lifecycle also informs our Strategy, and we have made sure that in planning out our objectives and actions we are taking into account each stage of this journey.

Goal 1: For DETE to be an 'Employer of Choice'



Career
Progression
Pathways

Blended and
Flexible Working
Practices

Involvement
and Recognition

Our targets:

1. To retain our own quality staff cohort by providing **opportunities for staff to grow and develop their career**
2. To support **modern, flexible work practices** and policies that allow us to remain a competitive employer
3. To develop a workplace culture that gives staff **opportunities to engage and participate** in change and problem-solving
4. To play our part in making the Civil Service **a modern, attractive career option**

Our starting point:

- Our success rate securing applicants through Civil Service Mobility affirms our Department is an attractive place to work; this will be developed to continue securing the best-fit candidates, as we compete for talent in a strong labour market
- Feedback from staff suggests an appetite for career development advice and finding out how to 'build' a career in the Department/Civil Service, including in specialist roles
- We now know that 'Blended Working', as opposed to full-time working in the office or remotely, is going to be a key feature of our working environment into the future.
- To remain a competitive and attractive employer, we must develop arrangements for our Department that allow us to offer this flexibility in a way that best meets our business needs, while supporting staff as appropriate
- Further developing a culture of involvement, participation and innovation is still a challenge for our Department, and is a key feature of workplaces that attract and retain motivated staff. While staff experience of our innovation culture has improved, less than half of staff (47%) feel that they are involved openly in decision making in our organisation

What will this mean for you?

- Career development support
- More developmental opportunities
- Blended and flexible working options
- Supports for making 'Blended working' work for your teams
- More ways to participate in problem-solving and improving our involvement culture

Action Plan

Career Progression Pathways

- Provide for **'career development' conversations**, including career path support for specialists
- Explore **new job titles** to better reflect work and skills
- Advertise suitable posts through **'Expressions of Interest'** to provide development opportunities
- Facilitate **secondment opportunities** with our Agencies, and explore private sector options in consultation with senior leaders
- Provide **more cross-Divisional 'on the job' development opportunities** akin to the 'Events panel'
- Provide **promotion-related training courses** such as interview and presentation skills, as well as **leadership programmes** to support staff development for promotion
- Review and **revise 'Internal Mobility' policy** to ensure it aligns with career development and succession planning needs

Blended and Flexible Working Practices

- Develop our **'Blended Working' policy** in consultation with all staff, and aligned with the Civil Service Blended Working Framework
- Develop a **'Right to Disconnect' Policy**
- Deliver a programme of activities to share and engage staff in **best practice remote and blended working behaviours**, using the learnings from ConnECTed Teams
- Support connectedness through networks: establish a **network to link new joiners with longer serving staff**, building on the peer-to-peer pilot
- **Promote other networks** to share knowledge/best practice and strengthen connectedness

Involvement and Recognition

- Listen to and **implement staff ideas** through Innovate@ETE
- Consult all staff on **2020 Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey** scores, developing an action plan to address challenging results
- Conduct a targeted **'ideas' engagement with new entrants**
- **Celebrate staff achievements** through the Excellence and Innovation Awards and long service contributions
- Commence **engagement on 'Great Place to Work'**, starting with a staff survey in 2022

Goal 2: Develop a Resilient Workforce



Pipeline of
Talent

Training, Career
Development
and Performance

Strategic
Workforce
Planning

Our targets:

1. To be able to **fill vacancies in a timely manner from a range of sources:** making the most of our internal resources as well as securing new entrants
2. To use external competitions and Civil Service Mobility to attract in **'best-fit' candidates to support our specialist work areas**
3. To build **management capability** to support good performance and high functioning teams
4. To use bespoke training to **build capability and core, transferrable skills** among staff
5. To **improve team resilience** by helping teams to prepare and plan for change: developing strong structures for succession planning and supporting teams through staff turnover

Our starting point:

- We partner with the Public Appointments Service to provide most of our staffing requirements, but the timeliness in filling vacancies is a challenge for our business. We will work with PAS to address delays while continuing to make the most of parallel sources including mobility, interdepartmental panels and our own recruitment licence
- c.200 new entrants have joined our Department over the past two years, replacing staff who have retired, resigned, or transferred. 131 staff have moved internally, including for promotion. This level of movement has been relatively constant for 2-3 years; 60% of staff are now in their post less than 4 years.
- Staff feelings of general 'competence' measured by the Employee Engagement Survey are strong with 81% believing they have the ability and skills to carry out their work; however this has declined slightly since 2015
- Our reputation for learning and development is strong. In addition to the wide OneLearning provision, we can also meet tailored training needs for individual teams

What will this mean for you?

