An tSeirbhís Phoiblí Shinsearach
Senior Public Service

SENIOR PUBLIC SERVICE
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
2017-2020

SPS Vision

To build a community of leaders that supports sustainable economic and social progress through innovation and excellence, strengthening cross-organisational collaboration, supporting continuous personal and professional development and inspiring others to achieve high performance in a common purpose.

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FOREWORD

The Senior Public Service was established in 2011, in recognition of the need for effective, unified leadership at senior levels of the civil and public service to deliver on key challenges facing the country.

We, in the civil and public service, work in a uniquely complex environment: we have a huge range of stakeholders with competing priorities, our workforce is based across a large number of organisations, located across the country with different business needs. To provide effective leadership in such an environment is challenging.

To deliver on our vision we need a pool of capable, high performing leaders working collectively across the system to deliver services and solutions that people need and expect - we want leaders that are resilient, can work in a collegiate way across boundaries and seek to get the best from themselves and their teams. We need to make sure that we have a senior leadership that is agile and responsive to the many changes that are happening nationally and globally, that is open to new ideas and new ways of working. This strategy sets out the approach for further developing this capability.

This new SPS Leadership Development Strategy for the period 2017-2020 builds on the previous initiatives, taking account of the key developments that have occurred in the intervening years that impact significantly on the civil service, in particular arising from the Civil Service Renewal Plan. It provides for a more integrated approach to the development of the SPS as a unified leadership cadre, by encompassing new cross-cutting initiatives including the Civil Service HR Strategy, talent management and the new performance management process for senior levels.

While the vision for this Strategy is long-term, the strategy itself will be kept under review and amended as needed to meet the ongoing needs of the SPS as individuals, as senior leaders within each Civil Service organisation, and as a part of a unified leadership.

We will also seek to continue to extend SPS measures to the broader Public Service where feasible, including through executive coaching, participation in training initiatives and networking.

Robert Watt
Secretary General, Dept of Public Expenditure and Reform
Chair, SPS Management Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SPS Leadership Development Strategy, 2017-2020, sets out the development initiatives that will be available to members of the SPS over the strategy period. These measures aim to address the needs of the SPS at individual, organisational and systemic levels.

These initiatives have been included based on review and feedback from previously introduced development measures, actions arising from the Civil Service Renewal Plan and knowledge of the strengths and areas for development of the SPS based on 360 feedback and engagement with the cohort. It also aligns with new cross-cutting initiatives including the Civil Service HR Strategy, talent management and the performance management processes for SPS grades.

The key measures that that will be available over the next 3 years are set out below; however, the emphasis of these programmes may change over time based on review and SPS feedback.

Initiative	Key elements
SPS Executive Coaching	❖ 6 coaching sessions with professional coach over 6-8 months. Final session 6 months thereafter. ❖ 360 feedback to inform areas for development. ❖ Primarily aimed at new appointees to SPS grades. ❖ Available to Non Commercial State Agency sector and Chief Executives City and County Councils.
Top Up Coaching	❖ 2-3 coaching sessions with professional coach as support in dealing with particular challenge. ❖ Available to Non Commercial State Agency sector and Chief Executives City and County Councils.
Team Coaching	❖ Pilot in 2017 for Management Boards of Civil Service Departments to support high performing top management teams. ❖ Based on review of pilot, to be extended to other Departments and wider public service.
Mentoring	❖ Will launch in 2017. ❖ Aimed at recent appointees to SPS grades. Experience SPS members will act as mentors. ❖ Will support new appointees in adjusting to their roles and facilitate knowledge sharing.
Executive Leadership Programmes	❖ Part of talent management initiative. ❖ Aimed at supporting the development of experienced SPS members who may wish to progress to more senior levels. ❖ Incorporates structured learning, coaching and mentoring.
Succession Planning	❖ Part of talent management initiative. ❖ Aimed at Principal Officer level. ❖ Incorporates structured learning, coaching and mentoring.

Voluntary and Managed Mobility	❖ Assistant Secretary vacancies in Government Departments and Offices will be considered for filling through SPS mobility. ❖ Aimed at experienced SPS members – to match skills with posts and support development and diversity on Management Boards.
Secretary General Initiatives	❖ Consideration of options including mobility opportunities, sabbaticals and short term placements.
Networking	❖ 4-5 SPS events per year on themes of relevance to cohort. ❖ Senior leaders from wider public service will be invited where theme is relevant.
Tailored Learning and Development	❖ Training sessions/workshops tailored to needs of SPS membership, informed by 360 feedback, development objectives, SPS engagement and broader strategic initiatives. ❖ Will be made available to senior leaders in wider public service where appropriate.

Where are we?

Where do we want to be?

What do we need to get there?

How will we get there?

How will success be measured?

The Senior Public Service comprises civil servants at top levels across Government Departments and Offices at Assistant Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Second Secretary and Secretary General levels. Those at Director level who are members of the Department/Office Management Board, and have direct reports at Principal Officer level are also members.

Linkages with the wider public service are important and efforts have been made to extend these linkages through making development measures available to senior leaders from the public service where possible, most particularly to CEOs from the Non-Commercial State Agency sector.

This Strategy sets out the measures through which the senior leadership cohort of Civil Service will be developed and strengthened over the next three years informed by environmental analysis and the knowledge base formed from current and previous development initiatives and aligned with broader HR reforms across the civil service, including the Civil Service HR Strategy, Public Service Reform Plan and initiatives to promote greater diversity across all Civil Service grades. The initiatives introduced under this Strategy will be extended to the broader Public Service wherever possible.

The Strategy will consider where the SPS is now in terms of membership profile, and strengths and areas for development, informed by consultation, aggregate 360 feedback, TLAC data and the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey. It will define where we want to be with regard to the competencies and behaviours required of senior leadership to perform optimally in a complex environment. It will set out what we need to do and how we will do it to achieve desired outcomes. Finally, the Strategy sets out how the success will be measured.

This Strategy provides a framework within which development initiatives will be designed and delivered. The approach to provision of development opportunities will be flexible and will be informed on an ongoing basis by relevant data and SPS feedback and input.

The SPS Management Committee was established in December 2011. It is chaired by the Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and currently comprises the Secretaries General of the Departments of the Taoiseach; Social Protection; Justice and Equality; Health,' Communications, Climate Action and the Environment; and Transport, Tourism and Sport.

The SPS Management Committee oversees policy in relation to developmental initiatives for the SPS, including this Strategy. The SPS Secretariat reports to the Committee regularly in respect of implementation of those initiatives.

1. Where are we?
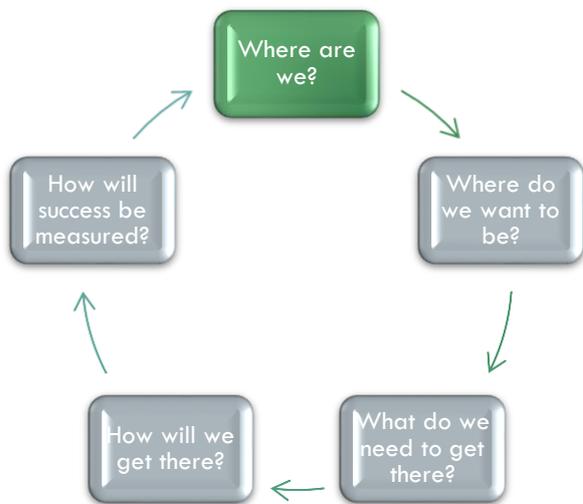
Key elements:

- ❖ Operating environment
- ❖ SPS Membership
- ❖ Perceptions of SPS

1.1 Operating environment

The context in which the SPS operates is challenging. In terms of external factors, the recent past has seen the emergence of a more complex Oireachtas composition, which has required a new approach to managing policy development and the legislative agenda. In terms of economic outlook, while the international economic outlook is fragile, we are in a period of more sustainable growth having emerged from a period of fiscal turmoil, with falling unemployment and strong domestic demand and investment. However, the Government and administration are faced with significant whole of Government challenges including Brexit, which poses unprecedented political, economic and diplomatic challenges for Ireland, meeting international climate change obligations and domestic challenges such as meeting housing needs and balanced regional and rural development.

With regard to internal factors, the age profile of the Civil Service indicates that up to 10,000 staff will retire over the next 5 years, including a potentially significant number at senior levels, where the average age is 54 compared to a Civil Service average of 47. This will present challenges in business continuity, and in terms of managing a new cohort of Civil Servants, with different expectations and aspirations for their career than previous recruits.

