

# Report of the Public Service Pay Commission

## Recruitment and Retention Module 2

A photograph showing two people in a professional setting. A man with a beard, wearing a white shirt and a tie, is gesturing with his hands while speaking. A woman with glasses and a dark blazer is listening attentively. They are seated at a table with papers, a laptop, and a glass of water. In the background, there are shelves with books or files.

JULY 2019



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# Chairman's Foreword

**This is the final Report of the Public Service Pay Commission as presently constituted. The Commission was established on a non-statutory basis in October 2016. Its mandate was extended to 30th June 2019, when it will finally expire. It was a singular honour to have been asked by the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe T.D., to chair the Commission and I have found the position to be both challenging and rewarding.**

In this final phase of its work, the Commission has examined issues relating to recruitment and retention of staff in a number of categories identified in its first Report as experiencing difficulties in that regard.

Due to the short timeframe available to the Commission between the receipt of final submissions and relevant data on the categories covered in this Report, and the expiry of the Commission's mandate, it has not been possible to undertake the same degree of analysis undertaken in previous Reports. Notwithstanding these constraints, the Commission has endeavoured to provide the best possible examination of the information with which it was provided and to formulate, as best it could, conclusions based on that evidence.

What has emerged throughout all phases of the Commission's work is that many of the issues raised by parties representing various groups and categories of public servants concern basic pay. As the Commission has consistently pointed out, questions relating to the adequacy of basic pay available to public servants are not what it has been tasked with examining. The dominant mode of pay determination in the public service continues to be collective bargaining. It was never intended that the Commission would offset or supplant that well established system of pay determination.

Nevertheless, the Commission has recognised the desirability of providing a suitable mechanism, at an appropriate time, by which a more general review of public service pay could be undertaken. That suggestion has been made in the Commission's previous Reports and is again made in this one.

I am extremely grateful to my colleagues for the courtesy and support which they afforded me during my tenure as Chairman. Their commitment to the work of the Commission was always manifest in the amount of time that they freely gave, and the quality of the

input that they made, throughout the three years of our existence.

I also wish to acknowledge, with thanks, the excellent service that the Commission received from our Secretariat, headed by Joan Curry, and previously by David Denny and Áine Stapleton. They were required to work to tight deadlines and under considerable pressure to ensure that we received, in good time, all of the information and data relevant to our work and, more particularly, in drafting and redrafting the four Reports that we issued. They did so diligently and with the utmost efficiency, in the best traditions of the Civil Service.

Finally, I wish to place on record our appreciation of the help and support that we received from the Minister and from the Secretary General and officials of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in ensuring that we received all of the resources that we required in order to discharge our mandate.



**Kevin Duffy**

Chairman, Public Service Pay Commission  
30th June 2019

# Terms of Reference

**The Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) was established to advise Government on Public Service remuneration policy.**

## Purpose

The findings of the Commission will contribute to and inform Government's considerations in relation to public service remuneration and assist the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in discharging its negotiation function on behalf of Government.

The PSPC will consider such other remuneration matters as it may be asked to consider by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform from time to time, including:

1. Providing objective analysis on the appropriate pay levels for identifiable groups within the public sector;
2. Comparing appropriate rates for identifiable groups with prevailing private sector/market rates. This should have regard to evidence on recruitment and retention trends in respect of each group;
3. Comparing appropriate rates for identifiable groups within the public service with their equivalents in other jurisdictions, particularly where internationally traded skillsets are required, having due regard to differences in living costs; and
4. Providing objective analysis on the appropriate pay levels for officeholders' pay and pensions.

**When reaching its findings the Commission shall have regard to:**

- The superannuation and other benefits applying in the public service;
- Security of tenure, where it applies to public servants;
- Pay comparisons taking account of relevant characteristics;
- The public service reform agenda;
- Evidence on recruitment and retention within the public service;
- Any other relevant matters including impact on national competitiveness and sustainable national finances and equity considerations; and
- Any other issues as they are determined by Government.

## Procedures

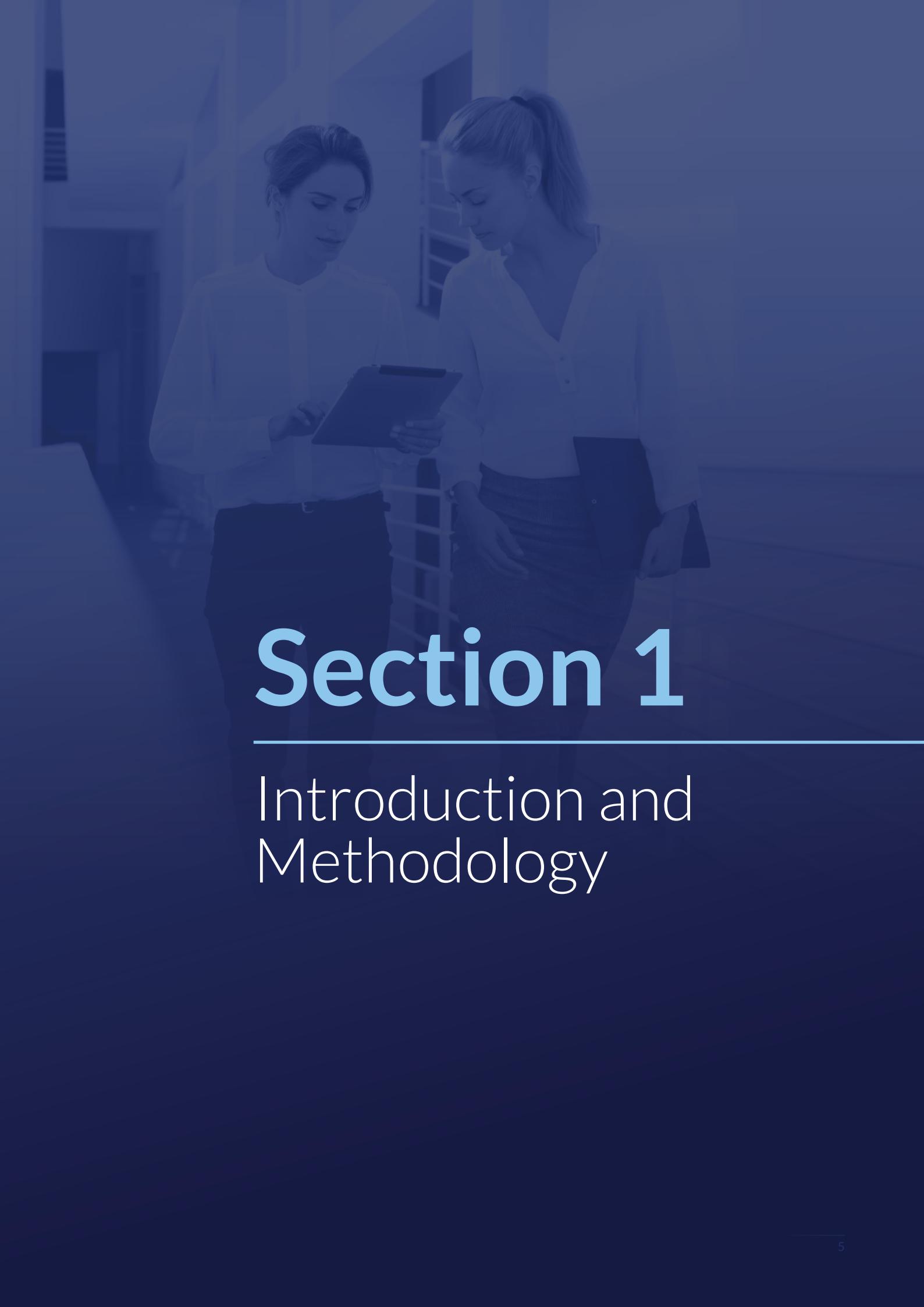
In progressing its work, the PSPC should utilise and analyse existing datasets and reports, as prepared and published by existing state and other agencies as appropriate. The PSPC may also undertake or commission additional research or data gathering where further information is required to comprehensively progress its Terms of Reference. The PSPC may invite relevant stakeholders to make submissions to the Commission to further assist its considerations.