- Broader options for filling vacancies
- Direct engagement between HR Business Partners and teams to problem-solve staffing issues
- Data insights for team leaders
- Training, development and networks to support skills development
- Support to put succession planning measures in place

Action Plan

Pipeline of Talent

- Procure a **recruitment agency** to assist in filling time-critical positions
- Target vacancies to advertise and fill through **'Expressions of Interest'**
- Continue to **build our capability and provide opportunities** through the **Civil Service Wide Mobility (CSWM) programme**
- Promote information on **overseas postings** and work with EU Affairs to develop a secondment policy for the EU Institutions
- **Engage regularly with PAS/TLAC** to build relations and meet our needs from external competitions
- Develop a formal **DETE Transition Year programme** to inspire the next generation to consider Civil Service careers

Training, Development and Performance

- **Establish skills and subject networks** in priority areas such as project management, procurement, legislation, etc
- Establish and promote materials to support **'self-guided learning'** options for staff
- Design and deliver **grade-based training programmes**
- Deliver **leadership-focused coaching and mentoring** programmes
- Start a **mentorship programme for new managers**
- Showcase and **recognise good management**
- Develop an initiative to **support managers in maximizing the benefits of PMDS** for staff and the Department

Strategic Workforce Planning

- **Regular consultation with senior leadership** to identify workforce gaps and develop solutions
- Develop a **new HR data dashboard** to provide regular, Divisional-level insights
- Review and **redevelop our HR Business Partnering model**
- Implement recommendations from the **HR Operating Model (HROM) pilot programme**
- Engage directly with teams to support **succession planning**
- **Strategic engagement with PAS/NSSO** as part of HROM project to address processing bottlenecks

Goal 3: Build a Supportive and Inclusive Workplace

ED&I
Benchmarking
and Strategy

Policies, Training
and Supports

Regular Staff
Engagement

Our targets:

1. To build and support a **diverse staff cohort** that is reflective of the citizenry.
As a Civil Service Department that serves the citizens of Ireland, our workforce can best understand our customers when it is most reflective of wider society
2. To develop **inclusive structures and policies** that ensure all staff feel able to participate and achieve their potential
3. To ensure staff **welfare and wellbeing are prioritised**, and that supports are well communicated
4. To build trust and commitment with staff, and **for all staff to feel their voices are heard** and their contribution to our Department is equally valued.

Our starting point:

- All civil servants have a responsibility to create a working environment in which differences are respected and in which all people – staff, clients and customers – are valued as individuals
- Progress has been made on different strands of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I), such as through the staff-led Pride network, improved disability participation, and improved senior team gender balance
- A coherent structure and direction is now needed, including broadening our focus on diversity across all nine grounds in the equality legislation – gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community
- The Civil Service is strongly committed to equality of opportunity in all its employment practices, and we will work to ensure our Department's practices and policies reflect this
- Continuing to build a culture of involvement and participation is a key focus for our Department. With less than half of staff (47%) of the view that they are involved openly in decision making in our organization, this will be a key focus for people managers and individuals to address with the support of HR

What will this mean for you?

- Opportunity to take part in consultation on DETE ED&I Strategy
- More ED&I-related training opportunities
- More opportunities and support to participate in access programmes
- More staff engagement initiatives

Action Plan

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarking and Strategy

- Establish **data and benchmarks** for DE&I
- Consult and review externally on **best practice policies and programmes**
- **Consult with all staff** on experiences of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in our Department
- Develop a **DE&I Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy**, in alignment with forthcoming Civil Service ED&I policies and guidance

Policies, Training and Supports

- Explore **ED&I workplace accreditation** for DE&I
- Provide **training in ED&I related areas** to support staff to build inclusive teams
- Provide **opportunities for people with disabilities** through WAM and OWL programmes
- Develop a **Maternity Leave Policy** and establish a support group
- Develop **new policies to support staff wellbeing and welfare**, including Menopause and Bereavement policies
- **Engage directly to support staff** and managers on sensitive issues
- Develop a protocol to **engage with retiring staff**

Regular Staff Engagement

- Develop 'pulse' survey format for **regular staff feedback**
- **Consult with staff** on solutions to improve our 'culture of involvement'
- Initiate **Exit Interviews and Orientation Interviews** for one-to-one engagement and feedback
- Develop and implement a format for **regular HR 'clinics'**
- **Consult with all staff** in the development of **new HR policies and strategies**

Appendix 1: Changes to HR in the Civil Service

HR Operating Model

The way HR works in the Civil Service is changing. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) is currently leading on a 'HR Operating Model' (HROM) project to review how HR services are delivered and develop a new, best practice model.