The Civil Service Renewal Plan, published in 2014, has provided greater opportunities for collaboration and innovation. It has resulted in the development and implementation of a number of actions which impact on the SPS in their roles as managers and leaders including the establishment of the Civil Service Management Board to oversee delivery of the Renewal Programme, the establishment of an Accountability Board, the development of a Governance Framework for Government Department/Office Management Boards, the introduction of new performance review processes for Secretaries General and Assistant Secretaries and talent management.

We face strategic challenges in planning for the future. Changes in the labour market will challenge our ability to attract, retain and engage the best talent for the Civil and Public Service. Future generations of workers may not want lifelong careers and have different expectations of how they will be managed and developed. Technological advances are changing the way in which we work and engage with the public and our stakeholders.

1.2 SPS Membership

Secretary General

Second Secretary General

Deputy Secretary

Assistant Secretary

Director

Key facts:

❖ The SPS comprises 237 members across 35 Government Departments and Offices.

❖ The average age of the SPS member is 54, compared to 47 across the Civil Service as a whole

❖ 29% of the senior civil leadership is female, compared to 60% across the Civil Service as a whole.

❖ 10% have less than 6 years' service in the Civil Service; while 49% have more than 30 years service in the Civil Service.

❖ 51% have been in their current grade for 5 years or less; 26% have been in their current grade for 5-10 years; 13% for 10-15 years and 10% for more than 15 years.

❖ Some 46% of Management Board members of the 19 main Depts/Offices have had experience at Principal Officer level or above in another organisation (collated from Departments/Offices, Q2 2017).

❖ However, 80% of successful TLAC applicants came from within the organisation in which the vacancy arose (TLAC Report 2015)

❖ 83% of SPS members are based in Dublin

Information from HRDatabank, January, 2017, unless otherwise stated

The key statistics for the senior civil service show that the composition of this group does not reflect the composition of the civil service generally in terms of gender and age profile to a significant extent. There is some diversity across Management Boards in terms of experience at Assistant Secretary and Principal Officer level – this reflects movements that occur due to transfers of functions between organisations, as well as SPS mobility and TLAC appointments.

With regard to attributes of the SPS group, results of the 2016 Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey (CSEES) show that the cohort is resilient, motivated, engaged and values interesting and meaningful work. These qualities are also reflected in aggregate 360 feedback reports for the group, drawn from the SPS Executive Coaching Programme and the performance management process. However, the CSEES also provided some challenging responses for the senior leadership, suggesting that senior leaders need to be more visible, provide vision and more effectively communicate and engage with their staff.

The Top Level Appointments Commission (TLAC), which is responsible for senior level appointments across the civil and public service, noted that, in 2015, while the number of applications from within the Civil Service increased, and the majority of TLAC vacancies have attracted strong internal applicant pools, some roles, particularly at Deputy Secretary and Secretary General levels have attracted smaller numbers of suitable applicants with the result that fewer candidates go forward to the final interview stage. The Commission posits that it is possible that highly talented and suitable Civil Servants are not putting themselves forward for consideration for roles at this level.

1.3 Perceptions of the Civil and Public Service

The IPA Public Sector Trends report, 2015, found that the efficiency and quality of public services in Ireland are rated highly by business users and consumers against other EU countries. In World Bank assessments, Ireland's Government effectiveness score, which includes capacity of the civil service, rates above the EU average. The Irish public service is seen as holding important public service values such as freedom from corruption and independence from political interference. However, just 33% of those who responded in the 2016 Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey felt that their work was valued by the public. This is in contrast to the strong results in that survey for the value and meaning civil servants attach to their own work (65%) and the extent to which civil servants feel their work impacts on citizens (68%).

Greater complexity in our internal and external environment will require a strong strategic focus by senior leaders in their approach to implementing cross Governmental issues, and to ensuring that their organisations and teams are well placed to respond to these and future challenges.

The SPS need to be able to lead on a diverse and complex range of issues, and deliver on priorities through their teams. They need to be able to negotiate a multifaceted political system and to engage effectively with a broad range of stakeholders with diverse needs and priorities. They need to be able to deliver at pace. They need resilience and personal drive in steering their way through these challenges.

Therefore, we need senior leaders who demonstrate more visible and effective leadership in terms of their capacity to manage and develop people; who contribute effectively to the corporate management of their own organisation and can communicate their organisation's strategic priorities and vision to their teams; work collaboratively and in innovative ways on whole of Government projects; and have the ability to be reflective, to step outside of the detail and have a strategic approach to their roles.

We want to facilitate diversity and gender balance on Management Boards to encourage innovation and variety of thought and approach. We need to ensure that all SPS members at all stages of their career are given the opportunity to develop in line with their individual and organisational needs, while also having a cohesive approach to leadership development.

We need ensure that succession planning challenges are addressed and that there is a cadre of appropriately developed, supported and experienced individuals, from a diverse range of backgrounds and organisations to compete for top level posts as they arise. We need to address these issues in a way that aligns with broader strategic initiatives across the civil and public service, including the Civil Service HR Strategy, the Public Service Reform Plan and strategic measures to promote greater diversity, including gender diversity, and to ensure that networking and development opportunites are available to the public service where possible to support cohesive leadership.
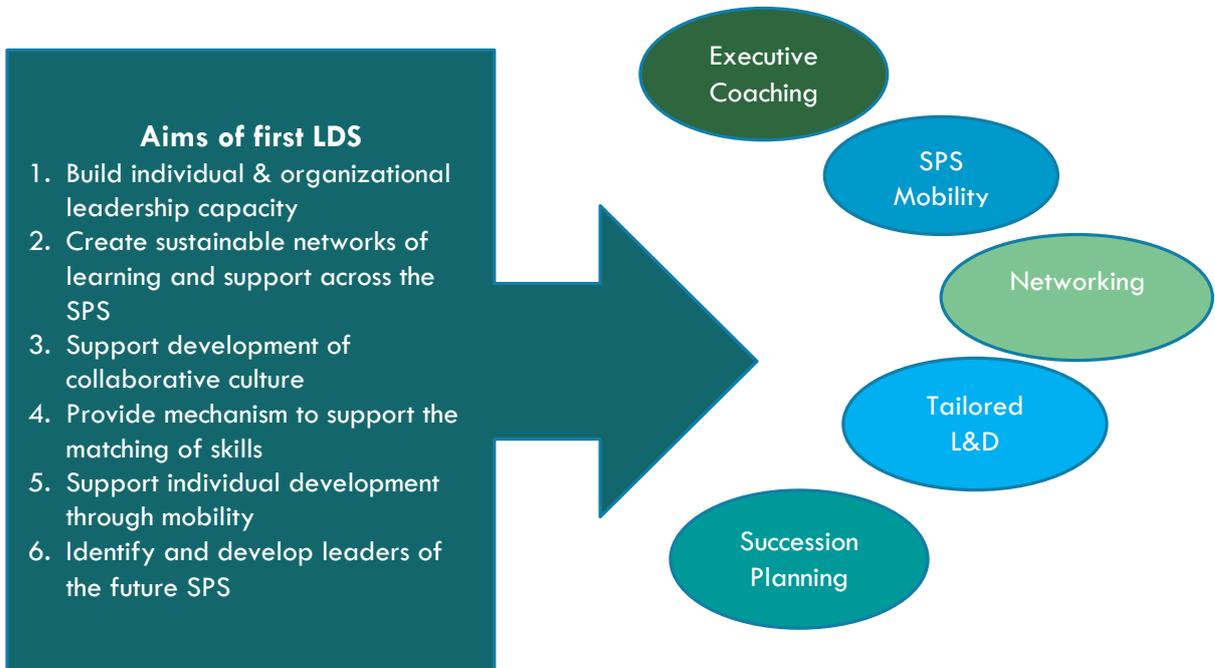
This Strategy builds on measures introduced since the establishment of the SPS, and is informed by:

❖ Lessons learned from the first Leadership Development Strategy;

❖ What we know of strengths and areas for development from aggregate 360 feedback; and

❖ Strategic HR developments across the Civil Service

3.1 Lessons Learned

The first SPS Leadership Development Strategy drew from academic reports, private sector best practice approaches and SPS engagement to identify the approach required to develop senior leaders in line with the SPS vision.