The PSPC must publish its findings and the evidence on which these are based. The PSPC will not take the place of direct negotiations between Government and employee representatives.

## Phase 2

In accordance with Section 3 of the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 and consistent with its overall Terms of Reference, the Commission should:

1. Seek to establish in the first instance whether, and to what extent, a difficulty exists in terms of recruitment and retention for specific groups/grades/sectors of the public service;
2. Where a difficulty is identified, examine the full range of causal factors, having regard as the Commission considers relevant to:
  - The totality of the current remuneration package available;
  - The planned future pay adjustments and alleviations from current rates of the Pension Related Deduction (PRD) provided for in the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020;
  - Remaining Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) pay unwinding post-2020, where applicable;
  - Supply constraints, for example, of newly qualified graduates of relevant post-Leaving Cert or third level programmes;
  - Work environment/organisational issues;
  - Career structures;
  - Learning and development provision;
  - Communications/engagement;
  - Other relevant HR practice or organisational issues; and
  - Any other factor considered relevant by the Commission.
3. Develop appropriate methodological and analytical criteria to ensure a robust evidence-based approach to this exercise;
4. Have regard to arrangements and best practice in other jurisdictions and, where appropriate, the domestic private sector in Ireland in relation to such issues, particularly in respect of those areas where a global labour market exists as well as the responses being adopted in other jurisdictions where similar recruitment and retention problems pertain;
5. Commission such external expertise as the Commission deems necessary to inform its deliberations in the context of the methodologies developed;
6. Provide the Parties to the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 with the opportunity to make submissions to the Commission;
7. Generate a range of costed options for resolving the specific issues identified having full regard to the fiscal constraints and requirements on Government to manage the Exchequer pay bill in a sustainable way over the medium and long-term;
8. Produce a final report to the Minister by end-2018 and/or at such interim stages as the Commission may decide.

A photograph of two women in professional attire standing in an office setting. One woman is holding a tablet computer and they appear to be discussing its contents. The background shows office equipment and shelves.

# Section 1

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Introduction and  
Methodology

## Establishment and Operation of the Commission

The Public Service Pay Commission (the Commission) was established on a non-statutory basis in October 2016. The role of the Commission is advisory in nature, and is not intended to duplicate the dispute resolution and adjudicative functions of the industrial relations institutions of the State, or offset the process of collective bargaining as the primary mode of pay determination in the public service.

The Members of the Commission are:

- Kevin Duffy (Chairman)
- Marian Corcoran
- Ultan Courtney
- Ruth Curran
- Noel Dowling
- Michael Kelly
- Seán Lyons (to 31 March 2019)
- Peter McLoone

In May 2017, the Commission published its first Report, which provided input on how the unwinding of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest legislation (FEMPI) should proceed. This was used as a basis for negotiations on the extension of the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020. Section 3.1.1 of the Agreement noted a finding from the Commission's Report, which stated that "consideration could be given to commissioning a more comprehensive examination of underlying difficulties in recruitment and retention in those sectors and employment streams where difficulties are clearly evident"<sup>1</sup>.

The Public Service Stability Agreement went on to provide for such an examination and also that:

- The Parties to this Agreement will have the opportunity to make submissions to the Commission on this matter.
- The Commission will conduct a comprehensive examination and analysis of the particular issues in question, commissioning external expertise as required, and taking into account the full range of causal factors in each case. The Commission will be asked to generate options for resolving the issues identified. In this regard, the Commission will develop specific methodological and analytical criteria to support it in carrying out this exercise.
- The Commission will be asked to complete this exercise by end-2018.

- The Commission will advise the relevant Parties on the outcome of its assessment, which will then be the subject of discussion between the relevant Parties. It is accepted by the Parties that the output from this exercise will not give rise to any cross-sectoral relativity claims.
- The implementation of any proposals that may arise on foot of the Commission's Report will fall to be considered by the Parties.

The Commission is supported in its work by a small Secretariat seconded from the Civil Service.

## Work Programme

In October 2017, the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform agreed the Terms of Reference (set out in the previous section) for the next stage of the Commission's work and the formal commencement of Phase II.

The Commission decided that a modular approach should be adopted for its Phase II work programme, whereby:

**Module 1** would consider issues relating to Nurses and Midwives, Non Consultant Hospital Doctors and Hospital Consultants.

**Module 2** would report on issues of recruitment and retention in the Permanent Defence Force and consider those residual grades/specialities where evidence of recruitment and/or retention difficulties were found to exist in Chapter 6 of the Commission's first Report.

The Commission's Statement of Approach to its work is available on the Commission's website at <https://paycommission.gov.ie/work-of-the-commission/phase-2/pspc-statement-of-approach/>.

## Approach

The mandate of the Commission is due to expire on the 30th of June 2019. Prior to the expiration of its mandate, the Commission is addressing its remaining work programme by carrying out a high level analysis of the remaining grades and specialities where evidence of recruitment and/or retention difficulties were outlined in Chapter 6 of the Commission's first Report published in May 2017. These grades were as follows: senior executive public servants, specialist grades in the public service, and dentists, paramedics, psychologists and radiographers in the public health service. National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) staff were subsequently also included.

The Commission has examined the submissions and data provided by the employer and by the staff representative bodies in order to investigate recruitment and/or retention difficulties in relation to

<sup>1</sup> (Public Service Pay Commission, 2017)

these groups. Due to the tight timeframe, oral sessions were not held with the staff representative bodies or the employers.

In addition to the groups identified as experiencing a recruitment and/or retention problem in Chapter 6 of its May 2017 Report, in Q4 2017 the Commission issued a general invitation for submissions on recruitment and retention to all staff representative bodies that were parties to the PSSA. The Commission has not been able to undertake an in-depth analysis of all of the issues raised in these submissions due to time constraints caused principally by the expansion of its earlier work programme<sup>2</sup>.

All submissions received by the Commission are published on the Commission's website here: <https://paycommission.gov.ie/submissions/>.

## Structure of Report

The Commission presents its assessment of recruitment and retention across the cohorts as follows:

- **Section 2** concerns the submissions received in respect of senior executive public servants;
- **Section 3** concerns the submissions, data and research received in respect of certain public service health professionals (public service dentists, paramedics, National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) staff, psychologists and radiographers);
- **Section 4** concerns the submissions received in respect of specialist grades in the public service; and
- **Section 5** sets out the Commission's concluding comments.

## Methodology

### Senior Executive Public Servants and Specialist Grades

The Commission stated that some senior executive public service and specialist grades were experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties in Chapter 6 of its May 2017 Report. The Commission received submissions from the relevant parties. The timeframe for examining this material was particularly constrained.

<sup>2</sup> The Commission was initially asked to examine the specialist grades identified in the conclusions of Chapter 6 of its May 2017 Report. However, following a meeting with the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform on the 29th of November 2018, the scope was extended to "a broad based" assessment of the PDF.

The Commission drew conclusions based on all of the information supplied to it. It also considered publicly available information, including reports by the Top Level Appointments Committee and the Public Appointments Service.

## Health Grades

The Commission developed a number of data requests to gather evidence on recruitment and retention for the health grades examined in this Final Report (radiographers, psychologists, paramedics, NEOC staff and public service dentists). The Commission requested information from the employer and from the relevant staff representative associations about the factors that impact on the recruitment and retention of personnel.

