



An Coimisiún um Cheapacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí
Commission for Public Service Appointments

Safeguarding Public Sector Recruitment and Selection



Annual Report 2024

2025 © Commission for Public Service Appointments

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Foreword by the Chairperson of the Commission



I am delighted to present the Annual Report of the Commission for Public Service Appointments for 2024.

The purpose of the Commission is to improve public sector recruitment, and a large part of our work is ensuring compliance with the CPSA Code. We continue to monitor compliance of bodies who have a licence to carry out their own recruitment. And we make sure that approved recruitment agencies are able to provide high quality end to end recruitment for public bodies who chose to use them.

Detailed statistics on each of these activities are set out in the body of this report. I note that the number of requests for reviews from candidates received has reduced to 38 requests, which is ten less than the number received in 2023. In recent years in particular our Secretariat has proactively engaged with recruiters to establish communication channels to encourage recruiters to bring any issues they encounter, either in their general recruitment activity or on specific campaigns, to our early attention. This is so that we can assist them in maximising best practice at the time recruitment action is undertaken rather than after the event in dealing with complaints about such action. We have found that this approach has resulted in recruiters consulting with us for best practice advice both before and during selection campaigns. We are confident this early engagement has increased the quality of campaigns and resulted in a corresponding reduction in complaint numbers.

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners, I would like to thank our Secretariat for all their work during 2024. This work is much appreciated and contributes significantly to ensuring ongoing proper regulation of public service recruitment in Ireland.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the sterling work of my predecessor, Seán Ó Fearghail, TD, and I take this opportunity to thank him for his valuable contributions as Chair of the Commission, from March 2016 until December 2024.

Verona Murphy

Commission Chair

October 2025

Update from Director General



At the outset I would like to echo the Chairperson's compliments to our staff for their hard work during the year in supporting the work of the Commission.

I am pleased to say that in 2024, we further progressed a number of our strategic objectives set out in Strategy 2025. In terms of expanding and enhancing stakeholder engagement with recruiters we continued to strengthen our relationship with public bodies and their understanding of the Code of Practice and to advise and support best practice and adherence to the Code in all recruitment campaigns. The benefit of

this engagement is reflected in public bodies' increasing willingness to improve recruitment processes and review and complaints procedures and, accordingly, in the further reduction in complaints on appeal which we received during 2023. In keeping with our regulatory role, we also successfully completed our Recruitment Verification programme, and we continued to assess all approved recruitment agencies and ensure they are compliant with the conditions and standards set out by the Commission. Our website continues to be kept up to date, helping to achieve our objective of providing safe and accessible mechanisms for members of the public to access our services.

Supporting the Commission Secretariat, we have a "corporate spine" which provides all of the back office supports to the Secretariat so that they are fully available to focus on CPSA work. The corporate spine consists of HR, ICT, Finance, Procurement, Facilities, Legal, Communications, as well as support in handling Data Protection and FOI requests. The ICT and Communications team in conjunction with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) achieved significant progress in 2024 by transferring the CPSA website to a new and more secure OGCIO-based solution. This will ensure we have more secure and sustainable websites going forward. Our Legal team continued to provide support to the Office of the CPSA on casework and investigations and provided in-house training to all staff of the Office during the year. Our Green Team continued to work hard to ensure we meet our requirements under the Climate Action Plan while our Public Sector Duty Committee ensures we meet our strategic objective of taking a pro- active approach to meeting our Public Sector Duty. These were all part of the Strategic Objectives we set out in our Statement of Strategy 2022 - 2025. During 2025, we will begin the process of developing our next Statement of Strategy. In the meantime, we will continue to progress our current objectives, strengthen our systems and processes for reporting, and continue to work with public bodies to ensure the high standard of recruitment is maintained.

Elaine Cassidy

Director General

Introduction

The year 2024 marked the Commission's 20th year as an independent regulator of recruitment and selection in the public service. The CPSA plays 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. The standard of fairness in public service recruitment remains very high, based on the low number of complaints (38 compared to 48 in 2023), the lower number of breaches (6 compared to 8 in 2023), and the engagement and collaboration of recruiters with the CPSA in advance to ensure high standards prevail from the outset.

In 2024, we continued to build strong relationships with public bodies, fostering a deeper understanding of the Code of Practice. The Recruiters Network, established in 2022 for public bodies within the CPSA's remit, facilitated ongoing dialogue on the Code and broader public recruitment strategies. While not network members, we consistently participated in quarterly meetings (both in-person and virtual) in our capacity as Regulator.

The Commission Members

The Commission was set up under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act in 2004. The current Commission members are:

- Verona Murphy TD, Ceann Comhairle (Chair) {Previously Seán Ó Fearghaíl, TD until December 2024}
- Ger Deering, Ombudsman
- John Callinan, Secretary General to the Government
- Justice Garrett Sheehan, Chairperson of the Standards in Public Office Commission
- David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)

The Office of the Commission

Our role is to support the Commission in its work.

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 the CPSA Code of Practice, it sets out the key recruitment principles and standards for appointments. The office of the CPSA has an oversight role in ensuring public bodies within our remit adhere to these standards when carrying out a selection process.