Aims of first LDS
1. Build individual & organizational leadership capacity
2. Create sustainable networks of learning and support across the SPS
3. Support development of collaborative culture
4. Provide mechanism to support the matching of skills
5. Support individual development through mobility
6. Identify and develop leaders of the future SPS

Executive Coaching

SPS Mobility

Networking

Tailored L&D

Succession Planning

3.1.1 Executive Coaching is offered to all SPS members, with a particular focus on new appointees to SPS levels, as a means of improving both leadership capacity and individual performance. The coaching programme is designed to enable the participant to enhance aspects of personal, interpersonal and leadership skills, strengthen their ability to manage significant organisational change and to facilitate the development of personalised plans for continuously enhancing performance.

In 2014 the Programme was made available to the CEOs of Non-Commercial State Agencies (NCSAs). Since 2012 over 150 senior leaders from across the Civil Service and the NCSA sectors have participated or are participating in the coaching programme. While coaching is very much tailored to individual needs, to support consistency in approach, standardised 360 questionnaires were developed for Assistant Secretaries and Secretaries General, based on the competency frameworks for those grades, to assist in identifying areas for development.

Coaching - Lessons learned:

- ❖ As well as facilitating personal introspection and input from participant peers, direct reports and managers into individual development, use of a standardised 360 tool provided high level aggregate feedback on areas of strength and development for the SPS cohort as a whole.

- ❖ A review of the Executive Coaching Programme was conducted in 2015, for the years 2012-2015 which found that there was strong support for the programme from both participants and line managers across Departments/Offices and NCSAs. It was found that coaching strengthened individual performance and capacity, strategic capability, provided techniques to respond to specific challenges, increased confidence and provided time for self-reflection.

- ❖ The coaching review found that the programme should be retained for newly appointed SPS members and be made available to more experienced members throughout their career to "touch base" with a coach, or as a support in dealing with a particular issue, project, change in role/organisation and as a means of embedding coaching techniques.


3.1.2 SPS Mobility was introduced in 2012 as a means of breaking down cultural silos at Management Board level and providing an opportunity for talent across the system to be deployed more effectively in pursuit of common Governmental and civil service goals and priorities. Mobility facilitates an expansion of diversity of skills and experience across Government Departments while also providing development opportunities for those who transfer to other Departments. Under the SPS Mobility Protocol, all vacancies at Assistant Secretary level must be considered for filling through Senior Civil Service mobility in the first instance.

Since the mobility protocol came into effect, 48 posts have been advertised under the SPS Mobility Protocol, with 19 (40%) of those posts being filled though mobility. Where the Mobility Sub-Group decided not to seek expressions of interest from the SPS to fill vacancies, this has been due to the specialist qualifications and skills required of the post or to ensure the broadest possible pool of candidates for certain posts.

Mobility - Lessons Learned

❖ Mobility has proved to be successful in terms of increasing diversity of management boards.

Mobility - Gender Breakdown
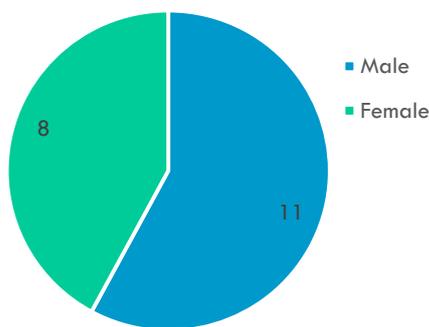
- Male
- Female

The 19 senior civil servants who have changed posts under the Mobility Protocol comprise 11 men and 8 women (58%/42%). As, currently the proportion of male/female senior civil servants is around 71%/29%, this gender balance in terms of mobility transfers is positive and has facilitated greater opportunity for gender diversity on Management Boards.

❖ The posts have been filled in 13 individual Government Departments and Offices with very different remits and responsibilities. While a greater proportion of roles filled relate to corporate affairs, finance, and governance; posts dealing with specific policy areas across a number of sectors, including tourism, transport, maritime policy, housing, legal reform, education, and international/ EU/British relations have also been filled under the Mobility Protocol. There is capacity to use mobility in a more strategic, managed way to develop staff, as well as to support the matching of skills and diversity.

3.1.3 SPS Networking At least 4-5 outside networking events are arranged each year for the SPS which provide opportunities for members to come together as a group to share ideas, and tap into the views of speakers from a broad spectrum of backgrounds - the private sector, the public sector in this and other jurisdictions and academia. The events have had diverse and wide-ranging themes around civil service renewal, sectoral issues and policy challenges including Civil Service Renewal, graduate recruitment and retention, shared services, leadership challenges, education reform and Brexit.

3.1.4 Tailored Learning and Development opportunities have been provided to support development. Over 40 SPS members from Government Departments and NCSAs have participated in communications training, which was designed to support the senior civil service leadership in a range of realistic scenarios. In order to support the new performance review process which launched in 2016 for SPS members, and to strengthen senior leaders as people managers, short sessions on how to give and receive feedback effectively were provided to all members. Scenarios were developed for the sessions, in conjunction with SPS members, to ensure that the content was realistic and recognisable in a civil service context. Over 100 members of the SPS, including 14 at Secretary General level attended the training.

Tailored L&D - Lessons learned

❖ **T**he SPS membership have significant demands on their time, so the training was designed to be focussed and practical. Engagement with the SPS membership at an SPS event on Leadership Challenges found that short training modules are in general preferable to longer programmes of learning.

❖ Feedback was particularly positive about the real-world application of course content, as well as the opportunity that the training provided to engage with and learn from peers.

3.2 Insights to Development Areas

The majority of the SPS have received 360 feedback as participants on the SPS Executive Coaching Programme, as part of the performance review process, or both. This provides useful aggregate data on those competency areas where senior leaders rate most strongly, and those which could be strengthened.

Aggregate 360 feedback from the participants on the SPS Executive Coaching Programme during the period 2012-2014 highlighted that the following competency areas were rated less highly by self, manager, peers and direct reports:

❖ leading people;

❖ managing for results; and

❖ thinking strategically.

These themes are echoed in the aggregate 360 feedback of SPS members that engaged with 360 feedback as part of their performance review process in 2016. Key themes highlighted included:

❖ the need for better delegation, building capacity and developing teams;

❖ assertiveness;

❖ increasing visibility;

❖ challenging more; and

❖ fostering key relationships within and outside the organisation.

The importance of gaining insights to the business for those new to their role and of broadening experience outside of the Department were also emphasised.

The performance review process for SPS members across the Civil Service has an emphasis on personal and career development, and incorporates the setting of development objectives. These objectives will inform the approach taken to provision of supports for the SPS.

3.3 Strategic Perspective

The Civil Service Renewal Plan and the Public Service Reform Plan have driven considerable change in terms of how public servants deliver for the public. The Civil Service HR Strategy, which will be published in 2017, aims to put a framework in place that ensures that the civil service has the human resource capability to deliver on what is expected. The SPS Leadership Development Strategy is an important element of these overarching strategic approaches to the development of a high performing public service that delivers for the people of the country.

One of the key aims of these overarching strategies is the development of a strong leadership cadre – this will inform the approach of the new Leadership Development Strategy. Key developments that have a direct impact on this Strategy are the performance management processes that were introduced for those at SPS levels in 2016; talent management; and the strategic goals of HR Strategy.

3.3.1 Performance Reviews Two new performance review processes, for Secretaries General/Heads of Office, and for other SPS grades launched in January 2016 in line with Action 12 of the CS Renewal Plan.

A Performance Review Group has been established to carry out the **Secretary General Performance Reviews.** This comprises an external member of the Accountability Board, the Secretary General to the Government and the Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Performance Review Group will report to the Accountability Board on the operation of the overall process. The Accountability Board will produce an annual review reflecting its assessment of the effectiveness of the system as a whole.

Other SPS Grades – The new performance review process for other SPS grades launched across Government Departments and Offices in January, 2016. There are a number of new elements to this process. In order to reflect the full range of challenges faced at senior levels, objectives are set under 4 categories – policy, operational, leadership and collaboration. Development objectives are also set, informed by 360 feedback. This feedback will continue to provide useful aggregate data to inform the design of L&D initiatives for the SPS.

3.3.2 Talent Management The Civil Service Renewal Plan sets out a vision for a high performing system with the capability to meet the challenges facing the country over the coming years. The Renewal Plan recognises that a key element of high performance is strong leadership capacity at every level. Talent management has an important role in both identifying and developing the future leadership of the Civil Service and also ensuring that talent at every grade is acknowledged, developed and effectively deployed across the system.