In order to establish whether there were difficulties with recruitment for these health professional grades, the Commission sought the following information:

- Evidence, including trends over time, on areas where there are significant numbers of vacancies, where efforts have been made to fill them and they remained unfilled;
- Data about consistent shortages of suitable applicants for particular posts (including trends over time);
- Evidence about panel resilience and rejections of offers by panellists;
- The operational impact of any recruitment difficulties; and
- Evidence, if relevant, of shortages in the supply of suitably qualified candidates in particular specialties from the domestic third level sector.

In order to establish whether there were difficulties with retention, the Commission sought the following information:

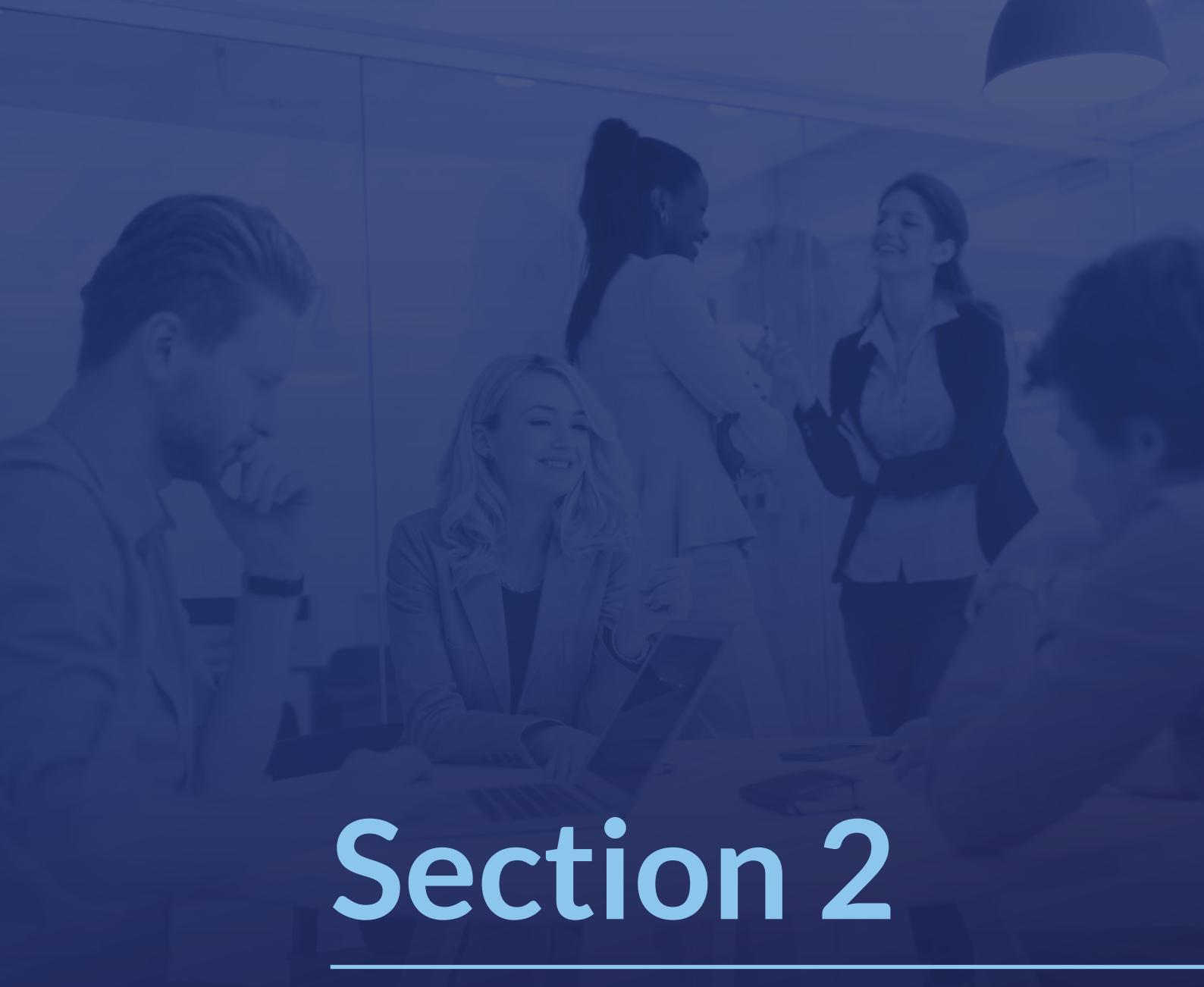
- Evidence of significant levels of turnover<sup>3</sup> supported by data on the impact on operational capacity;
- Information about personnel leaving their jobs for posts in the domestic public and private sector (including trends over time);
- Evidence of significant numbers of personnel moving out of public service roles to roles abroad where there is evidence of an international labour market for relevant professionals/personnel with particular skillsets(including trends over time); and
- Causal factors impacting on retention, e.g. working conditions or relevant environmental factors.

<sup>3</sup> The turnover rate described in the report refers to the number of leavers in a year divided by average number employed in that year.

The Commission also engaged external expertise to undertake a survey and structured interviews with personnel employed in the health grades considered in this final Report. The purpose of this was to provide further insight into the recruitment and/or retention issues that impact on radiographers, psychologists, paramedics, NEOC staff and public service dentists. This research has been published and is available in full on the Commission's website here: <https://paycommission.gov.ie/submissions/phase-2/>

## **Economic Context**

The Commission set out the fiscal and economic context in detail in its Report on the Permanent Defence Force (PDF), submitted to the Minister in May 2019. This PDF Report drew on the latest forecasts available from the Department of Finance, and it is the view of the Commission that the articulation of the fiscal and economic considerations reached therein remain valid at this juncture.



## Section 2

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Senior Executive  
Roles in the Civil and  
Public Service

## Background

In its first Report, issued in May 2017, the Commission noted the following in respect of senior executive and specialist roles in the Civil and Public Service:

*"In 2014, PAS reported challenges in attracting external candidates to senior executive roles, and has stated that these challenges were mainly due to salaries in the public service not being comparable to those in the private sector. PAS has said that the situation worsened in 2015 and 2016, due to an improvement in the economy, stating that it is a candidate driven market and that a lack of comparable incentives such as performance related bonus, health care and car allowance are issues.*

[...]

*In 2015, PAS managed the recruitment process for a number of specialist roles primarily in HR, ICT and Finance at senior level in Government Departments and the broader Civil Service. Feedback from their executive search function indicates that external candidates have been very interested in these roles [...] However, PAS states that the challenge has been that the remuneration (salary and benefits) these candidates currently earn is at least 30 per cent higher than that on offer in the Civil Service.*

[...]

*The 2015 PAS Annual Report also states that remuneration has become more of a competitive issue in public service recruitment as organisations within the private sector use remuneration in their overall approach to attract, develop and retain talent, and that this has now become a real disincentive to potential candidates from the private sector who are interested in working in the public service."*

within its Terms of Reference. Furthermore, the Commission is aware that remuneration for higher grades within the wider public and Civil Service is determined by Government and, in particular, the policy in relation to maximum salary levels. In the circumstances, the Commission recognises that any change to the current policy in this regard is a matter, in the first instance, for Government.

## Findings

There are, however, a number of observations that may be of assistance in considering the recent submissions made to the Commission.

It is a matter of fact that the pay reductions and caps introduced during the fiscal crisis had a significantly greater impact on the earnings of those at the most senior levels, relative to other grades of public servants. Moreover, the pace of restoration has also been slower, with the result that at the end of the current Agreement, in October 2020, when all public servants earning up to €70,000 will have had their pay fully restored, this cohort will still have a deficit outstanding. The Commission notes that, under the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017, the Minister has the power to complete restoration for all parties from 1 October 2020.

The Commission notes that, in the opinion of DPER, the current situation has resulted in a policy deficit with pay rates being determined on an ad hoc basis, without a consistent and objective policy support structure, in an effort to attract candidates for certain roles. The Commission would support the employer's view that this approach is neither desirable nor sustainable.