There are certain activities which are delegated to us by the Commission. We engage in a range of activities such as monitoring how recruitment is carried out by public bodies who have their own recruitment licence. We also award licences to recruitment agencies who can successfully demonstrate their competency to carry out recruitment for public service bodies. Licence holders in both public bodies and recruitment agencies are subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure continued compliance. We provide advice and guidance to public bodies where they have queries about recruitment competitions. Equally, candidates who apply for these competitions can seek reviews of the competition to be carried out by the CPSA as well. The CPSA is a Prescribed Person in relation to public sector recruitment and therefore our office also deals with Protected Disclosures in relation to those organisations within our remit.

The Role of the Commission

- The Commission continued to regulate public sector recruitment through a range of measures including:
- The promotion of the Code of Practice for recruiters, including answering queries and supporting best practice and adherence to the Code in all recruitment campaigns.
- The licencing of Public Sector organisations who can demonstrate the willingness and capability to comply with the Code of Practice and the terms of licence.
- The licencing of professional recruitment agencies who can demonstrate the willingness and capability to comply with the Code of Practice and the terms of licence.
- A programme of verification of those public bodies who are already existing recruitment licence holders and their ability to continue to carry out high-quality recruitment in line with the CPSA Code.

- A programme of verification of those Recruitment Agencies who are already existing recruitment licence holders and their ability to continue to carry out high-quality recruitment in line with the CPSA Code.
- The Commission also continued its work to strengthen 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. Having exhausted an organisation's internal procedures and, where appropriate, the Commission undertook investigation of complaints under the Code of Practice.
- Reviewing excluding order applications in order to grant or deny.

Key Activities

CPSA Code 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 the CPSA Code of Practice. The key recruitment and selection principles are:

- Probity
- Merit
- Best practice
- Consistency
- Transparency
- Appointment promoting equality, diversity and inclusion

The Code gives guidance on the meaning and application of these principles in everyday practice. It also sets out the standards which should be followed at each stage of the selection process. A copy of the Code can be found here:

- [Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service](#)

The Office dealt with queries from bodies who wished to hold recruitment campaigns and gave guidance in order to ensure that competitions were held in a fair and transparent manner, in keeping with the Code. Candidates taking part in these competitions who contacted the Office with questions or concerns were also assisted as much as possible. The CPSA continued to participate and support the Recruiters Network which also endorses the Code. As noted in the Chairperson's foreword, this approach has helped to reduce the number of complaints further in 2024.

Public Sector Bodies-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 (PAS) 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.

Licences can be 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

The CPSA granted one new specific licence in 2024. This was to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC)

A total of 50 general licences and 5 specific 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 14,167 appointments were reported by licence holders, including appointments made in the HSE, during 2024. Of these, 4,737 were new appointments made following a selection process carried out by the Public Appointments Service and 6,518 were made following open selection processes carried out by individual offices/Departments.

In addition, 1,849 appointments were made by way of internal promotion and 1,063 people were appointed to acting-up positions within licence holder organisations. A detailed breakdown of the recruitment and selection activity reported by licence holders is attached at Appendix 1.

Approved Recruitment 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, on examination, we were satisfied that they have appropriate processes in place to support public bodies in carrying out fair, merit-based selection.

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

During 2024, the Commission approved the following recruitment agencies:

- GHIL Recruitment Ltd
- Klas Recruitment
- Accpro Accountancy Professionals Ltd
- Vista Career Solutions
- Irish Recruitment Consultants Ltd T/a SRG
- ECS Recruitment
- Ascension Executive Recruitment
- Broadline Group
- Broadwork Limited T/A
- Sonas Technical
- Principle HR
- Gilligan Black Recruitment
- Hartley People Group
- Crewit Resourcing Ltd

This approval means 52 agencies are now included on our list of approved recruitment agencies, a full list of which is attached at Appendix 4.

Recruitment Licence Ongoing Monitoring

This Office has continued its work in monitoring compliance of licencees with the terms of their recruitment licence and the Code of Practice. To start with, the licencees complete a standardized self-declaration questionnaire which assesses recruitment structures, staffing qualifications, experience with competitive processes, and the prominence of the CPSA in candidate information. Responses are then evaluated against existing licensing criteria, confirming Code of Practice adherence. This is followed by a targeted review of a proportionate sample of recruitment competitions from each licensee over the preceding two years. This review encompassed selection methods, candidate handbooks, and candidate-HR communication, utilising a standardised checklist to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice.

In 2024, our analysis concluded that reviewed competitions adhered to the requisite criteria and were conducted in line with the Code of Practice. The following observations were made following this analysis:

Unnecessary Duplication

This exercise found that 22 licencees had conducted recruitment campaigns for general service grades (Clerical Officer, Executive Officer, Higher Executive Officer, Assistant Principal, and Principal Officer) typically managed by the Public Appointments Service (PAS). As stipulated in the licensees' terms and conditions, public bodies undertaking recruitment for these grades must provide a documented business justification for bypassing the PAS, thereby avoiding redundant recruitment efforts. Such duplication generates confusion within the employment market, increases state expenditure, and fosters unnecessary competition between state entities.

Following contact with these 22 organisations, all provided assurances of future collaboration with both the PAS and the CPSA prior to initiating recruitment for these or equivalent grades. This commitment should mitigate the risk of future duplication.