It is recognised that not all high performing staff will aspire to more senior positions. Talent Management will therefore provide a framework for identifying particular cohorts of staff (e.g. strong performers, new recruits, future leaders, etc.) and designing appropriate initiatives in parallel with the CS Renewal L&D action.

One element of the approach to talent management is the provision of leadership development programmes and other opportunities/supports for those at Assistant Secretary and Principal Officer grades who have been identified as having the potential and aspiration to progress to the next level. The programmes will focus on developing the necessary skills, competencies and behaviours required at the next grade.

3.3.3 Secretary General level Under the Secretary General performance review process, areas for development will be agreed in conjunction with the PRG. This will inform the Secretary General level development supports.

Modified retirement and severance terms for Secretaries General were introduced in 2011 whereby Secretaries General appointed from within the civil/public service may be offered another appointment in the civil/public service if they are below preserved pension age at the end of their term of office (7 years).

The average age of Secretaries General across the Civil Service is 54 years. A number of Secretaries General will reach the end of their 7 year term of office prior to reaching retirement age and may therefore be appointed to another public service posting. This will require greater emphasis on supporting and developing those at Secretary General level and consideration of options such as mobility opportunities, sabbaticals and short term placements. It also affords an opportunity for the civil service to avail of top management expertise for an extended period, at a time of significant loss of corporate memory and experience arising within the civil service due to the expected high level of retirements in the coming years.

3.3.4 Civil Service HR Strategy The new HR Strategy for the Civil Service sets out future strategic direction for HR in the Civil Service. The approach of the Leadership Development Strategy will align with this strategic direction. The HR Strategy is developed around 3 strategic goals:

❖ Build the Workforce of the Future;

❖ Build, Value and Support Managers as People Developers; and

❖ Being an 'Employer of Choice'

These goals will be progressed through SPS initiatives that strengthen the capacity of senior leaders to contribute to the strategic direction and corporate governance of their organisation and the civil and public service and that supports them in their role as people managers and developers. SPS initiatives will align with the integrated, strategic approach being taken through the CSHR Strategy to mobility, talent management and diversity, including gender diversity.

3.3.5 Public Service Reform Plan One of the aims of the second Public Service Reform Plan which was published in 2014 was to strengthen management and leadership across the Civil Service, and ultimately the Public Service. It sought to develop a high performance leadership cadre as a shared corporate resource, improve cross-organisational collaboration, encourage innovation and support continuous personal and professional development. These aims have been progressed through measures introduced for the SPS for senior civil servants, and senior public servants where possible. Efforts will be made to strengthen networks across the civil and public service over the term of this Leadership Development Strategy, in alignment with the new Public Service Reform Plan to be published later this year.

To support the SPS in getting where they need to be, and taking account of lessons learned, strategic initiatives and individual development needs, we will take the following approach:

❖ Provide development opportunities throughout the career life-cycle of members;

❖ Be flexible and responsive in adapting to new data coming from 360 feedback and engagement with the SPS membership;

❖ Be mindful of individual, organisational and systemic needs and provide L&D measures that address these.

4.1 Approach

Life Cycle Approach

All members of the SPS play an important role in the leadership of the public service. Over the period of this Strategy, the approach will be to support the development needs of SPS members at every stage of their career while maintaining the overall focus on building strong, collaborative leadership within organisations and across the civil and public service. SPS feedback and data, together with the contextual issues identified previously, have fed into the development of this strategy, and will continue to inform development initiatives into the future.

Development opportunities will be available to those recently appointed to SPS grades, those with more experience at senior levels who want support in their current role, or facing new challenges, and those who wish to progress to more senior levels. Some initiatives will span different stages of the life cycle, for example coaching and mentoring.

Flexible Approach

The approach will be flexible and will be informed on an ongoing basis by aggregate 360 feedback from the SPS Executive Coaching Programme and the performance management process, as well as to development supports sought by SPS members through their development objectives and engagement with the SPS Team.

The approach to training modules will also offer flexibility to SPS members, in terms of having regard to their work schedules and priorities. The aim will be to provide short, practical training

sessions that are tailored to the development needs of the SPS. Other programmes including coaching and mentoring will also fit around the schedules of individual members.

Individual, Organisational and System-Wide Approach

Development measures will be put in place to meet the needs of the individual, their organisation and the civil service as a whole.

Individual development supports will aim to improve the capacity of the individual to perform more effectively in their current role and to work towards achieving their career aspirations. Measures will include continuation of the SPS Executive Coaching Programme and top-up coaching, tailored learning and development measures and mentoring.

Organisational needs will be informed through engagement with Secretaries General and Heads of Office. Initiatives to meet organisational needs will aim to strengthen the performance of senior level teams and support the delivery of organisational objectives, including team coaching and tailored learning and development sessions.

System wide needs align with broader strategic initiatives including the Civil Service HR Strategy, Civil Service Renewal actions and Public Sector Reform. To meet systemic needs, initiatives that strengthen the ability of the senior civil and public service as a whole will be progressed and developed, including mobility, managed mobility, networking and talent management programmes.

Some development initiatives will meet individual, organisational and system wide needs. Details of programmes that will be provided are set out below.

4.2 Development Measures

4.2.1 SPS Executive Coaching

Based on participant and line manager feedback, the SPS Executive Coaching Programme has been successful in meeting individual development needs and enhancing performance. The programme is primarily directed at new appointees to SPS grades. It comprises 6 sessions over a period of 6-8 months, followed by a final session 6 months later to check in on progress and agree a way forward. 360 feedback is an integral element of the programme, which informs the areas for development to be addressed with the coach. Line manager engagement with the process is also key to instil an organisational focus and to help assess impact. The format of this programme is effective and will be retained for new appointees to SPS levels. We will continue to examine ways of enhancing its effectiveness, as has been done since the launch of the programme in 2012.

The Programme was made available to the CEOs of the Non Commercial State Agency Sector on a pilot basis in 2014. Take-up was strong with around 20 NCSA participants that year. Feedback was positive, and participation of the NCSA sector in the Programme has continued. The Programme has also been made available for the first time in 2017 to Chief Executives of City and County Councils.

Coaching participants have advised that coaching would provide a valuable support throughout the career cycle. On that basis 2-3 coaching sessions will be made available to SPS members in the civil service, NCSA and Local Authority sectors who need support in dealing with specific challenges or following mobility.

> **Outcomes**
> Strengthened individual performance through the support of a professional coach. Identification of development needs at individual Department and system level through individual and aggregate 360 feedback.

4.2.2 Team Coaching

Team coaching for Management Boards in Civil Service Departments will be piloted in 2017 to support development of high performing top management teams. If the review of the pilot is positive, it will be extended to additional Government Departments and Offices in 2018 and opened up to the wider public service in 2019. The specific approach adopted will vary in response to the issue(s) to be addressed through team coaching, but may include one to one information gathering, team diagnostics and team coaching sessions.

Outcomes
More effective, high performance teams at Management Board levels. The pilot in 2017 will provide insights into the types of challenges faced by Management Boards that can be most effectively addressed through team coaching. The pilot will inform further development and expansion of this support.

4.2.3 Mentoring

SPS mentoring will launch in 2017. Mentoring has been found to be of significant benefit for both mentors and mentees at a range of levels, including the most senior. Feedback from research and from programmes at other levels indicates that all parties gain from the mentoring relationship. New appointees gain from getting valuable insights into the culture and challenges facing them in their new role. Mentors often gain interesting insights and new perspectives from mentees; they get an opportunity to support the development of others while adding value to their organisations and having their own expertise acknowledged and valued.

Experienced Assistant Secretaries will be asked to express their interest in becoming mentor to a newly appointed colleague in other Departments and Offices. Training and guidance material will be provided to mentors and mentees. There will be ongoing links with mentors and mentees to see how the programme is progressing and whether further supports are required. Training and guidance material will be made available to those organisations across the wider public service who wish to implement a similar scheme.

Outcome
Mentoring will support new appointees in adjusting to their role, as well as providing a mechanism through which mentors' knowledge and experience can be tapped into in a way that is of value to their organisation and the civil service more broadly.

4.2.4 Executive Leadership Programmes

As part of the talent management initiative, structured and transparent programmes to develop leaders at the next level in the Civil Service have been developed for those at Assistant Secretary and Principal Officer levels. The programmes will incorporate a development centre, designed to reveal to participants their strengths, development areas and potential against a set of criteria that reflect the future leadership requirements of the Civil Service. The Development centre will also inform the areas in which learning opportunities should be expanded for SPS members.