It is further noted that remuneration in respect of higher level posts in the public service was historically determined by Government on the recommendations of the Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Sector. This reflected a policy position that pay for the most senior posts in the public service should be determined in a different manner to the normal industrial relations machinery used for other grades. The Review Body provided objective, evidence based assessments to inform pay policy via periodic reviews of the adequacy of remuneration for senior grades between 1969 and 2009.

The Commission would consider it appropriate, should it be decided to conduct a review of remuneration of senior level posts, that the Review Body be reconstituted for this purpose, given the complexity and variety of the posts under discussion, as well as the range of issues affecting them. In undertaking this work, the Review Body could examine how pay, pensions, and other elements of the remuneration package impact on recruitment and retention, and how to attract the best candidates to apply for top level posts.

## Submissions to the Commission

The Commission received submissions from various stakeholders, including, on the employer side, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER).

In its submission to the Commission, received on 28th May 2019, DPER acknowledged a continuing difficulty in attracting candidates for certain high level posts due to constraints on remuneration. In the time available before the Commission's mandate expires on 30th June 2019 it has not been possible for the Commission to undertake any meaningful analysis of the extent of the difficulties alluded to, or of the causal factors giving rise to those difficulties. Suffice it to say, the information available to the Commission indicates that the problems identified are mainly caused by the factors reported by PAS and noted by the Commission in its 2017 Report.

These are matters which relate primarily to basic pay, which the Commission is constrained from addressing

A soft-focus photograph of a woman with dark hair and a baby. She is smiling warmly at the camera, and the baby is visible in her arms, though slightly out of focus.

# Section 3

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Certain Public Service  
Health Professionals

## Background

The first Report of the Public Service Pay Commission, published in May 2017, identified certain grades, groups and sectors where recruitment and retention difficulties appeared to exist. The second Commission Report (Module 1), published in August 2018, examined recruitment and retention matters for Nurses and Midwives, Non Consultant Hospital Doctors and Hospital Consultants.

The Commission has agreed that Module 2 of its current work programme would, in addition to its recent Report on the Permanent Defence Force, consider the residual grades and specialities where evidence of recruitment and/or retention difficulties were found to exist. The remaining health disciplines highlighted in the 2017 Report – Radiographers, Psychologists, Paramedics and Public Service Dentists – are considered here; together with National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) staff, who were subsequently included.

## Submissions to the Commission

The Commission has received submissions from various stakeholders and in the course of its data request for Module 1 took the opportunity to request transactional recruitment and retention data for the health professionals under consideration.

The Commission has not been in a position to conduct an in-depth consideration or analysis due to the extent, and subsequent expansion, of its earlier work programme. The Commission's review of the material received revealed a scarcity of detail regarding the number of vacancies and the optimal number of employees required. A similar problem had been encountered in the course of researching the August 2018 Report "on Nurses, Midwives, NCHDs and Consultants," in respect of which the Commission concluded that it '*must be recognised as constraining its capacity to make definitive evidence based conclusions*'.

## Recruitment

The joint employer submission stated that the number of Whole Time Equivalents (WTEs) for Psychologists,

### Headcount Change and Recruitment Campaigns

	Change in WTE Numbers, 2008-2018	Ratio of Applicants Interviewed to Panel Places, 2013-2018
Psychologists	+48%	1.4
Radiographers	+23%	1.4
Ambulance Staff Group	+35%	4.6
Dentists	-19%	1.9

Source: PSPC Workings based on DPER/HBS Recruit Data

Radiographers and Ambulance staff has increased significantly since 2008, but there has been a 19% reduction in the number of Dentists in the public service. The submission argued that the number of applications, and of candidates being interviewed, indicates that there is no evidence of a recruitment difficulty for any of the four groups. The table below outlines the change in WTE numbers for each group from 2008-2018, and the ratio of applicants interviewed to places on panels from 2013-2018.

However, as these numbers only reflect aggregate headcount and applicant figures, there may be vacancies at local level and for particular specialities or skill sets within each cohort.

Given the lack of information regarding the numbers of personnel required, the Commission is unable to make a definitive finding regarding the existence of a recruitment problem for any of these health grades.

## Retention

The joint employer submission states that turnover rates for each of the staff groups are low and, with a range of 2.3% to 7%, are below the average employee turnover rate of 9% in the wider economy in 2017, as reported in the IBEC 2018 Turnover Report<sup>4</sup>. While staff side submissions alluded to retention difficulties in regional areas, data to support this was not presented.

## Commission Research

A quantitative and qualitative attitudinal survey of the four health disciplines under review was carried out on the Commission's behalf by Research Matters Ltd. The objective of the surveys and interviews was to gain a further understanding of the main drivers influencing recruitment and/or retention, what employees perceive as their motivation in applying for and remaining in their current employment and the drivers, if any, for intending to leave their current role. The response rates ranged from 27.8% for Radiographers to 46.7% for Paramedics and National Emergencies Operations Centre Staff. A summary of the findings is set out in Appendix C and the full Report is available on the Commission's website at [www.paycommission.gov.ie](http://www.paycommission.gov.ie).

<sup>4</sup> Joint Employer Submission to the Public Service Pay Commission, 2018

The Commission also notes the finding in the 2018 National Skills Bulletin that while demand was strong nationally for many healthcare professionals, of the cohort being examined in this Report, shortages were identified for Radiographers.<sup>5</sup>

## Findings

Having considered the evidence available to it, the Commission has a number of general points and observations to make in respect of the public service health professionals under consideration, as follows:

1. Staff side submissions have expressed dissatisfaction with many aspects of their terms and conditions of employment and have particularly focussed on the issue of remuneration. However, the Commission reiterates that its considerations are restricted to the issues of recruitment and retention and that it is therefore precluded from undertaking a general pay review.
2. The Commission consider that the recruitment process in the public health service warrants review and enhancement and that a more targeted, dynamic and contemporary approach should be applied, in what is a highly competitive and rapidly changing market. The Commission is also of the view that there are numerous initiatives either in place or in gestation that have potential to alleviate or assist recruitment and retention difficulties. There is a need in this regard to support such measures as part of the broad range of responses required to deliver sustainable progress in recruitment and retention. Consequently, the Commission would encourage and support a determined response from stakeholders in the consideration of potential solutions.
3. The Commission has previously outlined the complexities of recruitment and retention and the requirement for multi-faceted policy responses. The Commission's 2017 Report acknowledged that a number of stakeholders had recognised that increased pay would not in itself address recruitment and retention, particularly in the health sector, and that there was a range of influencing factors which impact on ability to deliver on patient care, including: the pressurised work environment; the provision of continued professional development, paid study days and clinical support; the ability to offer a more attractive work environment; the ability to address inefficient systems or processes which impact or distract from providing patient care; and geographical location<sup>6</sup>.
4. The Commission notes that a number of relevant reports, including the recently published National Oral Health Policy *Smile Agus Sláinte*, and the soon to be published *National Radiographer Review Group Report*, have implications for the public health service professionals in these sectors. The National Oral Health Policy, which was published in March 2019, suggests a significantly altered focus and operation of the public health dental service. The National Radiography Review Group, which is a broad representative forum, is considering matters of concern to the sector, including recruitment and retention, and is expected to conclude its work shortly.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.solas.ie/SkillsToAdvance/Documents/National%20Skills%20Bulletin%202018.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Public Service Pay Commission, May 2017.*



# Section 4

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Specialist Grades in  
the Public Service

## Background

The Commission agreed that Module 2 of its current work programme would, in addition to reporting on the Permanent Defence Forces, consider the remaining grades and specialities identified in its Report of May 2017 where evidence of recruitment and/or retention difficulties were found to exist. Chapter 6 of that Report concluded that “despite gaps in the available data, particularly in relation to retention issues, our analysis of the volume of applications for posts in the public service in the recent past would indicate that it is possible to attract new recruits to the public service particularly in such areas as the Civil Service (up to PO grade), Garda Síochána, education sector and the Local Authorities.” However, the Report also found that PAS had identified difficulties in attracting external senior executives and specialist grades into the public service.