The project is now in its second stage, and our Department is one of three together with the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform taking part in the pilot phase, partnering with the Public Appointments Service (PAS) and the National Shared Services Office (NSSO).

The HROM is an ambitious project, tasked with improving the strategic HR offering to Departments. It will introduce some changes to HR structures/processes and how HR interacts with staff and business teams. A key objective of the project is for HR to work more closely with teams and team leaders to help deliver on business goals. The infographic overleaf summarises the planned outcomes of the project.

How will this affect me?

For People Managers, these changes will mean:

- HR 'Business Partners' (HRBPs) will have an in-depth knowledge of the Department/Divisions and will be able to support you in business planning, workforce planning, recruitment etc.
- HR will provide enhanced support to you in relation to people management issues (via your HRBP and your HR team)
- HRBPs will make people data and insights more accessible/usable for you

For all staff:

- There will be some improvements in how HR supports you and the organisation. You will be kept fully informed of any changes as the project progresses.
- HR will continue to work closely with Business Units in order to help meet their objectives.
- The new model supports the longer-term ambitions for the Civil Service to be an 'Employer of Choice' and to build the 'Workforce for the Future'.

HROM and the DETE People Strategy

The design phase of the HROM project is now underway. The purpose of this is to create a custom HR model to meet the needs of each pilot Department. The next phase, starting in late Q4 2021, will be to roll out the model within our Department. This should be completed by end February 2022. All staff will be kept informed of changes as the project develops.

The purpose of the HROM project is to reform and streamline HR structures and processes, freeing up time and resources for the team to focus on working directly and more strategically with the Department's business teams. In this way, the HROM can be seen as an 'enabling' project that will support the HR team to deliver the key strategic objectives set out in this document.

HROM: What will success look like?

Business Leaders

- ✓ HRBPs working in partnership with senior leaders to understand business challenges and develop people solutions to address
- ✓ Additional capacity in HR will enable more value added interventions to support the business to improve employee engagement
- ✓ Decision making will be supported through readily available HR data and access to advice and insights from a dedicated HRBP and CoE

"I have HR data, insights and a readily available HR Business Partner to feed into my leadership decisions so I can consider my people at every step of the way."



"I am part of a team that brings best practice and know-how to Departments. I have been upskilled, supported and know exactly where I should go to help progress HR issues."



Local HR

- ✓ HR will be equipped with the infrastructure, tools and development to enable them build strategic HR capability, becoming trusted advisors to the business
- ✓ HR's credibility will grow through the provision of HR services in a consistent, efficient and best practice manner
- ✓ HR will be supported by CoEs with access to specialist/expert advice on more complex people related issues

People Managers

- ✓ Clear roles and responsibilities for People managers, knowing exactly where to go to for their people related queries
- ✓ People managers will be empowered and supported with access to HR advice, guidance and coaching, particularly around performance management challenges
- ✓ Access to clearly defined HR policies and procedures and also data to help inform decision making about their people / teams



"I am well-informed and supported in my role as a People Manager, especially when I seek guidance on HR issues. The HRBP provides great insight on how to manage performance cases."



"My interactions with HR are consistent as I move through my career in the Civil Service. I know where to go for information, and I am assured that it is accurate and up to date."

Employees

- ✓ Consistent and standardised user experience when dealing with HR
- ✓ Employees will be better supported when starting in their new role with consistent access to learning and development opportunities
- ✓ Employees will have meaningful feedback conversations, coaching and development from their people managers, leading to increased performance and engagement

Appendix 2: Strategy Development and Monitoring

Consultation

We carried out several consultations as we developed this Strategy, providing opportunities for all staff to have their say on what our core priorities should be, and how we could improve our service.

After an initial consultation with the Management Board, we invited all Principal Officers to a WebEx focus group to discuss key issues and concerns. We then held a 'Lunch and Learn', promoted and available to all staff, where all attendees were given the opportunity to feedback and give their thoughts and ideas. In addition, an online form was made available for staff to leave feedback in their own time. All feedback through these sessions was considered and taken into account in developing this final document.

A further key source of information has been the Department's 2020 results from the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, which has provided baseline data on staff sentiment in several core areas.

Review of 'Connected HR' Strategy 2018-2020

Our previous Strategy, 'Connected HR 2018-2020', was built around three core goals: **building our workforce** to meet our business needs; **developing excellent people managers** to deliver the Department's goals; and embedding the **strategic role of HR** within the Department.

Under this Strategy, the HR team moved to develop a more strategic approach to operations, introducing new functions such as Strategic Workforce Planning, HR Business Partnering, and People Analytics. The focus in Learning and Development was placed on management development and leadership skills, as well as supporting the transition to OneLearning; and new initiatives were introduced to improve HR's management and engagement with the employee career path such as a formal induction process, a Mobility policy, long service recognition, responsive training, and staff engagement forums.