Participants will also attend a number of leadership development modules delivered by external experts with input from Secretaries General, together with supports including coaching and mentoring

Outcomes
This measure will support the development of those seeking to progress to more senior levels in the SPS and support a wider cohort of applicants for senior positions. The development centre approach will provide high level aggregate information that will assist in the design of learning opportunities for the broader SPS.

4.2.5 Voluntary and Managed Mobility

SPS Mobility has worked well in terms of facilitating the matching skills with vacancies and supporting diversity of experience within Management Boards. This voluntary mobility will continue. Going forward, managed mobility will also be used as a means of supporting the development of participants on the SPS and Principal Officer Executive Leadership Programme. The focus of managed mobility will be on moving individuals into posts that will provide challenges and experience that will contribute to their own personal and career development as well as supporting strategic workforce planning.

The mobility process does not replace the holding of open competitions for external appointments to senior level posts as ultimately, a consequential vacancy is advertised publicly and filled through open competition. Rather, mobility is a means of supporting developmental objectives and ensuring a good match between Government priorities and individual skills, as well as strengthening diversity within Departments in terms of approach.

Outcome
Mobility will facilitate greater diversity of experience and backgrounds on Management Boards across the system while also supporting a more unified, strengthened senior civil service. The introduction of managed mobility for talent management purposes will facilitate individual development as well as supporting strategic workforce planning

4.2.6 Secretary General Initiatives

Under the Secretary General performance review process, areas for development will be agreed in conjunction with the Performance Review Group. This will inform the Secretary General level development supports.

Modified retirement and severance terms for Secretaries General were introduced in 2011 whereby Secretaries General appointed from within the civil/public service may be offered another appointment in the civil/public service if they are below preserved pension age at the end of their term of office (7 years).

The average age of Secretaries General across the Civil Service is 54 years. A number of Secretaries General will reach the end of their 7 year term of office prior to reaching retirement age and may therefore be appointed to another public service posting. This will require greater emphasis on supporting and developing those at Secretary General level and consideration of options such as mobility opportunities, sabbaticals and short term placements. It also affords an opportunity for the civil service to avail of top management expertise for an extended period, at a time of significant loss of corporate memory and experience arising within the civil service due to the expected high level of retirements in the coming years.

Outcomes
Provide development supports will be in line with those identified in development discussions with the PRG as part of the Secretary General performance review process. Provide opportunities and supports for Secretaries General who have completed a 7 year term which will give them an opportunity to reflect on their resilience, experience and knowledge of alternative ways of working with a view to enhancing their future contribution to the public sector.
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4.2.7 Networking

Networking events will continue to be held at least 4 times annually. Themes will be agreed by the Assistant Secretary Network Executive Committee, which comprises representatives at Assistant Secretary level from a range of Government Departments and Offices, with input from the broader SPS membership. Opportunities for stronger engagement with the broader public service will be supported in this context.

Outcomes
Support engagement with peers outside of the usual work structures and across sectors, thereby expanding networks of the membership. The events will be on a range of themes to inform and invite discussion and the sharing of views and will encourage a broadening of ideas and knowledge. Senior managers from the wider public service will continue to be invited to events where the theme is relevant.

4.2.8 Tailored Learning and Development

Training sessions, tailored to reflect the challenges faced by senior civil/public servants will be made available. The focus of the training will be informed by evidence bases provided by aggregate 360 feedback and the findings of the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, development centres as well as the development objectives of SPS members. Training will also be informed by overarching HR objectives, including strengthening the capacity of all managers as people managers and developers and supporting leadership development.

Based on key themes that have come through from data sources and, in alignment with broader strategic objectives, key areas that will be the focus of tailored learning and development initiatives will be:

- ❖ Leadership skills/Managing for results, including management styles and techniques, staff coaching, team development, effective delegation and staff development.

- ❖ Strategic and innovative thinking/Problem solving.

- ❖ Effective communication in a range of scenarios such as Committee appearances, media interviews and with key stakeholders with confidence, assertiveness and credibility;

- ❖ Giving and receiving feedback effectively – continuation of our current initiative to support performance management; and

- ❖ Building and maintaining resilience.

Outcomes: Focussed tailored training will strengthen the development of the competencies required at SPS levels. Sessions will be provided on a cross-organisational basis which will support peer learning and expansion of networks. Where relevant, training modules will be made available to the broader public service.

The **Action Plan** for roll out of SPS leadership development measures is at Appendix 1.
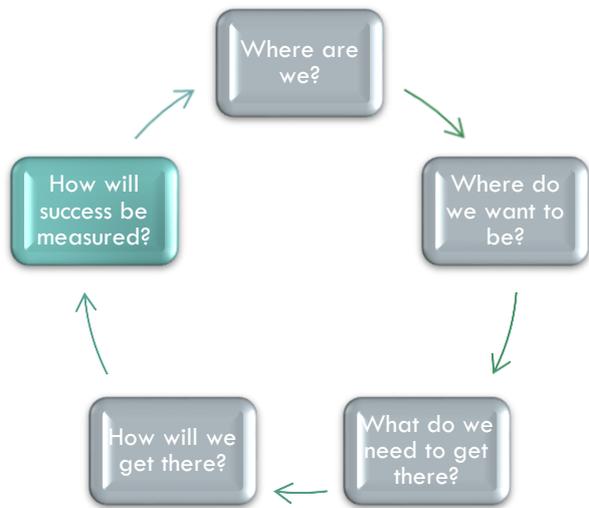
The development of leadership behaviours and competencies is an incremental process.

In the **shorter term**, the impact of learning and development initiatives will be assessed through evaluation and review of programmes provided including: executive coaching, mentoring initiatives, training modules and the SPS Executive Leadership Programme. These reviews will include feedback from participants and their line managers.

Over time, the impact of learning and development initiatives will be evaluated through:

❖ Tracking changes with regard to areas of strength and for development in 360 feedback from the SPS Executive Coaching Programme and the performance review process;

❖ Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey responses indicating stronger, more visible leadership, better delegation of participation levels within organisations with stronger capacity to manage and develop staff;

❖ Reviewing trends in TLAC applications and appointments, such as in relation to gender and other diversity measures and in respect of the extent to which successful appointees are internal, cross-departmental, public service or from private sector backgrounds.

❖ Greater diversity on individual Management Boards, including gender, experience in other organisations and other criteria.

| Initiative	Life Cycle Stage	Level: Individual-Organisation-System	Timeframe - Start date
SPS Executive Coaching	Recent appointees	Ind	Ongoing
Top Up Coaching	Experienced members	Ind	Ongoing
Team Coaching	All	Org	2017 (Pilot) 2018 Implementation 2019 Wider Public Service
Mentoring	Recent appointees (Mentees)	Ind	2017
	Experienced SPS members (Mentors)	Ind/Sys	
Executive Leadership Programmes under Talent Management initiatives	Experienced SPS members	Ind/Sys	2017
Succession Planning	Principal Officer level	Ind/Sys	2017
Mobility	Experienced SPS members	Ind/Org/Sys	As posts arise
Managed Mobility	Experienced SPS members	Ind/Org/Sys	As posts arise
Secretary General measures ❖ Executive Coaching ❖ Development Initiatives ❖ Sabbaticals ❖ Short-term placements	SG level	Ind/Org/Sys	Ongoing 2018/19

| Initiative	Life Cycle Stage	Level: Individual-Organisation-System	Timeframe - Start date
Networking	All stages	Ind/Sys	At least 4 times annually
Tailored L&D ❖ **Effective Feedback** ❖ **People Management/Leadership** ❖ **Effective Communication** ❖ **Strategic thinking** ❖ **Innovation/ Problem solving**	All stages	Ind/Org/Sys	2017 2018

APPENDIX 2

The data shown in this document is taken from HR databank, January, 2017, unless otherwise stated. Data relates to the Civil Service only.