## Submissions to the Commission

The Commission received a number of submissions related to specialist grades, including a submission from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) concerning the recruitment and retention of professional and technical grades across the Civil Service. The DPER submission points out that the distinction between general staff and professional and technical staff in the Civil Service can sometimes be unclear, e.g. ICT specialists are often given general administrative job titles. It also acknowledges that the recruitment and retention of professional and technical staff may present specific challenges when compared to general recruitment, due to the more limited pool of available labour, the specific skillsets and qualifications required, and the existence of comparable public and private sector positions with more attractive terms and conditions, both domestically and internationally.

### Recruitment

The DPER submission presented quantitative PAS data concerning recruitment trends on a diverse range of grades ranging from Engineer Grade III, which is common to many Government Departments, to Assistant Librarian Oireachtas, which is found in only one. The submission points out that, although PAS has run a number of competitions for professional and technical grades throughout the Civil Service, some Civil Service bodies have recruitment licences of their own. The PAS recruitment data does not therefore represent a complete dataset, but the submission argues that it can indicate general trends.

### Retention

The DPER submission states that data on staff retention is less readily available for the Civil Service than recruitment data. It references HRMS reporting data and states that, although the figures appear

volatile, turnover of professional and technical staff overall has remained below 10% in recent years, and averaged only 6% in the Civil Service in 2018.

Finally, the DPER submission sets out a number of examples of recruitment and/or retention difficulties arising in the Civil Service, including ICT staff generally, and some other grades in particular areas as follows:

- Grade III Solicitors in the Legal Aid Board;
- Statisticians in the Central Statistics Office; and
- Category Specialist Higher and Category Managers in the Office of Government Procurement.

The submission highlighted that these examples are by way of case study and are not intended to be representative of all sectors.

## Staff Side Submissions

Relevant staff representative bodies forwarded a number of submissions asserting recruitment and/or retention problems affecting specialist grades within the public service. Grades which were referenced include:

- Solicitor Grade III – Legal Aid Board;
- Meteorologists – Met Éireann;
- Technical Agricultural Officers – Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- Library and Research Staff – Oireachtas;
- Debates Office Staff and Translators – Oireachtas;
- Grade III Valuers – Government Valuation Office;
- Radio Officers – Irish Coastguard Service;
- Special Education Needs Organisers – National Council for Special Education;
- Local Authority Professional Officer grades (Assistant and Executive Engineers and Planners);
- Various Medical Scientist Grades;
- Health and Social Care Professional grades; and
- Phlebotomists and Pathology Technicians.

## Findings

Having considered the views expressed in these submissions, the Commission would make a number of points, as follows:

1. Given the diversity of grades encompassed within the specialist 'category', there would appear to be particular recruitment and/or retention challenges in certain niche areas which may call for exceptional intervention. Difficulties may also arise at an organisational level and these instances should be examined on a case by case basis. Accordingly, the Commission reiterates the view set out in Paragraph 6.31 of its May 2017 Report, which stated that "*in the past, various pay devices were used to address specific recruitment and retention difficulties in particular specialist areas. These included entry above the scale minimum, accelerated incremental progression, allowances in the nature of pay, etc. It may be worthwhile for the parties to examine the use of such devices as part of the response to areas where real recruitment/retention challenges exist rather than attempt to rely solely on a 'one size fits all' solution.*"
2. The limited data available to the Commission suggests that differences exist between similar jobs (or equivalent grades) in different areas within and across the civil and public service, and that this may contribute to churn, internal attrition and turnover. An example of this is Solicitor Grade III in the Legal Aid Board, referenced in both the employer and the staff side submissions, where more favourable starting pay terms are available in other public service bodies. The Commission is of the view that where business cases are being examined on a case by case basis, this must involve consideration at a central level. Applying bespoke solutions for a particular grade in one public service organisation could give rise to knock-on recruitment and/or retention issues elsewhere.
3. The Commission notes that an ICT Professionalisation Strategy has been developed as part of the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy. A number of actions therein are specifically aimed at improving the recruitment and retention of ICT personnel, e.g. internship competitions, specific ICT recruitment campaigns, Continuing Professional Development, accredited training, the development of an ICT staff engagement strategy and the recently launched ICT Apprenticeship Programme.
4. There is a lack of centralised data in relation to the recruitment and retention of professional and technical grades in the Civil Service, in part due to such staff at times being categorised as general administrative staff and vice versa for central reporting purposes.
5. The Commission has observed that a number of the grades referenced in submissions are specialist skillsets in strong demand in the resurgent construction industry. Temporary shortages of sought after specialist personnel and skills arise from time to time and are often cyclical in nature. The private sector is typically more flexible in its responses to shortages in specialised areas, and can put temporary arrangements in place which will then cease at the end of the skills shortage. The public service may require some flexibility, as set out above, to address specific recruitment and retention difficulties in particular specialist areas. However, these flexibilities should be kept under review and it would not, in the Commission's opinion, be appropriate to make permanent changes to longer term pay and conditions, where the challenges being addressed are temporary or have arisen due to exceptional circumstances.



# Section 5

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## Concluding Comments

The completion of this Report represents the culmination of the work of the Public Service Pay Commission as presently constituted. This phase of the Commission's work was specifically focussed on an evidence based examination and analysis of recruitment and or retention issues.

The Commission at all times based its considerations, conclusions and recommendations on the evidence presented to it by the relevant parties and gathered by the Secretariat.

The Commission experienced varying levels of detail and completeness with regard to the evidence provided to it and has commented on that fact in each of its first three Reports, stressing the importance of completeness, relevance and accuracy of data to inform business decisions and in this case to manage the recruitment and retention of personnel in the public service

The recommendations made by the Commission in the course of its work comprise both the specific and the general. These recommendations have included streamlining recruitment processes, improved induction/orientation arrangements, greater access to training, the prioritisation of workforce planning and enhanced investment in the HR functions in terms of resources, data and expertise. It is the view of the Commission that in addressing recruitment and retention difficulties, as earlier Reports have made clear, the source of such difficulties as they exist are multifactorial and no one initiative, taken in isolation, can provide the solution.

A noticeable feature of the staff side submissions throughout all phases of the Commission's work was the extent to which they urged the Commission to recommend increases in basic pay as a means of resolving recruitment and retention issues. As stated in its previous Reports, the Commission is precluded from undertaking a general pay review for any group. The Commission is also aware that the current PSSA, while providing for consideration of any proposals that may arise on foot of the Commission's Report, does not allow for the pursuance of increases in pay or improvements in conditions of employment beyond those provided for by the Agreement during the term of the Agreement.

Many of the submissions expressed a level of dissatisfaction across a range of issues which may have some bearing on recruitment and retention, however, the Commission is of the view that some of these issues could be resolved with appropriate direct discussions between the parties.

The Commission recommended at section 6.31 of its first Report in May 2017 that, where a recruitment and/or retention difficulty has been identified in particular specialist areas, it would be worthwhile for the parties to examine the various pay devices which were used in the past to address specific recruitment and retention issues.

The Commission subsequently recommended in its August 2018 and May 2019 Reports that the parties to the PSSA consider putting arrangements in place, at an appropriate time, and without compromising the stability of the public service pay bill, to allow for the adequacy of current pay arrangements more generally to be fully examined.

The Commission trusts that the research and recommendations furnished within its four Reports have gone some way towards addressing the various remuneration, pension and recruitment and retention issues within the public service which were referred to it for examination, and that, after further consideration by the relevant parties, they may form the basis for fruitful discussion.

