

Public Service Reform 2014-2016

Description of the Policy

Public Service Reform is a key element of the Government's overall strategy for recovery. Details of the policy are set out in the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016. This Plan builds on the achievements and aims of the original Public Service Reform Plan, published in November 2011. The reforms delivered during the period 2011-2014 have enabled the public sector to maintain and improve public services in the face of the necessary reduction in staff numbers and budgets, at a time of increased demand for public services. This 2014-2016 Reform Plan sets out ambitious objectives and actions for public service reform and looks further forward to address the ambition for reform towards 2020.

The plan maintained the first Reform Plan's necessary emphasis on reducing costs and increasing efficiency, but also moved the reform agenda towards a much stronger focus on the delivery of the best possible outcomes. In this regard, there are four key themes running through the 2014-2016 Reform Plan:

- Delivery of improved outcomes for service users.
- Achieving a reform dividend.
- Greater digitalization and use of open data.
- More openness and accountability.

A pdf version of the Reform Plan is available at: [Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016 pdf](#)
For an interactive version of the plan, please visit: <http://www.reformplan.per.gov.ie/2014/>

An appendix to the plan, "Action Plan for Public Service Reform 2014 – 2016" details specific actions over the period of the plan. This is available at [Action Plan 2014-2016](#)

A Progress Report on the implementation of the Public Service Reform Plan 2014 – 2016 was published in March, 2015. And is available here: [First Annual Progress Report on the 2014-2016 Reform Plan, March 2015](#). An interactive version of the report is available at: <http://www.reformplan.per.gov.ie/>

A second Progress Report will be published in Spring 2016.

FAQs

Q1. Why is Public Service Reform needed?

Sustainable reform of the Public Service continues to be an important part of the Government's strategy for economic recovery. Staff numbers have been reduced by approximately 10%, since 2008 and the Public Service pay-bill has been reduced by approximately 20%. This has been done at a time of increased demands on our public services, arising from demographic changes as well as from the crisis itself.

The performance and reputation of our public institutions is critical to Ireland's attractiveness for business investment and employment creation. In addition, the efficiency with which public services are delivered and the cost of their provision also impacts on taxation levels and the State's funding requirements.

Q2. What progress was made on the Government's first Public Service Reform Plan?

The Government's first Public Service Reform Plan was published in November 2011. Progress reports were published in September 2012 and in January 2014.

Strong progress was made in terms of reducing costs; improving productivity; more online delivery of services; development of shared services; and putting in place the structures to reform public procurement and property asset management, to name just some areas.

Q3. What progress has been made on the main areas of cross-cutting reform?

A strong governance model has been created to ensure that there is an appropriate emphasis on the implementation of reform. Some of the key areas where progress has been made include:

- **Reduced Public Service Numbers:** the number of staff working in the Public Service has been reduced by 10% since 2008.
- **Public Procurement:** The Office of Government Procurement led by a Chief Procurement Officer was established in 2013 with a target of €500 million in savings over three years;
- **Shared Services:** PeoplePoint (Civil Service HR and Pensions Shared Services Centre) and the Payroll Shared Service Centre have been established.
- **External Service Delivery:** All new services must first be tested for external service delivery suitability. Departments have produced External Service Delivery Plans. A Debt Management project (to evaluate how the debt management process could be improved across five major sectors) is underway.
- **Digital Government:** The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer has been established and has published a new Public Service ICT Strategy.
- **Property Asset Management:** An Action Plan setting out a broad range of measures to deliver efficiencies in the State's extensive property portfolio is being implemented.

Q4. What are the priorities in the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016?

The Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016 outlines the key cross-cutting and sectoral reform initiatives that will be implemented over the next three years. It also looks further ahead to address the ambition for reform towards 2020. While maintaining the drive for greater efficiencies, the Reform Plan has a stronger focus on improving the overall outcomes achieved

for service users. This will mean a change in the way the Public Service designs and delivers services. There are four high-level themes in the Reform Plan:

- i. Strengthened focus on the delivery of improved outcomes for service users - through a focus on service users, on efficiency (continued) and on openness and accountability, underpinned by a strong emphasis on leadership, capability and delivery;
- ii. 'Reform Dividend' – emphasis on 'saving to invest', allowing the freeing up of resources and using the savings to invest in new or improved services;
- iii. Embracing technology and making maximum use of new technologies, digitalisation and open data to deliver services in innovative ways; and
- iv. Delivering more openness and accountability to rebuild trust in government and public services.

Q5. How is the Reform Programme being implemented?

The delivery of the ambitious reforms set out in the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016 requires a continued strong emphasis on implementation, including effective programme management and governance arrangements, both centrally and within each of the main sectors. This is led by the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform.

New Integrated Reform Delivery Plans for 2015 were completed by all Departments and major offices early in 2015. These plans set out how those organisations will implement the cross-cutting reforms set out in the new Reform Plan, alongside sector-specific reforms and actions under the Haddington Road Agreement. The main sectors (health, education, justice and local government) are required to report on progress on the implementation of these plans at the end of each quarter, while other Departments and major Offices report on progress every six months. Departments and Offices are encouraged to publish their Integrated Reform Delivery Plans on their websites. The department of Public Expenditure and Reform's 2016 plan is available here: [insert link](#)

Further Information

<http://www.per.gov.ie/en/public-service-reform/>
<http://www.per.gov.ie/en/public-service-reform/implementation-of-public-service-reform/>

Integrated Reform Delivery Plans are completed by all Departments and major Offices at the start of each year. These Plans set out the actions and milestones for the implementation of priority areas of organisational, sectoral and cross-cutting reform, as well as actions to implement the Haddington Road Agreement.

Guidelines

The Programme Management Office in the RDO has developed a number of guidelines, handbooks, tools and templates in respect of a number of areas to assist public servants deliver the reform programme. These include resources on Communications, Risk Management, Change Management and Programme Management and are available on request from the Programme Management Office.