Chart 1 SPS Membership – Grade Breakdown
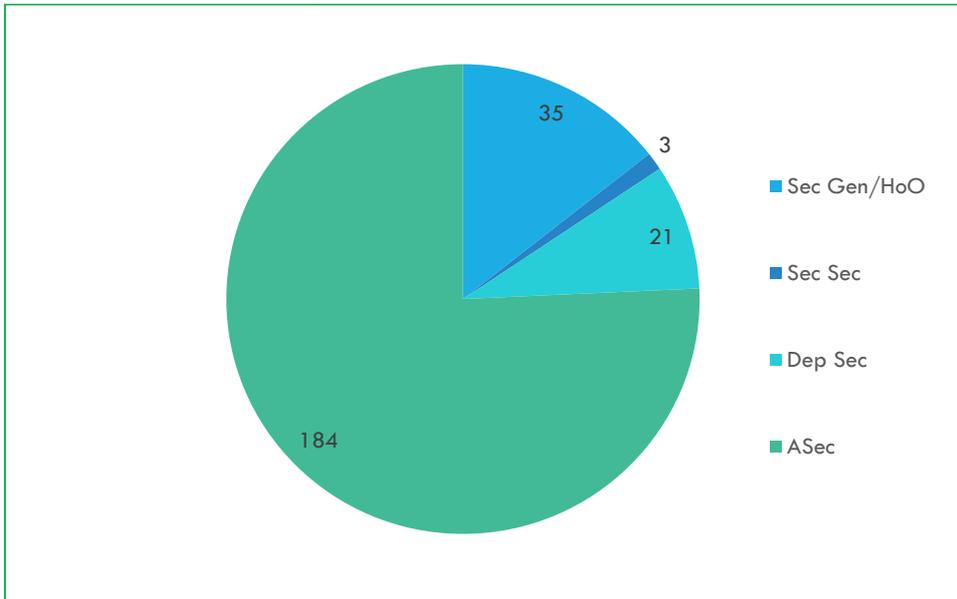
**Chart 1**: There are 237 members of the SPS across 35 Government Departments and Offices. The Assistant Secretary number above also includes 16 members at Director level.

Chart 2 SPS gender breakdown
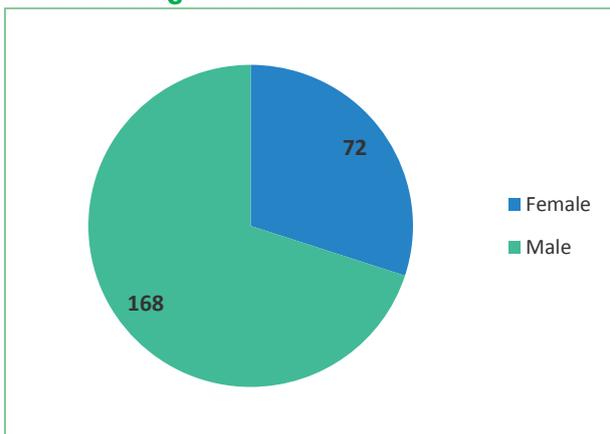
The overall SPS gender breakdown in the SPS is 29% female/71% male, compared to 60% female/40% male across the Civil Service as a whole, and 40% female/60% male at Principal Officer level (Level below SPS grades)
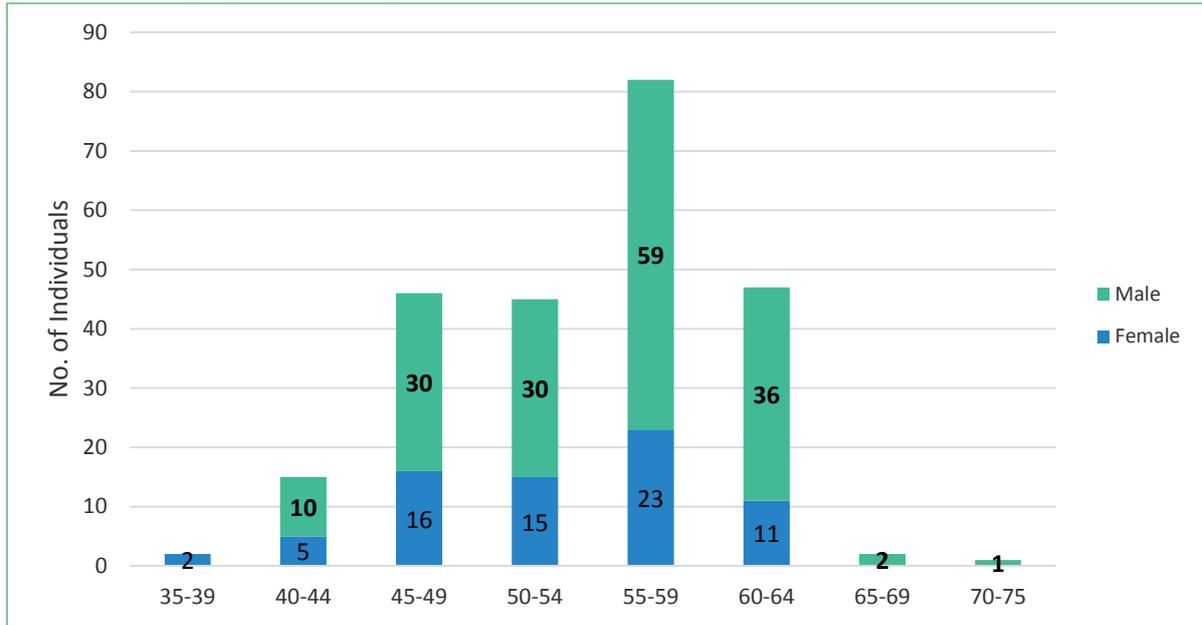
Chart 3 SPS Gender breakdown by grade

Chart 3 SPS Gender breakdown by grade
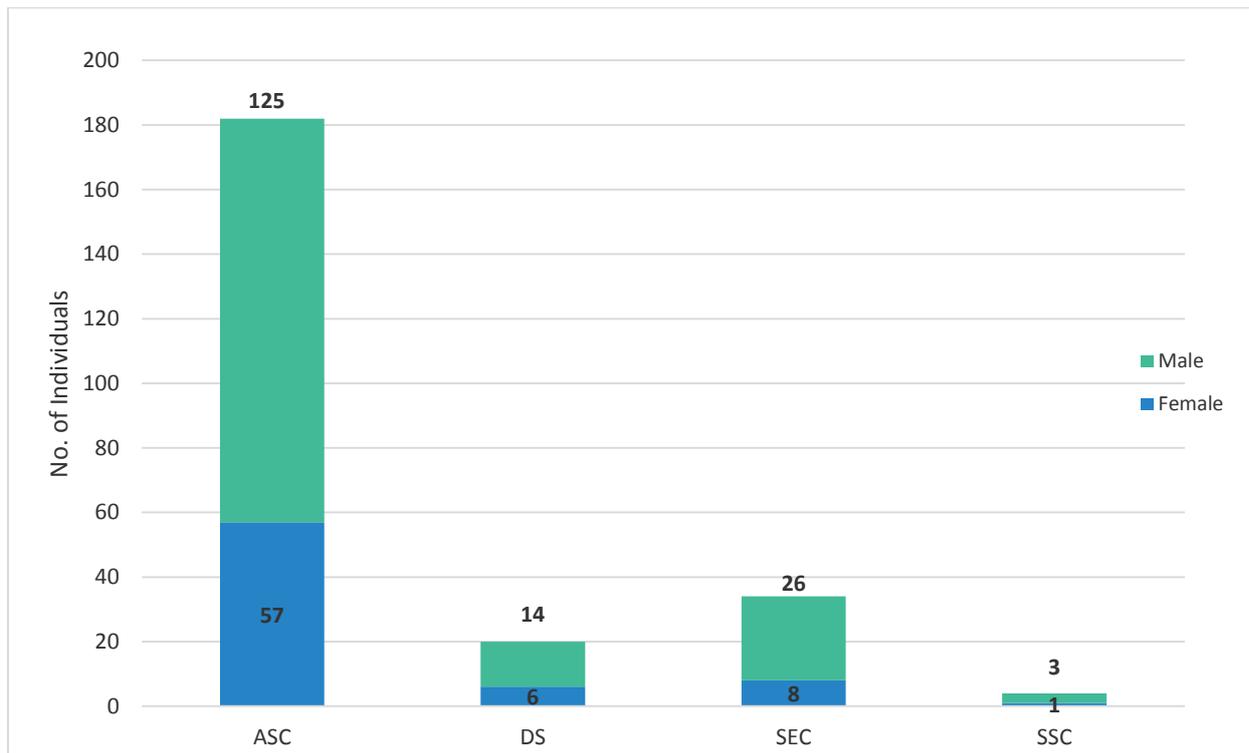
Chart 3 above shows the gender breakdown by grade, as follows:
Assistant Secretary: 69% Male/31% Female
Deputy Secretary: 71% Male/29% Female
Second Secretary General: 75% Male/25% Female
Secretary General: 76% Male/24% Female

Chart 3 SPS age profile - all grades

Chart 3 shows that the age profile of all grades in the SPS is *54*. This compares to *47* across the Civil Service as a whole. **Chart 4** below shows the age profile of SPS members by Department/Office, compared to the SPS average age of *54*.