A blurred background image showing a group of diverse professionals in a modern office environment. They are dressed in business attire, including suits and casual shirts, and appear to be engaged in a social gathering or networking event. Some individuals are holding coffee cups, and they are all smiling and looking towards the right side of the frame.

# Appendices

# Appendix A: Membership of PSPC and List of Meetings

## Members

Kevin Duffy (Chairman)  
Marian Corcoran  
Ultan Courtney  
Ruth Curran  
Noel Dowling  
Michael Kelly  
Seán Lyons (To 31 March 2019)  
Peter McLoone

Brief Biographies of the Commission members can be found at <http://paycommission.gov.ie>

## Module 2 Meetings<sup>7</sup>

1. 23rd October 2018
2. 13th November 2018
3. 29th November 2018
4. 4th December 2018
5. 5th February 2019
6. 5th March 2019
7. 26th March 2019
8. 9th April 2019
9. 30th April 2019
10. 2nd May 2019
11. 7th May 2019
12. 14th May 2019
13. 11th June 2019
14. 25th June 2019

Minutes of these meetings are available on our website  
<http://paycommission.gov.ie>

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<sup>7</sup> This list of meetings includes all those held in relation to Module 2, including those concerning the PDF.

# Appendix B: List of Submissions Received

All submissions will be available on our website (<http://paycommission.gov.ie>).

## **Submissions**

1. Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Senior Executive Roles in Civil and Public Service.
2. Department of Health and Department of Public Expenditure Reform, Radiographers, Dental, Ambulance Staff and Psychologists.
3. Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Professional and Technical Staff in the Civil Service.
4. Senior Civil Service Association.
5. SIPTU – Health Division.
6. Irish Dental Association.
7. IMPACT/FÓRSA – Civil Service Division.
8. IMPACT/FÓRSA – Health and Welfare Division.
9. SIPTU – Local Government.
10. SIPTU – MSLA
11. AHCPS
12. Association of Judges in Ireland
13. CPSU/FÓRSA
14. ASTI/INTO/TUI
15. PSEU/FÓRSA

# Appendix C: Survey and Structured Interviews

This Appendix presents an overview of the findings of the Commission's survey and structured interviews of public service dentists, paramedics and NEOC staff, psychologists and radiographers in relation to recruitment and retention. One of the objectives of the research was to further understand the main drivers influencing any recruitment and retention difficulties. The views of practitioners may also be useful in identifying policy options to address any such difficulties. Details on the methodology and limitations are provided in the full study, which is available on the Commission's website at [www.paycommission.gov.ie/submissions/phase-2](http://www.paycommission.gov.ie/submissions/phase-2). All results should be treated as indicative only.

## Public Service Dentists

The sample size for this group is low, with 125 responses. This equates to 30% of the total cohort, as the overall population is small (approx. 410 WTEs).

### Recruitment

#### Survey Results

The survey asked those who had been in their current role for less than two years about their impressions of recruitment. Just over 16% of the sample had been recruited into their current role in the last two years and responded to the survey around recruitment issues.

The findings from the analysis indicate that dentists are moderately satisfied with the recruitment process, and they are highly satisfied with the reality of the job compared to expectation. For example, 69% were satisfied with the interview process and 61% were satisfied with the fairness of the process.

The area of recruitment that received the most negative feedback in the survey was the length of the recruitment process, with 46% being dissatisfied; though it should also be noted that 40% were satisfied with the process.

#### Interview Results

There was extensive commentary in the interviews about the length of time recruitment takes and how this can lead to gaps in service provision. Examples were given of panels that had been in place for two or three years. It was reported that some were 'waiting so long that they go off and take another job'. Others said that this process could mean 'losing opportunities

to hire excellent candidates because by the time the paperwork has been processed the best candidates have had other offers and have gone elsewhere'.

The difficulties in getting permission to recruit from the relevant authority (generally the local employment monitoring committee) and the availability of funding for posts were raised in the interviews. Many interviewees spoke about problems in getting approval for replacements in particular for maternity cover and temporary absences. The 'run rate' was referred to by a number of individuals, where the filling of a vacancy is dependent on the budget availability at the time. It was suggested that as a result of the slow pace of recruitment, the post may not be filled because the budget may be taken away by the HSE by the time a candidate for the post is found. In addition, it was stated that the moratorium on recruitment imposed in 2009 led to a number of vacant posts being 'eliminated' and 'erased' from the system.

There were a range of views among respondents about whether it was difficult to attract dentists to work in the HSE. It was suggested that the role needs to be promoted better and that pay needs to be restored so it is more aligned with the private sector. On the other hand, it was highlighted that recent competitions had attracted a number of applicants and the 'calibre of the applicants' was 'superb'. It was also mentioned that some locations are more attractive than others and that the HSE may be less attractive to male dentists and this is potentially a 'pay and career progression issue'.

### Retention

#### Survey Results

The survey results indicate that about one in five respondents (20.7%) intended to leave their current job in two years or less, while 79.3% intended to stay. Due to the small sample size of 125, just 24 respondents are in the 'leave' group, so the results should be interpreted with caution.

The most frequently cited factors that contribute to dental surgeons staying in their jobs are suitable working hours, the job being permanent and pensionable, convenient location and personal and family reasons.

The factors most frequently highlighted by those who indicated an intention to leave were staffing levels, demands of the work environment, better work opportunities elsewhere and personal/family reasons.

Analysis of the results of those likely to leave are not associated with any particular individual characteristics such as gender, employment grade, full time/part time status or age. Lower overall job satisfaction, lower engagement levels, less training and promotional opportunities, a poorer job skills match, less employer support, a perceived higher effort to reward ratio and a diminished organisational commitment were shown as a higher predictor of likelihood of leaving the organisation or the profession.

### **Interview Results**

In relation to the qualitative research, dental surgeons commented favourably on advantages of the role, including the rewarding nature of the job, its flexible hours, and the ability to work almost anywhere.

There was a lot of commentary about work colleagues and most of this was positive. Comments were made such as "we would have good camaraderie in the staff here" and "we do get on because we all know we're fighting the same battle." A small number of dentists noted that some people were appreciative of the service they receive.

The sources of the biggest challenges for dental surgeons are staffing levels and workload. Many comments were made about these issues. It was suggested that "the main [challenge] is that we are short staffed and yet we have seen a huge increase in the core operations... a big decrease in dentists in the last 10 years while dealing with a population increase." Others observed that low staffing levels were leading to stress and burnout.

Pay was raised by some participants, with some highlighting that they are relatively satisfied, whilst others stated that pay levels were higher in the private sector. There was some acknowledgement, however, that dentists in private practice also had additional costs, such as taxes and salaries of support staff.

Training and education were highlighted, with some calling for the reinstatement of the vocational training scheme that allowed graduates to do placements with the HSE. Others highlighted a lack of funding and support for continuous professional development and how this can lead to a loss of skills over time. Finally, some argued that the dental service had "no promotional opportunities" and others lamented the "short structure" of the hierarchy.

## **Paramedics and National Emergencies Operations Centre Staff**

The response rate for this group was 46.7% (835 responses). Paramedics made up 89% of the sample (i.e. 742 responses) and staff working in the National Emergency Operations Centre made up the other 11% (i.e. 93 responses).

## **Recruitment**

### **Survey Results**

The survey asked those who had been in their jobs for less than two years about their impressions of recruitment. Just over 25% of the sample had been recruited into their current role during the last two years and responded to the survey around recruitment issues.

The findings from the analysis indicate that overall paramedics and NEOC staff are moderately satisfied with the recruitment process. In terms of different components of the recruitment process, 52% were satisfied with the interview process and 53% were satisfied with the fairness of the process. However, 52% were dissatisfied with the length of the recruitment process. In addition, analysis of the responses of both paramedics and NEOC staff indicated that there was a relatively high match between their initial expectations of the role and their experience of the role.