Notwithstanding this element of duplication, the Office of the CPSA found that the assessment provided a high degree of assurance to the Commissioners that licensed recruiters are maintaining compliance with the Code of Practice.

The Licence Holders were contacted to inform them that the licence verification programme is complete and that the Commission was satisfied with the correspondence received and were reassured that recruitment by their organisation was functioning in compliance with the terms of their Recruitment Licence.

Extent of Coverage of Public Service Management Act 2004.

The CPSA is the regulator of Public Sector recruitment and a Prescribed Person under the Protected Disclosures Act 2022 in respect of recruitment matters. However, not all public sector bodies are within our remit, and this can lead to confusion among candidates who wish to complain as well as potential reporters of wrongdoing under the 2022 Act.

In the 2023 Annual Report, we reported that our office had begun work to establish the number of bodies under the aegis of Government Departments who are within the remit of the Commission.

Work continued in 2024 with the responses received from Government Departments still being assessed. It is clear that the Public Service Management Act only covers a certain number of Public Bodies. This includes some newly established bodies, based on an examination of their enabling legislation. The office will continue to map recruitment practices across the public service and collaborate with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPENDR) to address any discrepancies.

Approved Recruitment Agencies ongoing monitoring

We assess all approved agencies and ensure they are compliant with the conditions and standards set out by the Commission. We review the listed approved agencies every two years to ensure they remain compliant with the standards set out by the Commission and in accordance with the Codes of Practice. Any agency that no longer meets the standard, is removed from the list. Since 2021, six approved agencies have been removed from the approved agency list. Three new applications were not granted in 2024, as the recruitment agency did not satisfy all aspects of the application process.

Complaints under the Code

The CPSA Code of Practice sets 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 Code, or make a complaint about the process itself, under Section 8.

If a candidate wants to request a review of the decision, they can do this by contacting the public body directly. If a candidate believes that the selection process was not carried out fairly, they can make a complaint to the public body in the first instance and to the Commission to review the public body's response. An in-depth examination is carried out into the process by the public body, in order to identify whether any breaches in the

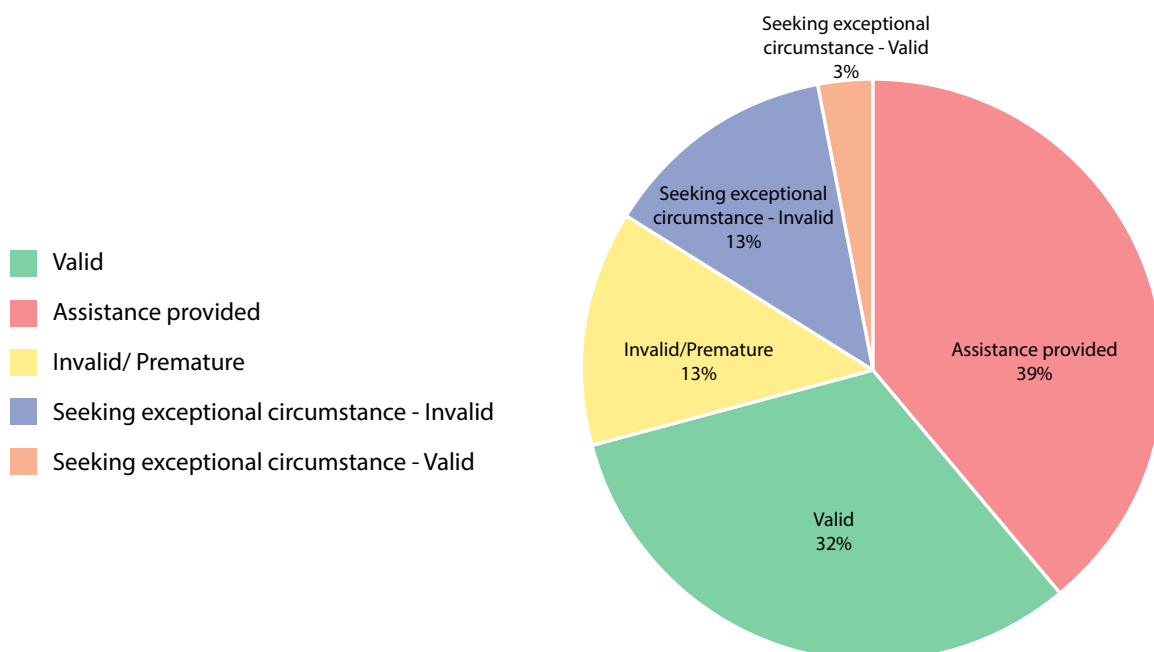
Code of Practice have occurred. Where breaches are identified, these are highlighted, and recommendations are made to the public body to amend its processes and to make sure the issues giving rise to the complaint do not reoccur.

In total, 214 requests for a review under Section 7 were made to licence holders, including the HSE, during 2024. In addition to this, 16 complaints were made to licence holders under Section 8.

Of these, the Commission received 38 complaints on appeal. This was 10 fewer complaints than the 48 received in 2023. A breakdown is shown below. 13 of these were considered valid and accepted by the Commission. A number of cases were brought to the Commission where the candidates had raised valid concerns but had not yet raised the matter formally with the public body. Of the remaining invalid complaints, most were situations where insufficient evidence was provided to the

Secretariat to demonstrate 'exceptional circumstances' and so it was decided not to proceed with a review.

