

Phase 2: Recruitment and Retention

Please complete this template and submit through the link on our website at: <http://paycommission.gov.ie/submissions/>

Please include any additional relevant documentation relating to recruitment and retention as a separate attachment.

Submissions may alternatively be sent to the postal address below to arrive by due date:

Public Service Pay Commission,
St. Stephen's Green House,
Earlsfort Terrace,
Dublin 2.

Name of organisation making this submission	SIPTU LAPO
Contact details	Liberty Hall, Dublin 1
Date of submission	November 29th 2017

Submissions should be made **by 5.30 pm on Wednesday the 29th of November.**

Queries in relation to completing this template can be sent to info@paycommission.gov.ie

Please note that all submissions and comments received will be subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and that all submissions will be published on the Public Service Pay Commission's website following publication of the report.

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Part I - 4 - Please provide evidence of the outcomes of the initiatives described in part I-Q.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Check
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Part I - 2 - Please provide evidence to support the recruitment difficulties identified?

(E.g. number of competitions, number of applications to each competition, number of offers for each competition, number of acceptances/refusals to each competition, etc.)

This text box will expand as required

Fingal Co Co has held 3 competitions in the past 12 months for engineers, two for the grade of Assistant Engineer and one for the grade of Executive Engineer

1. In November 2016 22 AE's were placed on a panel. Of this 22, just 6 took up employment with FCC with 16 declining the offer of employment.
2. In July 2017 21 AE's were placed on a panel with just 7 taking up employment with FCC and 11 declining the offer.
3. In November 2016 31 EE's were placed on on a panel. Just 10 accepted an offer of employment with 21 declining the offer.

South Dublin Co Co has also held 3 competitions in the past 2-3 years.

Two panels were formed for Assistant Engineer with 22 being placed in total on the panel.

Of these 22 just 10 accepted an offer of empl ployment with the second panel being exhausted within 6 months.

A third panel is currently being establish for AE's

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co Co established two panels in 2016, one for Assistant Engineer and one for Executive Engineer

14 were placed on the AE panel, of these 8 were offered employment with just 3 accepting the offer.

25 were placed on the EE panel, all of the 25 were offered employment, with just 13 accepting the offer.

The union is aware that similar problems have been experienced by Dublin City Council in recent years, however, we have not been able to get in time for inclusion in this submission.

the information to support this from DCC

Part I - 3 - Please provide evidence of any relevant initiatives to address these difficulties (if applicable)?

not applicable

Part I - 4 - Please provide evidence of the outcomes of the initiatives described in part I-Q.3

(E.g. change in the numbers of applications, change in the number or percentage of acceptances, change in the number or percentage of refusals etc.)

not applicable

This text box will expand as required

Part 1 - 5 - Please supply any relevant data, including trend data (from 2007 to 2017), that you may have; such as staff numbers, turnover rates*, staff vacancies, age profiles and details of recruitment campaigns, etc. from 2007 onwards.**

No further information available to the union.

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Part II - 1 - Are there currently retention issues for this sector? Please indicate which grades are experiencing the most significant difficulties.

Grade Title
Assistant Engineer
Executive Engineer
Assistant Planner
Executive Planner

Please expand where necessary

Part II - 2 - Please supply evidence to support the retention difficulties identified?

(E.g. Data on vacancy rates, data on turnover rates, data on leaver reason, data on joiner reason etc.)

SIPTU understands from HR Departments that professional graduate entrants can typically have more than one job offer and if a Local Authority is not able to respond reasonably quickly on these matters, applicants are more likely to take up alternative job offers in the Private Sector. Also, even where engineers have been successfully recruited a number of local authorities have experienced these new recruits leaving within 6 months to take up better offers in the private sector. We are also aware that a number of planners at the entry grades are actively seeking alternative employment because their post graduate experience has not been taken into account in terms of their position on the pay scale.