### **Interview Results**

Generally, there was relatively little commentary in the interviews about the recruitment process for paramedics. However, a number of participants highlighted issues where paramedics in training or immediately after qualifying end up being allocated to a position a long way from home. It was suggested that there is "no linked up thinking" about the placement of people from panels close to where they are based. Some interviewees commented that the placements of people far from home were having a negative impact in terms of personal relationships and finances. It was also suggested that the placements could be a barrier to going forward for paramedic training, particularly for Emergency Medical Technicians.

Similarly, there was limited commentary on the recruitment process for NEOC staff. However, it was highlighted that the length of time between recruitment and getting people from the panels into training and then into the workplace was problematic. It was suggested that attempting to hire people into a job 18 months after being placed on a panel was not feasible as many would have moved on to different roles.

## **Retention**

### **Survey Results**

About one in three respondents (33.9%) intended to leave their current job in two years or less, while 66.1% intended to stay. The three most common reasons for those intending to stay were 'suitable working hours, days and/or rota' (45% rated this as highly relevant), 'personal or family reasons' (39%) and 'convenient location' (37%).

The factor that those who indicated an intention to leave most frequently highlighted was 'staffing levels as a problem' (66%). In addition, 47% indicated that 'better job opportunities elsewhere' was highly relevant, 39% rated 'work environment too demanding' as highly relevant, 36% rated 'working hours, days and/or rota not suitable' as highly relevant and 25% indicated that personal or family reasons were highly relevant.

Regarding the intention to leave, about two fifths of respondents thought about leaving the organisation often or all of the time. About one in four indicated that they would leave their organisation in the next year. There was a very high level of correlation between those who expressed the intention to leave their organisation and the intention to leave the profession, which implies that once an individual leaves their organisation they are likely to be lost to the wider paramedic/NEOC services. The scores on the intention to leave the organisation index are significantly higher for NEOC staff (57%) compared to paramedics (50%).

Analysis of the results of those likely to leave amongst paramedics shows no difference between genders; however older employees (aged 51 or older) were less likely to leave than younger staff. Further analyses of the impact measures (global job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout and engagement) underlined the role played by lower employer support, work overload, poorer perceptions of managers and co-workers in 'driving' impact measures and predicting the intention to leave the organisation.

For NEOC staff, the intention to leave was not associated with gender, age group or grade. Further analyses of the impact measures (global job satisfaction and organisational commitment) clearly underlined the role that poorer employer support plays in 'driving' both of these impact measures and predicting intention to leave the organisation.

### **Interviews with paramedics**

In relation to the qualitative research, paramedics commented favourably on advantages of the role, including having a positive impact on the lives of patients and their families and working with good colleagues. Respondents mentioned saving people's lives, being valued and thanked by patients or their families and being trusted by the public.

Ambulance crews who respond to emergency or urgent calls identified a number of issues arising from the way in which calls are allocated. These include having to travel long distances, regularly being told to 'stand down' (where they respond to a call because they are the nearest available ambulance but another becomes free before they get to the incident), being unable to take comfort or meal breaks, being held up at A&E departments for substantial periods of time, and having to work extended hours at the end of an already long shift.

Work-life balance was highlighted as being particularly challenging. First, the impact of extended hours was highlighted and it was noted that it is very difficult to plan activities following work due to its unpredictable nature. Second, shift work and the rostering system were identified as problematic, and examples were given of individual paramedics who were not on a roster not knowing where they would be working from week to week. Finally, the type of work undertaken by paramedics is challenging and stressful, and the emotional impact of this is substantial.

Paramedics highlighted that they stay in the service because they love their job and/or their specific skills mean that it would be difficult to get jobs elsewhere.

Three main reasons were provided by paramedics around the intention to leave in the interviews. First, it was noted that paramedics in Ireland are very highly skilled and, consequently, they have opportunities to get work in many other jurisdictions with more advantageous terms and conditions compared with Ireland. A second reason outlined in respect of intention to leave relates to difficulties with management, particularly in respect of communication, trust and relationships.

Third, while a small number of interviewees indicated that they received sufficient pay, in general pay was highlighted as inadequate. In addition, it was suggested that without overtime it would be very difficult for paramedics to live on their salary. It was also noted that some were reluctant to go for promotion, as they said they would earn less due to the loss of allowances and the starting point on the new salary scale.

### **Interviews with NEOC staff**

NEOC staff highlighted two positive aspects of their roles. These were the impact of the work on the lives of people in difficulty and the relationships they have with their colleagues.

The urgent nature of the work carried out by NEOC personnel was identified as resulting in a very stressful and challenging environment. These challenges differ by work role. For call takers the challenges include the difficult nature of some of the calls, and for dispatchers the main challenge centres around the allocation of scarce resources.

Staffing levels were identified as being consistently lower than required, and this results in higher volumes of calls for the individuals who are present. This, in turn, can result in a problem with the quality of the service being provided.

The commentary in respect of reasons for staying at the NEOC was limited and, in general, personnel only identified their colleagues as a positive reason for remaining there.

The main reasons given by personnel for leaving their current role were management style, pay, the

challenging nature of the job, personal reasons and better opportunities elsewhere.

There was substantial commentary about the negative impact of the management style on personnel. Commentary included a wide range of staff grievances. Managers identified a number of initiatives that had been put in place to address such complaints. Some managers also highlighted issues around employee competency.

In respect of pay, it was suggested that the amount received is inadequate given the type of work that is carried out, and this was particularly the case in respect of dispatchers, where it was suggested that there is a high level of responsibility.

Others drew attention to the challenging nature of the job, including shift work and the stresses associated with the work, as a reason for leaving. Opportunities elsewhere were cited as another reason, and it was suggested that some personnel join the NEOC as a stepping stone to becoming a paramedic.

## Psychologists

The sample size for this group is small, with 335 responses, and is slightly over-representative of male psychologists. The sample equates to 28.2% of the 1,188 psychologists in the population.

## Recruitment

### Survey Results

The survey asked those who had been in their jobs for less than two years about their impressions of recruitment. Nearly half of the sample (49.3%) had been recruited in the last two years and responded to the survey around recruitment issues.

There was a moderate level of satisfaction with the recruitment process. The survey also found that those appointed to their roles in the last two years reported a high level of satisfaction with the reality of the job compared to their initial expectations.

### Interview Results

Two main issues arose in the surveys in respect of the recruitment of psychologists. The first issue was the shortage of qualified personnel due to the lengthy training period for psychologists and the limited number of training places made available.

The second issue raised related to the recruitment process itself. Respondents outlined that there were a lot of steps that have to be taken even before the request to fill the post is sent to HBS Recruit (formerly the National Recruitment Service). It was also suggested by respondents that psychologists need to be a good fit for the particular job they are doing, and that the use of a national panel hinders this.

Participants commented that the interview and application process is difficult and that the accreditation and Garda vetting of psychologists takes too long.

## Retention

### Survey Results

The survey results indicate that about two in five respondents (39.9%) intended to leave their current job in two years or less, while the remainder (60.1%) intend to stay.

The most common reasons for those intending to stay in the service were 'suitable working hours and/or days' (59%), 'personal or family reasons' (46%) and 'convenient location' (44%). In addition, 31% rated 'lack of available alternatives' as highly relevant.

Respondents who expressed an intention to leave their current job were asked to indicate the relevance of a range of factors to this intention. Somewhat unexpectedly, none of these reasons were rated as 'highly relevant' by the majority. Therefore, the percentages that are rated both 'somewhat relevant' and 'highly relevant' were combined. Items with the highest frequencies of 'somewhat' or 'highly relevant' (combined) were 'better job opportunities elsewhere' (69%) and 'staffing levels a problem' (61%).