Overall requests received 2024



Requests for review broken down by Public Body (2024)

Licence Holder	Valid	Invalid/ Premature	Seeking under exceptional circumstance- Valid	Seeking under exceptional circumstance- Invalid	Not a case but assistance provided	Total
An Garda Siochana	2	1	0	2	3	8
Public Appointments Service	3	0	0	1	4	8
Health Service Executive	2	1	0	1	2	6
Courts Service	1	0	0	0	0	2
Tailte Eireann	1	0	0	0	0	1
National Council for Special Education	0	0	0	0	1	1
Central Statistics Office	0	0	0	0	1	1
Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman	1	0	0	0	0	1
Children's Ombudsman	1	0	0	0	0	1
Director of Public Prosecutions	0	0	0	0	1	1
Department of Justice	1	0	0	0	0	1
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	0	0	0	1	0	1
TUSLA	0	0	1	0	0	1
Department of Education	0	0	0	0	1	1

Licence Holder	Valid	Invalid/ Premature	Seeking under exceptional circumstance- Valid	Seeking under exceptional circumstance- Invalid	Not a case but assistance provided	Total
Consumer Protection Commission	0	0	0	1	0	1
South Dublin City Council	0	1	0	0	0	1
Limerick County Council	0	1	0	0	0	1
Kerry County Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	12	4	1	6	15	38

Complaint Reviews completed

We completed examination of 8 complaints during 2024, these also included a rollover of complaints from 2023. Of the competitions examined, breaches were found in 2 cases.

In certain 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 2024, we noted a continued increase in the engagement with public bodies and their willingness to improve recruitment processes and the review and complaints procedures. The Commission welcomes this continued engagement and hopes to promote future similar discourse.

Breaches of the Code

Of the competitions examined, breaches of the Code of Practice were found to have occurred in 2 cases.

The issues included:

1. Failure to provide the shortlisting scorecard to the candidate
2. Failures to maintain communication and provide updates to the complainant over the course of a delayed review process
3. Failure to complete a review within a reasonable time period

In a number of the other cases, the Commission found that while the actions taken by a public body did not constitute a breach of the Code, 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:

1. Mechanisms are put in place to ensure that all future complaints are processed in a timely manner
2. Campaign information is correct and consistent throughout all candidate literature
3. Improved communication between recruiters and candidates at all stages of a campaign
4. Interview Board training includes all aspects of the process, including feedback

Case studies

Below we have outlined some outcomes that arose through our early engagement process and also some examples of issues identified in recruitment competitions. These illustrations are intended as a learning and training tool and to highlight how issues can be resolved and safeguards implemented.

Early Resolution Outcomes

'Technical Problems'

A complainant expressed concerns regarding a candidate in a confined competition who was interviewed later than others, received extra preparation time, and was interviewed aurally, differing from the experiences of other candidates.

However, when the matter was investigated it was found that the employer had found that an error had occurred in the shortlisting process, as all applicants should have been interviewed without prior shortlisting. To rectify this error, candidates who had not been interviewed in December were rescheduled for interviews in January 2024. Only those who were successful in these interviews were placed on the confined panels, and results were withheld until all interviews were completed. While all interviews were conducted via MS Teams, some candidates faced technical issues, leading to their interviews being conducted aurally, which was documented in their records.

The Commission was satisfied with the actions taken to ensure all candidates had an opportunity to be interviewed and deemed the handling of technical difficulties acceptable. Consequently, no further action was required from the relevant board, and the complainant was informed of the resolution.

'Inadequate Section 8 review'

Following a lack of response to an informal Section 8 complaint, the complainant escalated the matter to CPSA for a formal Section 8 review. Dissatisfied with the initial outcome, which CPSA deemed inadequate due to its handling by HR and failure to address all concerns, CPSA intervened and secured agreement from the relevant board to conduct a new review with an independent reviewer. The complainant was informed of this action and advised of the option to re-escalate to CPSA if they remained dissatisfied.

Formal investigative outcomes

Some cases required more investigation, and the following are some case studies of those outcomes:

'Two breaches found'

The individual applied for the Higher Executive Officer (HEO) position within a public body but was unsuccessful at the shortlisting stage. They raised several issues around the process including feedback, communication around scoring/assessments, delays in acknowledgements, the shortlisting process and the internal formal review carried out.

The Commission reviewed documentation related to the process, including applications and correspondence. The public body also put forward responses to the allegations and these were also considered. The Commission determined that the individual's concerns about the shortlisting criteria were unfounded, as the criteria in question were not used for that purpose. They found it appropriate that only those qualifications which were deemed 'essential' were considered as part of the shortlisting.

However, the Commission identified that the public body should have provided the shortlisting scorecard initially, deeming this a breach of the Code. Additionally, the failure to respond to the informal complaint within the specified timeframe was also considered a breach. Recommendations were also made around ensuring all relevant documentation is provided to candidates in future competitions and improving processes for handling informal complaints promptly.