Chart 4 SPS Age breakdown by Organisation compared to SPS average
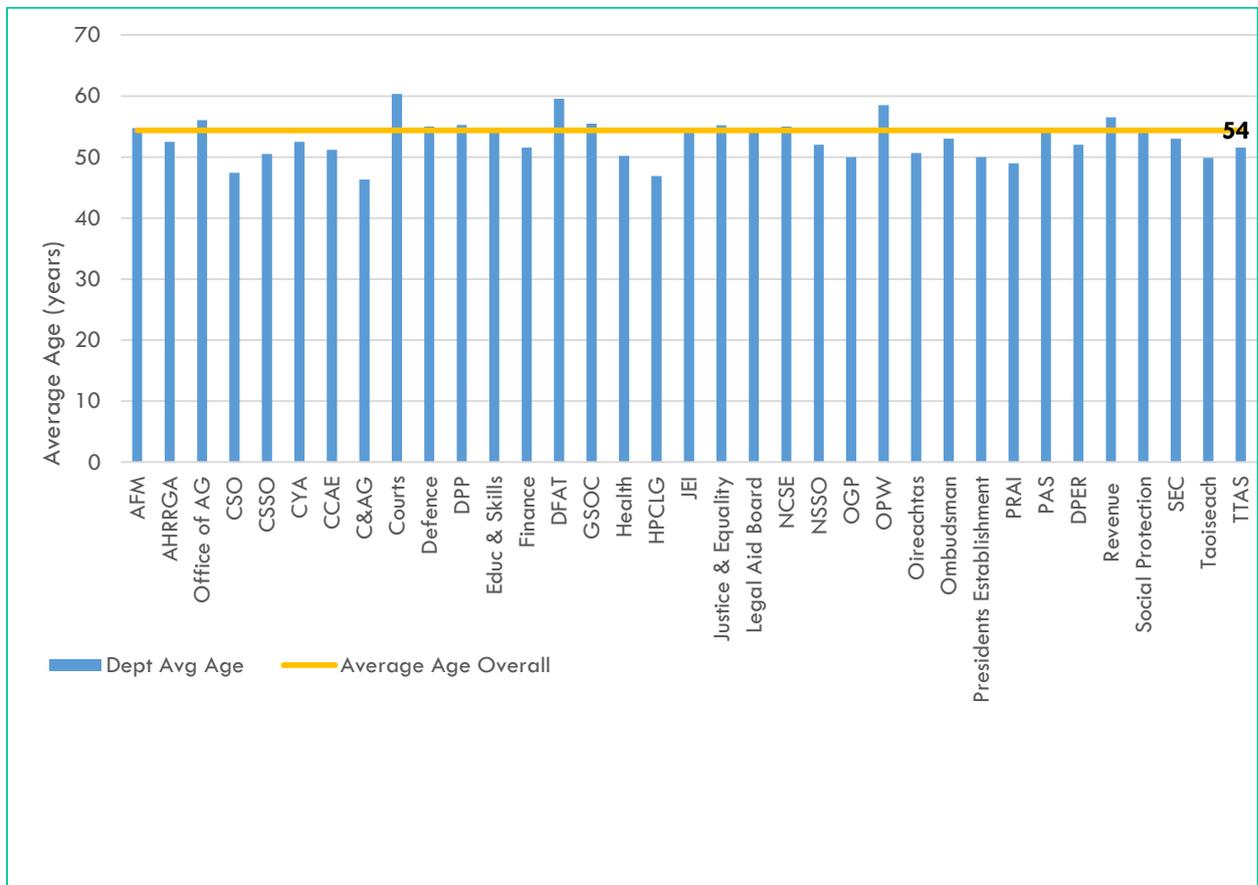
Table 1 SPS Membership by Department/Office and by Gender

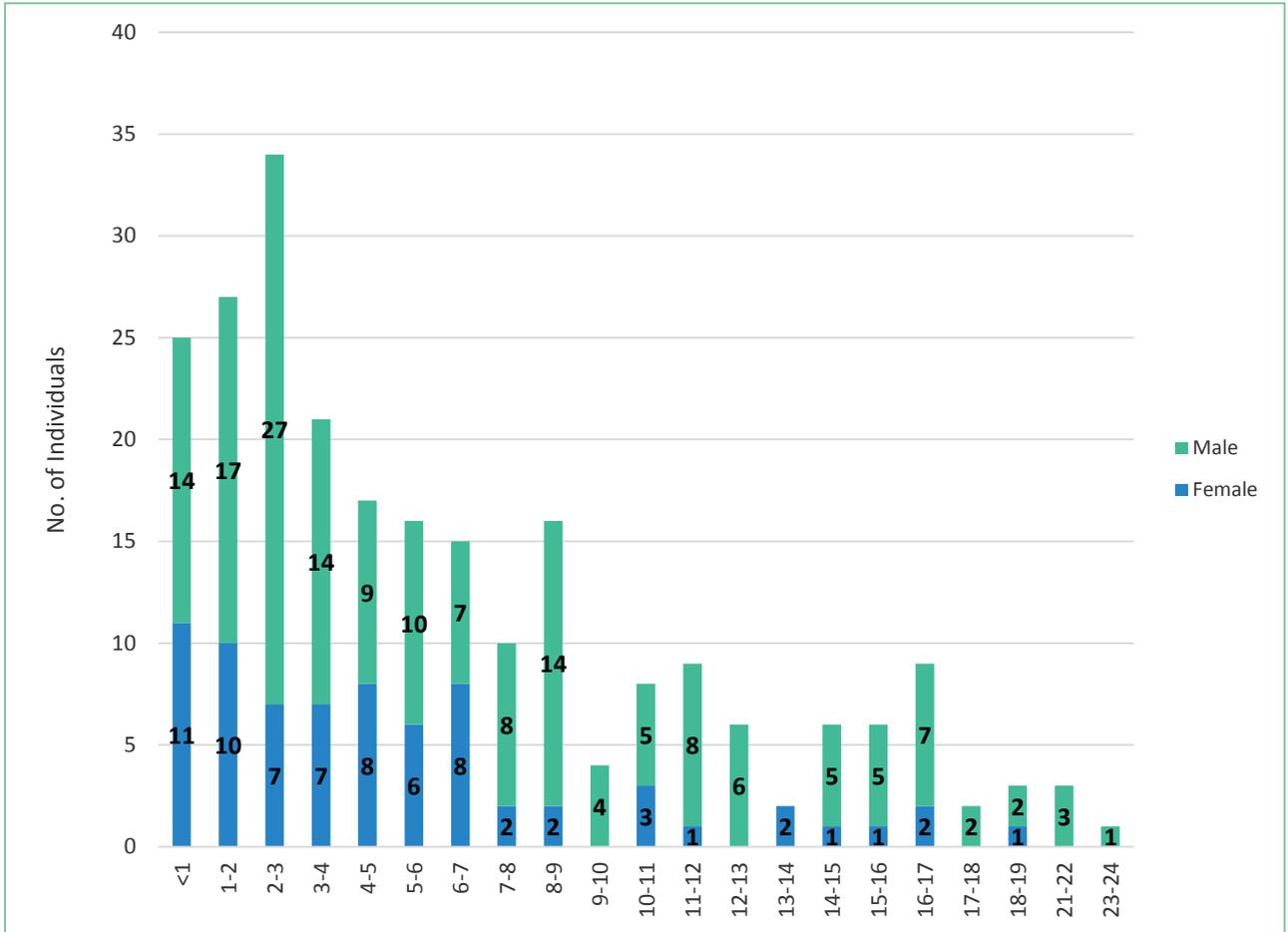| Department Group	Female	Male	Total
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	2	9	11
Art, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	1	5	6
Attorney General	9	6	15
Central Statistics Office	1	4	5
Chief State Solicitor's Office	4	2	6
Children & Youth Affairs	2	2	4
Communications, Climate Action & Environment	1	4	5
Comptroller & Auditor General	2	1	3
Courts Service	1	5	6
Defence		3	3
Director of Public Prosecutions	3	4	7
Education & Skills	2	9	11
Finance	1	6	7
Foreign Affairs & Trade	5	21	26
GSOC		3	3
Health	3	7	10
Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government	5	4	9
Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation	5	8	13
Justice Group	6	14	20
Legal Aid Board		1	1
National Council for Special Education	1		1
National Shared Services Office	1		1
Office Of Government Procurement		1	1
Office of Public Works		4	4
Oireachtas	1	2	3
Ombudsman	1		1
Presidents Establishment		1	1
Property Registration Authority	1		1
Public Appointments Service	1		1
Public Expenditure & Reform	1	7	8
Revenue Commissioners	2	16	18
Social Protection	7	5	12
State Exams Commission		1	1
Taoiseach	1	5	6
Transport, Tourism & Sport	2	5	7
Total	**72**	**165**	**237**