About 40% of psychologists indicated that they thought about leaving the organisation often or all of the time, and 12% thought about leaving the psychology profession often or all of the time. Almost one in four psychologists (23%) indicated that it was likely that they would leave their organisation within the next year, while just 3% indicated that it was likely that they would leave the psychology profession within the next year.

Intention to leave the organisation was not associated with gender, employment grade or full-/part-time status. However, younger psychologists (aged 50 or younger) were more likely to intend to leave than older psychologists.

Further analyses of the impact measures (global job satisfaction, effort-reward ratio and organisational commitment) underlined the role that training and promotion opportunities, job skills match, and information sharing and decision making play both in 'driving' the impact measures and predicting intention to leave the organisation.

### Interview Results

Three main positive aspects of the psychologist role emerged in the interviews. These were making a difference to the lives of clients and their families, working with good colleagues and having supportive managers. These factors were also highlighted in respect of reasons for staying in the service, and the

role of managers in influencing personnel to stay is notable.

In general, psychologists spoke about multiple reasons for leaving. These reasons included the stress and challenges of managing the waiting list, limited training and promotional opportunities, better job alternatives elsewhere and personal reasons, including commuting.

Psychologists spoke about how shortages of staff, coupled with increases in referrals, have led to significant waiting lists. Increases in requests to carry out Assessments of Need for children with disabilities were identified as particularly complex and time consuming. The length of the waiting list has an impact on both clients (in terms of getting access to timely psychological interventions) and psychologists (who identified high levels of stress, and outlined that it was leading some to consider leaving the service). Managing the waiting list was identified as requiring a balance between discharging people too early and ensuring people are provided with a good service.

Some respondents stated that there were very few opportunities for promotion in the regions that they are posted in or for promotion beyond the senior psychologist grade. Education, training, mentoring and supervision all elicited extensive commentary, and it is clear these issues are of central importance to the work of psychologists. Some respondents commented, however, that the HSE only pays for the training of clinical psychologists and they claimed that those who have trained as educational, counselling or forensic psychologists are viewed less favourably and have more limited opportunities.

Pay was identified as an issue but, relative to other areas, the commentary on this was much less extensive.

## Radiographers

There was a 27.8% response rate for this group, with 592 responses out of a population of 2,129 radiographers. Structured interviews were completed with 21 radiographers at various grades.

### Recruitment

#### Survey Results

Over a quarter (27.3%) of radiographers had been in their current role for two years or less. This group responded to questions about the recruitment process and their expectations of the job.

Overall, this group expressed a moderate level of satisfaction among new entrants in respect of the fairness and efficiency of the recruitment process. The survey also found that those appointed to their roles in the last two years had an overall score on the job expectation index of 68%, indicating a high level of match between job expectations and experience. The

length of the recruitment process received the most negative feedback in the survey, with 40% dissatisfied with it; though it should also be noted that 42% were satisfied with the length of the process. In response to questions about job expectations, radiographers reported a high level of satisfaction between their initial expectations of the role and their experience of the role.

### Interview Results

By contrast with the survey, which found that generally radiographers were satisfied with the recruitment process, in the interviews the recruitment process for radiographers was identified as challenging. Interviewees spoke of an extensive and lengthy process being required to fill posts. It was suggested that the creation of a national panel has been very problematic for two reasons. First, the manager of the service a radiographer is being allocated to has no knowledge of the individual and is, therefore, unable to make a judgement as to whether the person is suitable for the job or not. Second, it was noted that radiographers could be on the panel for an extensive period of time.

The availability of radiographers was also noted to be problematic as there is only one radiography undergraduate programme in Ireland. While radiographers are recruited from the UK, it was pointed out that this could be a problem post-Brexit. Recruiting radiographers from Northern Ireland was also highlighted as having become difficult recently due to delays with CORU registration. Local initiatives include giving radiographers short-term temporary contracts and publicising the work of the unit and the benefits of working there.

### Retention

#### Survey Results

The results from the survey indicate that one in three respondents (34.0%) intended to leave their job in two years or less, while 66.0% intended to stay.

The most frequently cited reason for those intending to remain in their job were 'suitable working hours, days and/or rota' (58%), 'personal or family reasons' (52%) and 'convenient location' (48%). While the three main reasons cited by those intending to leave their job were 'better job opportunities elsewhere' (43%), 'staffing levels a problem' (39%) and 'work environment too demanding' (36%).

Intention to leave the organisation was not associated with gender or sector. However, younger radiographers (40 or younger) were more likely to intend to leave than older radiographers. Clinical specialists (41%) were less likely to intend to leave than basic grade radiographers (52%), whilst other grade radiographers intention to leave 'scores' ranged from 45% to 49%. In

addition, part-time employees (42%) were less likely to intend to leave than full time radiographers (50%).

Analysis of the impact measures (global job satisfaction, effort-reward ratio and organisational commitment) underlined the role that poor relationships with managers, fewer training and promotion opportunities, lower levels of employer support, and dissatisfaction with pay and with the quality of the workplace play in 'driving' the impact measures and predicting intention to leave the organisation.

### Interview Results

The complexity of the role of radiographer, particularly the dual interpersonal and technical aspects involved in the role, was highlighted in the interviews as a positive feature of the job. Many radiographers noted that they loved their job and enjoyed mixing interpersonal interaction with having the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to improve patient outcomes. Making an impact on people's lives was identified as an important positive of the job. Having good working colleagues was also identified as a positive factor in the working lives of radiographers, and this was noted as having an impact on their decisions about whether to stay in or leave the job.

Four key challenges were identified in respect of the job of radiographer: on-call rotas, workload and staffing, the physical nature of the work and a lack of up-to-date, properly functioning equipment. Of these, challenges arising in respect of on-call rotas were raised particularly frequently. The main issues arising related to the lack of choice in whether to take part in rotas; the inequities arising in different on-call rotas in terms of busyness of workload, complexity, payment and compensation; the challenges of meeting urgent time-bound protocols, especially when taking part in off-site on-call rotas; and the impact on the health and wellbeing of radiographers due to tiredness and poor work-life balance.

In addition, interviewees made predominantly negative comments in relation to management in the service, particularly in relation to non-radiography management. Issues such as poor communication with management, large amounts of bureaucracy and feeling undervalued by management were flagged.

Pay attracted substantial commentary, with three main issues being identified. The first was that some respondents reported that they believed that pay levels were not adequate and that they needed to work on-call rotas to make up their salary. Second, some highlighted that they were on lower salaries than other allied health professionals (e.g. physiotherapists, occupational therapists). Pay differentials between different grades of radiographer were also identified, and it was suggested that there is little difference between the top of the basic radiographer grade salary scale and the start of the clinical specialist

scale. It was also noted that individuals who become radiographer managers could end up with substantially lower take-home pay due to no longer undertaking on-call work. The third area, relating to changes in the on-call payment rates following the Haddington Road Agreement, was identified as a source of much upset and anger, as these changes have resulted in a significant reduction in take-home pay for many radiographers.

Issues relating to the job, particularly on-call rotas, workload and poor staffing, were highlighted as key reasons for leaving radiography posts. Respondents also reported their dissatisfaction with pay and cited it as a key variable impacting on retention. The role of management, the limited scope for career progression and poor support for continuous professional development were also identified as reasons for leaving.

# Appendix D: Acronyms

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

DPER – Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

FEMPI – Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest

PAS – Public Appointments Service

PDF – The Permanent Defence Force

PRD – Pension Related Deduction

PSPC – Public Service Pay Commission

PSSA – Public Service Stability Agreement

NEOC – National Emergencies Operations Centre

WTE – Whole Time Equivalents

# Appendix E: Bibliography

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