'No breach found'

The individual applied for a promotion to Higher Executive Officer within a public body but raised concerns regarding the interview process. They claimed that an interview invitation sent to their personal email led to them missing it initially, resulting in insufficient preparation time. They were of the view that the Public Body should have made a follow-up call when they did not respond. Instead, they made contact themselves, discovering they had only reduced time to prepare. Their request to reschedule the interview was denied.

An examination of the campaign records showed that all candidates were treated similarly and followed consistent questioning. The recruiter provided evidence that board members were properly trained and adhered to interview guidelines, and the Commission found no breaches of the selection process.

The public body stated it is not standard policy to follow up interview invitations by phone. The Candidate Information Booklet informed candidates that failure to access emails does not warrant rescheduling and specified that communication would be conducted via email

only. It also indicated that requests to reschedule would only be considered in exceptional circumstances, which do not include missing an email.

Ultimately, the Commission found that the selection process was fair, consistent, and in line with the Code of Practice, with no further action necessary from the public body.

'Recommendations made'

The complainant applied for an Assistant Principal position but was unsuccessful in the interview. They used the internal review procedures, which were dealt with by the approved recruitment agency used by the public body to run the competition.

However, the complainant subsequently lodged a Section 8 complaint with the CSPA.

The complainant made a series of allegations. They stated that they had experienced confusion in the advertisement regarding whether the selection process was competency- or capability-based. Furthermore, they stated that the interview lacked direct questions on relevant policy. Concerns were also raised about inadequate record-keeping, with the candidate believing the panel's notes inaccurately reflected the interview. The candidate noted an excessive delay of 59 days in receiving a response to their Section 8 request.

In investigating this complaint, the public body recognised the complainant's experience, but the candidate needed to provide more relevant examples. They defended the interview notes as summaries rather than verbatim records and claimed all candidates were asked multiple questions about relevant policy. The public body admitted to an administrative error regarding interview style communication and acknowledged the delay in responding to the Section 8 complaint, which was seen as a breach of the Code of Practice.

The Commission found the public body to be in breach of the Code due to the delayed response and advised that all candidate materials should accurately reflect the interview structure. They also noted that the review report did not adequately address all the complainant's points and recommended better training for reviewers and adherence to proper procedures for future reviews.

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 a 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 Code of Practice.

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

Internships

The Civil Service, like other employers, needs to avail of all possible tools to attract, recruit and retain people who can contribute meaningfully to its mission, who are in roles that they are suited for and skilled in, and which fulfil them. An internship programme can provide a pipeline of qualified staff for specialised roles.

Internships are an excellent way to develop skills and capabilities for both interns and hosting organisations. They can improve access to employment and training, provide work-integrated learning opportunities and promote the Civil Service as an Employer of Choice across society.

The number of internships offered by Government Departments and Offices is increasing as the demand by third-level education bodies, potential users and Government bodies for these types of programmes keeps growing.

The development of internships by Civil Service employers is also supported by the [Pathways to Work 2021-2025](#) strategy, whereby the Government commits to provide access to paid work internships to members of underrepresented groups, such as members of the Traveller and Roma communities, migrants, asylum seekers, and other groups who face barriers to work.

WAM For Graduates

The WAM (Willing and Able Mentoring) Programme offers graduates with disabilities the chance to undertake a minimum 6 month, paid, mentored work placements with high profile Irish employers.

A WAM placement is a minimum 6 month, paid, mentored work placement in a company for graduates with disabilities. Placements can be in the private or public sector and are

typically mainstream graduate entry level positions. Graduates must compete for roles that are available, as they would when applying for any job.