The core achievement of the 'Connected HR' Strategy was the establishment of new processes and tools that would enable HR to play a more strategic and proactive role in developing and structuring the Department's workforce.

This new People Strategy, and the HROM project running in tandem, takes the next step by setting out how we in HR can now leverage these tools to face a new and changed set of challenges.

Review of Staff Data

In preparation for this Strategy, we created a summary 'data dashboard' with a selection of staff data points, that allowed us to develop a baseline picture of our workforce and the trends that should inform the direction of our Strategy. This dashboard is available on [bob](#). Using this data, we drew out several key insights that would need to be addressed if we were to meet our overall goal:

- **Age:** Over 45% of our staff are over 50, and our average age is 47. This has been unchanged for the past 5 years. Our well-known challenge is working with teams to prepare for retirements; but we will also look at attracting and retaining younger staff and creating a culture that bridges and accommodates different age groups.
- **Gender balance:** this is largely positive across most grades, with near 50/50 balance at senior management level. Our challenge is to retain this positive balance, monitoring and assessing potential barriers and ensuring the right supports are in place.
- **New staff:** large intake with nearly 200 entrants over two years. We can expect this trend to continue in line with retirements and other exits over the lifetime of the Strategy. Our challenge is welcoming new staff into the organisation, bringing them up to speed and providing appropriate training and development.
- **Promotions:** 75 promotions across 2019/2020 equating to nearly 10% staff moving up into new levels of responsibility. As with new entrants, this rate is likely to remain steady as vacancies are created due to retirements and exits. Promotion is an exciting and challenging time in any staff members' career; making the transition successful for individuals and teams requires strong management, training, guidance and development from team leaders and HR together.
- **Movement:** 60% of staff are in their current post less than four years. The knock-on movement that results from staff retiring, resigning, or transferring out of the organisation is a challenging but inevitable, and ultimately positive, feature of any modern workplace. The challenge here is to work with and respond to teams to support them before, during, and after these transitions.

Governance, Monitoring and Feedback

In line with the annual Business Planning process, in each year of this Strategy we will set out our exact actions and target delivery dates in our HR Business Plan. To assess our progress, we plan to add to existing datasets by introducing regular 'Pulse' surveys to provide qualitative feedback from all staff on HR initiatives, staff sentiment, and staff capability.

We will also be engaging regularly with staff as we develop new policies, assess the results of the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, carry out Workforce Planning and Business Partnering, and hold clinics and workshops on practical HR and Learning and Development issues. All of these engagements will be used to provide feedback on the impacts of this Strategy.

The Strategy will be reviewed and assessed each year in a written report by the Policy, Innovation and State Agencies Team.

Appendix 3: HR Services in DETE

HR and Peoplepoint: who should I contact?

HR and Peoplepoint provide complementary services to staff.

Peoplepoint manages transactional processes including annual and non-annual leave, absence, workshare, pensions and retirements, pay, employee schemes, exit processes, and mobility applications.

You should use the [Peoplepoint portal](#) or contact [Peoplepoint directly](#) if you are:

- Applying for or approving leave (annual or non-annual)
- Raising a sick leave absence for a staff member
- Applying for a work-sharing arrangement
- Initiating your retirement
- Looking for information about your pension
- Applying for a mobility opportunity

The Department's HR team manages all other HR services and supports.

You should contact HR for information or support about any of the services below – full details on who does what and contact email addresses are available on [our bob page](#):

- **Recruitment:** recruitment, assignments, promotional opportunities, secondments, overseas postings, and workforce planning
- **Employee relations:** performance, attendance, sick leave, dignity at work and other employment rights matters, the flexi-clock system
- **Remuneration:** increments, overpayments, pay on promotion, Labour Court (Members) Pension Scheme and Competition Authority (Members) Pension Scheme, seniority lists and higher scale assignments
- **Learning and Development:** in-house training programmes, information/lunch and learn sessions, advance payment of fees scheme, support for OneLearning, mentoring, coaching and leadership development opportunities
- **Staff Engagement and Recognition initiatives:** Innovate@ETE, ConnEcTEd Teams initiative, Peer2Peer Network, Staff Ideas process, Long Service Awards, Interdenominational Service
- **HR Strategy and Policies:** existing HR policies and HR policy development
- **Civil and Public Service Renewal:** Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards, CSR2030
- **State agency recruitment:** sanctions or State Board appointments
- **Disability support:** the Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) can be contacted directly and confidentially at cian.machale@enterprise.gov.ie