Part II - 3 - Please provide evidence of any relevant initiatives to address these difficulties (if applicable)?

not applicable

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Part II - 4 - Please provide evidence of the outcomes of the initiatives described in part II-Q.3

(E.g. Change in vacancy rates, change in turnover rates, change in reasons for employees joining/leaving, etc.)

not applicable

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Part III - 1 - Evidence of any impact of recruitment and retention difficulties on service provision:

(i.e. Data/analysis that clearly identifies impacts on service provision)

The vacancies not being filled, or having to be filled again within a relatively short period usually means the work associated with the post is not done and/or takes significantly longer to do with consequences for the delivery of services including capital projects. Apart from the timely delivery of services reduced engineering resources can impact negatively on the efficiency of service delivery.

Part III - 2 - Please provide evidence of labour market pressures from the private sector domestically or international organisations (if applicable)?

(E.g. Data/analysis on numbers of employees joining international employers in similar sectors, data/analysis on numbers of employees joining similar sectors in the domestic private sector, etc.)

With the economy now in full recovery, and with the growth that has taken place within the Construction Sector, the landscape for the employment opportunities for these grades has changed utterly.

The 2014 [Construction 2020 Strategy](#) estimated that Ireland should be able to sustain a construction industry equivalent to 12 per cent of GNP - up from 6 per cent of GNP in 2012 - and that construction employment could rise from 100,000 in 2012 to 160,000 by 2020.

With the most recent CSO [Quarterly National Household Survey](#) (February 2016) estimating construction employment of 138,200 in the fourth quarter of 2016, it would appear that the construction industry is well on the way to recovery.

A positive outlook for this sector over the medium-term is also clearly evident from the 2016 [Demand for Skills in Construction to 2020](#) report produced by DKM Economic Consultants for the Construction Industry Federation. This forecast the construction industry to expand by an average of 9 per cent annually over 2016-2020 and to reach 10 per cent of GNP and employment levels of around 212,000 by 2020 (i.e. 50 per cent *above* late 2016 levels).

It should be noted that the DKM report also concluded that the construction industry '...is on course to experience the most positive outlook for construction in a decade *provided it has the skills available to meet the demands on the industry*' (emphasis added). This issue of skills shortages is also discussed in the [National Skills Bulletin 2016](#) (September 2016), produced by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in Solas on behalf of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs.

This firstly estimated that that there were approximately 20,000 people employed in these occupations in 2015, made up of approximately 8,100 civil engineers, 4,700 architects and town planners, 3,500 construction-related technicians and 3,300 architectural technologists, construction project managers and surveyors, and that approximately 95 per cent of construction professionals and 86 per cent of construction associate professionals in employment were third-level graduates.

It then stated that recent economic growth has translated into greater demand for *construction professional and associate professional occupations* and that growth 'is expected to accelerate in absolute and relative terms over the medium-term as the sector gains further momentum'. And it concluded that while there was 'significant graduate output from construction related courses' and some remaining 'overhang' of construction skills (i.e. professionals seeking employment), as of May 2016, it did see signs of a tightening in the labour market for construction professional and associate professional occupations, particularly in relation to surveyors, architects and civil engineers, and that, moreover, skills *shortages* have already been identified in relation to construction and quantity surveyors with 'building information modelling' (BIM), computer-aided design (CAD) and 'construction project managers with experience' (p.116)

Given that nearly one in five construction professionals and associate professional occupations were employed in public administration and defence in 2015 (National Skills Bulletin, p.115), there is a concern that the failure to adequately address public sector pay could see an exodus of professional expertise from the public sector to a (now expanding) private sector. This could not only undermine existing capabilities in the public sector but could also adversely affect the ability to both prepare and implement any new multi-annual 10-year capital plan (involving investment in roads, public transport, energy, water, education, health, climate change, sustainable development and environmental protection objectives), as recently [announced](#) by the Taoiseach, 'as a direct response to Brexit', which is now widely recognised as the principal risk to the Irish economy.

Part III - 3 Other information relevant to the submission

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