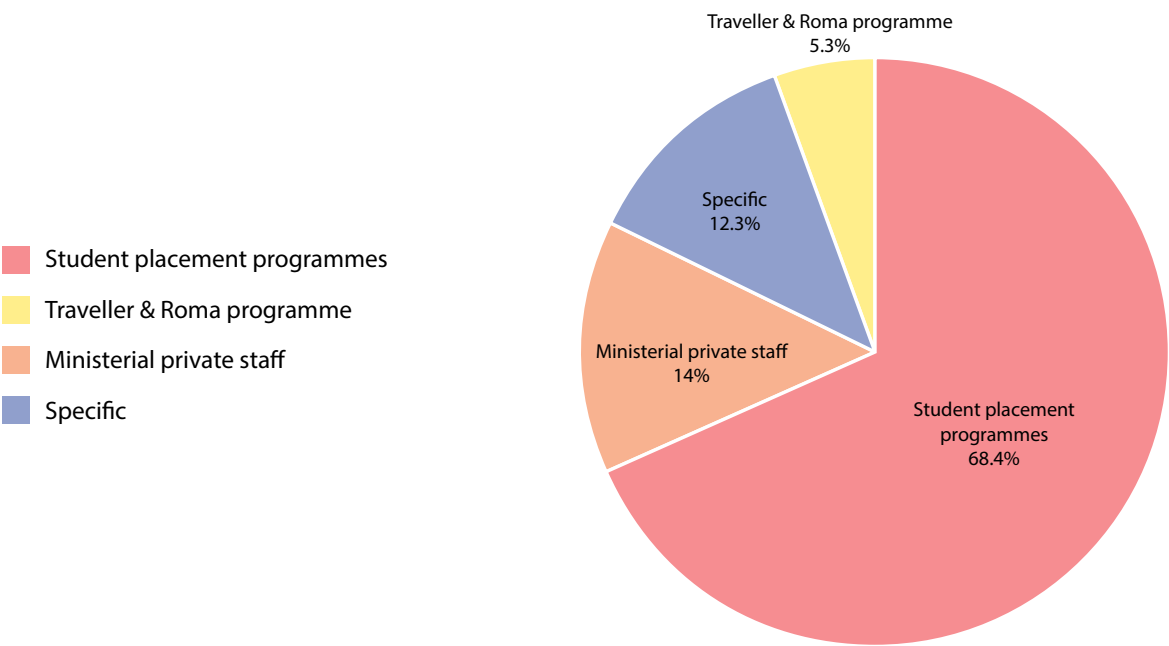
Traveller and Roma Programmes

Orders were granted to support specific policy initiatives such as the Traveller and Roma pilot programme

Other Excluding Orders

There can also be instances where Excluding Orders can be sought for Ministerial roles such as Ministerial drivers, who work with the Minister in question for the duration of their being in office. Other examples could include a person who has a particular specialist skill who is retiring but which a department or Public Body may need to retain to complete a particular project. 8 orders were made for Ministerial private staff, and 7 orders were made for specific skills.

Summary of Excluding Orders granted



The Commission's Audit Function

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

No audits were undertaken by the Commission for Public Service appointments in 2024.

Protected Disclosures

A protected disclosure is a disclosure by a worker of information about a relevant wrongdoing which they became aware of in a work-related context. The Protected Disclosures Act provides certain protections to those who make protected disclosures.

Sometimes workers make these reports to their own employer, but in other cases they may choose to make them to a Prescribed Person.

The Director of the CPSA is a Prescribed Person under the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022, with responsibility for assessing disclosures in certain areas of Public Sector recruitment. Prescribed Persons are generally regulators in the areas that are the subject of allegations. To make a protected disclosure to a Prescribed Person, the worker must reasonably believe that the Prescribed Person is responsible for the report and that the information disclosed and any allegation made are substantially true.

During 2024, the CPSA received eight reports alleging wrongdoing in public sector recruitment processes. Seven reports were submitted by identified individuals; one report remained anonymous.

As of 31 December 2024, five of these disclosures had been subjected to a preliminary assessment. This initial assessment, conducted in accordance with established procedures, evaluates the existence of prima facie evidence suggesting potential wrongdoing, based exclusively on the information provided by the reporting party. This stage represents a mandatory procedural step for the triage of reports, as defined by relevant legislation. It does not, however, constitute a definitive conclusion regarding the occurrence or non-occurrence of wrongdoing; such an outcome can only be reached following a further investigation.

Subsequent to the preliminary assessment, two reports were returned to the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner due to falling outside the CPSA's remit. One report was subsequently withdrawn by the reporting individual. The remaining five reports are currently under active investigation with three at draft report stage.

Governance

Corporate Governance

The Office, comprising of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Information Commissioner, the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information, the Standards in Public Office Commission, the Commission for Public Service Appointments and the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner, is funded by one Vote and overseen by an Accounting Officer (Director General), Elaine Cassidy who is supported by a Management Advisory Committee. In carrying out their work, our staff embrace the traditional obligations of privacy and integrity in the performance of official duties, while at the same time protecting and preserving the statutory independence and functions of each of the constituent offices in which they work. Updates in relation to our Corporate Governance are set out on the Strategy and Governance page on the website of the Office of the Ombudsman. This page includes information and updates in relation to our:

- Strategic Plan 2022–25
- Compliance with the requirements under the Official Languages Act
- Compliance with the requirements of the Protected Disclosures Act
- Compliance with the requirements under s.42 IHREC Act (the duty on public servants in relation to human rights (the Public Sector Duty))
- Green Team (including our compliance with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act)
- Corporate Governance Framework
- Fraud Prevention and anti-Corruption Policy
- Policy on gifts, hospitality and entertainment
- Revolving Door Policy

Looking ahead to 2025

In 2025, the Commission intends to continue to ensure high standards in public sector recruitment, monitoring compliance with the CPSA Code of Practice across the sector.

We will expand and strengthen our outreach to public bodies, including through participation and supporting the Recruiters Network hosted by PAS. This will further support compliance and best practice in the sector.

Work will continue on ensuring ongoing compliance by public bodies in possession of a recruitment licence. Recruitment agencies wishing to obtain a recruitment licence for the public sector will be closely examined to ensure high standards are applied.

We will continue to accept complaints about recruitment competitions from candidates and will attempt to resolve issues at an early stage, where possible. Where that is not possible, we will conduct a review, with the aim of improving the standards for future competitions

Protected disclosures will be dealt with in the upmost confidence and be used as a welcome source of intelligence to assist in our regulatory role.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Licence holder recruitment and selection activity

Licence Holder	Internal	Open	Open (PAS)	Acting-up	Total	Internal %	External %
Adoption Authority of Ireland	4	7	0	0	11	37%	65%
An Garda Síochána	34	250	349	27	660	10%	91%
Central Statistics Office	36	209	84	12	341	14%	86%
Chief State Solicitor's Office	20	48	22	11	101	31%	69%
Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)	7	1188	0	24	1219	2%	97%
Courts Service	70	108	0	55	233	54%	46%
Corporate Enforcement Authority	1	3	8	1	13	15%	85%
Data Protection Commission							
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	109	33	148	9	299	39%	61%
Department of Children and Youth Affairs	21	74	243	2	340	7%	93%
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	44	12	47	7	110	46%	57%
Department of Education and Youth (Incl Dept of Higher/ Further Ed)	63	38	199	18	318	25%	75%
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	274	293	1287	265	2119	25%	75%
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	48	4	74	9	135	42%	57%
Department of Finance	23	1	58	0	82	28%	72%
Department of Foreign Affairs	29	58	164	4	255	13%	87%
Department of Health	17	0	86	6	109	21%	79%
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	12	70	75	3	160	9%	91%
Department of Justice	92	151	657	5	905	11%	89%
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	18	2	80	0	100	18%	82%

Licence Holder	Internal	Open	Open (PAS)	Acting-up	Total	Internal %	External %
Department of Rural and Community Development	6	0	16	6	28	43%	57%
Department of the Taoiseach	6	0	22	0	28	21%	79%
Department of Transport	31	5	83	7	126	30%	70%
Electoral Commission	0	3	3	0	6	0%	100%
Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman	0	45	0	0	45	0%	100%
Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission	10	0	26	3	39	33%	67%
Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)	4	39	0	8	51	24%	76%
Houses of the Oireachtas	29	29	79	3	140	23%	77%
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	0	6	14	0	20	0%	100%
Irish Prison Service	118	64	0	2	184	65%	35%
Law Reform Commission	2	12	0	0	14	14%	86%
Legal Aid Board	11	65	14	11	101	22%	78%
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority	0	31	5	0	36	0%	100%
National Council for Special Education (Specific)	16	147	20	0	183	9%	91%
National Shared Services Office	42	88	67	4	201	23%	77%
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland	0	13	0	1	14	7%	93%
Office of Public Works	21	1	140	19	181	22%	78%
Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General	12	24	0	1	37	35%	65%
Office of the Director for Public Prosecutions	24	34	5	3	66	41%	59%
Office of the Planning Regulator	0	16	8	0	24	0%	100%
Office of the Ombudsman	5	9	23	1	38	16%	84%
Office of the Ombudsman for Children	0	11	0	2	13	15%	85%
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	223	38	294	27	582	43%	57%
Policing Authority	1	1	5	0	7	14%	86%
Public Appointments Service	19	0	48	5	72	33%	67%
State Examination Commission	15	16	25	14	70	41%	59%
State Laboratory	8	27	1	0	36	22%	78%

Licence Holder	Internal	Open	Open (PAS)	Acting-up	Total	Internal %	External %
Tax Appeal Commission	4	6	0	7	17	65%	35%
Tailte Éireann (PRA and Valuation Office and Ordnance Survey)	78	40	51	11	180	49%	51%
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority	0	31	5	0	36	0%	100%
Totals	1607	3319	4530	593	10049		

Health Service Executive	Internal	Open	Open (PAS)	Acting-up	Emergency	Total %	Internal %	External %
Health Business Services (HBS)								
CHO area 1 - HSE West and Northwest								
CHO area 2 - HSE West and Northwest	0	210	0	62	0	272	23%	77%
CHO area 3 - HSE Mid West								
CHO area 4 - HSE South West								
CHO area 5 - HSE Dublin and South East	31	74	0	19	0	124	40%	60%
CHO area 6 - HSE Dublin and South East	100	106	0	76	0	282	62%	38%
CHO area 7 - HSE Dublin and Midlands	0	79	0	4	0	83	5%	95%
CHO area 8 - HSE Dublin and Midlands	24	129	0	302	0	455	72%	28%
HO area 9 - HSE Dublin & North East	87	165	8	0	0	260	33%	67%
RCSI Hospital Group								
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group								
UL Hospital Group	0	468	0	7	0	475	1%	98%
South/South West Hospital Group								
Saolta Hospital Group								
HR Shared Services National Office	0	1968	199	0	0	2167	0%	100%
HR Community Operations								
DML Area Recruitment Manager								
Total	242	3199	207	470	0	4118		

Appendix 2 Number of complaints vs overall number of appointments

Licence Holder	Complaints made under Section 7	Complaints made under Section 8	Appointments Made	Total % of complaints over appointments
Adoption Authority of Ireland	0	0	11	0%
An Garda Síochána	7	3	660	1.5%
Central Statistics Office	10	1	341	3%
Chief State Solicitor's Office	5	0	101	5%
Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)	8	1	1219	1%
Corporate Enforcement Authority	0	0	13	0%
Courts Service	2	0	233	1%
Data Protection Commission				
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	17	1	299	6%
Department of Children and Youth Affairs	1	0	340	1%
Department of Education and Youth (Incl. Dept of Higher/Further Education)	0	0	318	0%
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	52	0	2119	2.5%
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	3	1	135	3%
Department of Finance	1	0	82	1%
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	0	0	255	0%
Department of Health (Specific)	0	0	109	0%
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	0	0	160	0%
Department of Justice and Equality	6	0	905	1%
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	0	0	100	0%
Department of Rural and Community Development	0	0	28	0%
Department of the Taoiseach	0	0	28	0%
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	1	0	110	1%
Department of Transport	1	0	126	1%
Electoral Commission	0	0	6	0%

Licence Holder	Complaints made under Section 7	Complaints made under Section 8	Appointments Made	Total % of complaints over appointments
Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman	2	1	45	7%
Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission	0	0	39	0%
Health Information and Quality Authority	0	0	51	0%
Houses of the Oireachtas	1	0	140	1%
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	0	0	20	0%
Irish Prison Service	16	0	184	9%
Law Reform Commission	0	0	14	0%
Legal Aid Board	0	0	101	0%
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority	0	0	36	0%
National Council for Special Education	2	1	183	2%
National Shared Services Office	6	0	201	3%
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland	0	0	14	0%
Office of Public Works	1	0	181	1%
Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General	0	0	37	0%
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	0	0	66	0%
Office of the Ombudsman	0	0	38	0%
Office of the Ombudsman for Children	0	1	13	8%
Office of the Planning Regulator	0	0	24	0%
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	12	0	582	2%
Policing Authority	0	0	7	0%
Public Appointments Service	0	0	72	0%
State Examination Commission	1	0	70	1%
State Laboratory	0	0	36	0%
Tailte Éireann	1	2	180	2%
Tax Appeal Commission	0	0	17	0%
Total	156	12	10049	

*Any areas that have been left blank reflects the Public Bodies that failed to return their recruitment statistics.

Health Service Executive	Complaints made under Section 7	Complaints made under Section 8	Appointments Made	Total % of complaints over appointments
Health Business Services HBS				
CHO area 1				
CHO area 2 - HSE West and North West	1	0	272	1%
CHO area 3 - HSE Mid West				
CHO area 4 - HSE South West				
CHO area 5 - Dublin and South East	3	1	124	3%
CHO area 6 - Dublin and South East	8	0	282	3%
CHO area 7 - HSE Dublin and Midlands	7		83	
CHO area 8 - HSE Dublin and Midlands	4	0	455	1%
CHO area 9 -HSE Dublin and North East	3	0	260	1%
RCSI Hospital Group				
Ireland East Hospital Group				
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group (Tullamore and St Lukes only)				
UL Hospital Group Mid-West Acute	1	0	475	1%
South/South West Hospital Group				
Saolta Hospital Group				
Children's Hospital Group				
HR Shared Services National Office	31	3	2167	2%
HR Community Operations				
DML Area Recruitment Manager				
Total	58	4	4118	

Notes: In the returns submitted by the HSE, there were no emergency appointments made.

*Any areas that have been left blank reflects the HSE areas that failed to return their recruitment statistics.

Appendix 3 Recruitment licence holders

- Adoption Authority of Ireland An Garda Síochána
- Central Statistics Office
- Chief State Solicitor's Office Child and Family Agency - TULSA Courts Service
- Data Protection Commission
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment Department of Finance
- Department of Foreign Affairs Department of Health
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Department of Justice and Equality
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Department of Rural and Community Development Department of Social Protection
- Department of the Taoiseach Department of Transport
- Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) Health Information and Quality Authority
- Health Service Executive
- Irish Human Rights Commission Irish Prison Service
- Law Reform Commission Legal Aid Board
- Maritime Area Regulatory Authority National Council for Special Education National Shared Services Office Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
- Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

- Corporate Enforcement Authority
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas
Office of the Ombudsman
- Office of the Ombudsman for Children Office of the Planning Regulator Office of Public
Works
- Office of the Revenue Commissioners Policing Authority
- Public Appointments Service State Examinations Commission State Laboratory
- Tax Appeals Commission
- Tailte Éireann (PRA, Valuation office and Ordnance survey) The Electoral Commission

Appendix 4 Approved Recruitment Agencies

- 2into3
- Accpro Accountancy Professionals Ltd Africare
- Amrop
- Ascension Executive Recruitment Brightwater Selection (Ireland) Ltd Broadline Group
- Broadwork Limited T/A Careerwise Recruitment Ltd Conscia
- Cpl Ltd
- Crewit Resourcing Ltd ECS Recruitment Eden Recruitment Excel Recruitment
- FRS Recruitment Society Limited Gatenby Sanderson
- GHL Recruitment Ltd Gilligan Black Recruitment Hartley People Group
- Hays Specialist Recruitment Limited Hero Recruitment
- Hollilander Recruitment Ltd InterSearch Ireland
- Irish Recruitment Consultants Ltd T/a SRG Klas Recruitment
- Lansdowne Executive Lex Consultancy Limited
- Lincoln Recruitment Specialists Matrix Recruitment
- Mazars Medforce
- Morgan McKinley Group Nuvo Recruitment Odgers Berndtson
- Orange Recruitment Limited Osborne Recruitment
- PE Global Perret Laver Ltd Principle HR PWC Executive
- Recruitment Plus RSM Ireland

- Servisource Recruitment Limited Shikilla Healthcare
- Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Limited Signium Ireland
- Sonas Technical
- Staffline Recruitment (ROI) Ltd Steering Point Advisory Ltd Vertical Markets Group
- Vista Career Solutions Yala

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