Chart 5 Length of service in grade

Chart 5 Length of service in grade. Stacked bar chart showing No. of Individuals (y-axis, 0 to 40) by length of service in grade (x-axis). Values shown for Female (blue, lower) and Male (green, upper):

Years	Female	Male
<1	11	14
1-2	10	17
2-3	7	27
3-4	7	14
4-5	8	9
5-6	6	10
6-7	8	7
7-8	2	8
8-9	2	14
9-10		4
10-11	3	5
11-12	1	8
12-13		6
13-14	2	
14-15	1	5
15-16	1	5
16-17	2	7
17-18		2
18-19	1	2
21-22		3
23-24	1	

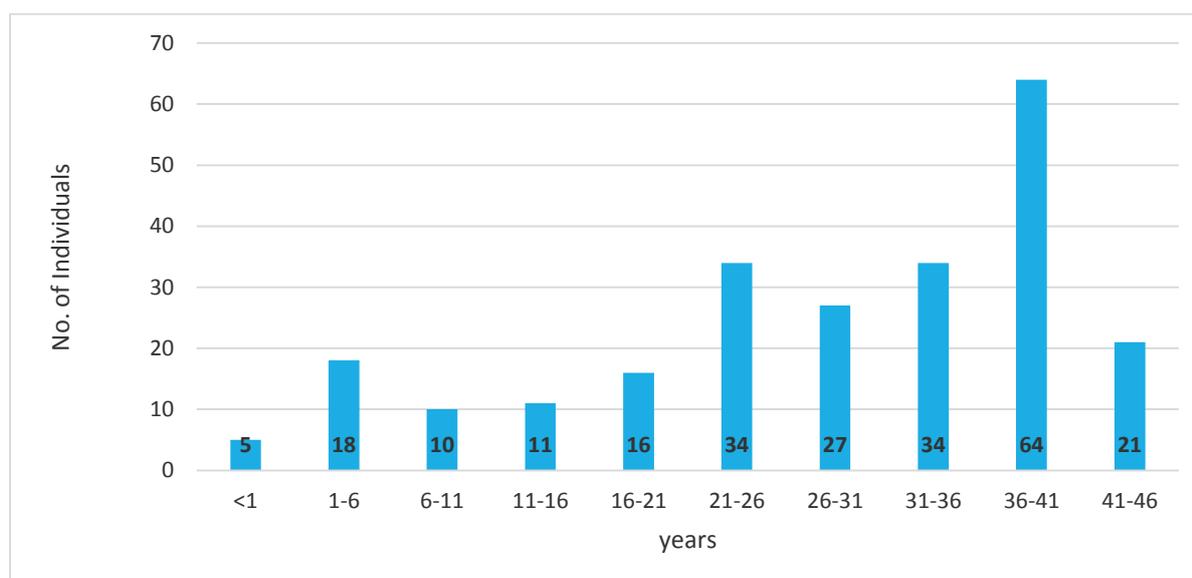**Chart 5** Shows length of service in grade of the SPS cohort.
124 (52%) members have served in their current grade for 5 years or less;
61 (25%) members have service in their current grade for 5-10 years;
31 (13%) members have served in their current grade for 10-15 years;
24 (10%) have served in their current grade for more than 15 years.

Chart 6 SPS Length Service in Civil Service

Chart 6 shows the length of service of SPS members in all grades in the Civil Service, or the length of career in the Civil Service. The data show that less than 10% have served for less than 6 years in the Civil Service; while 49% have served for over 30 years in the Civil Service.

Table 2 Location of SPS members

Location Group	ASG	DS	SEC	SSC	Grand Total
Abroad	11	2	2	1	16
Cork	3		1		4
Dublin	147	16	28	3	198
Galway	2				2
Kildare	4		1		5
Limerick	1				1
Longford	1	1			2
Mayo	1				1
Meath	4		1		5
Offaly	1				
Unknown		1	1		3
Waterford	1				1
Westmeath	1				1
Wexford	1				1
Grand Total	179	20	34	4	237

Table 2 shows that 83% of SPS members are Dublin based, in terms of work location. 11% are based in other locations around the country, while some 7% are based abroad.

Chart 7 Diversity of experience on Management Boards

Chart 7 Diversity of experience on Management Boards
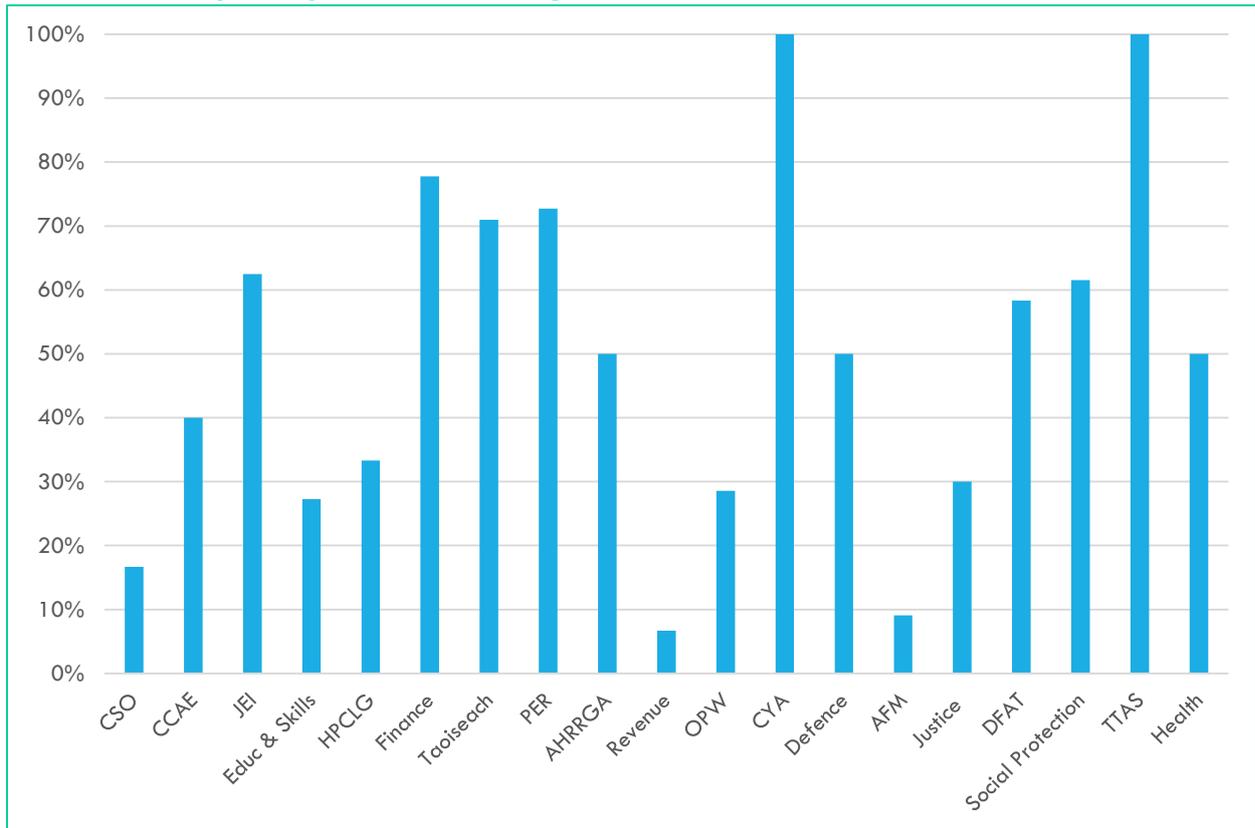
Chart 7 shows the proportion of Management Board members across the main Government Departments and Offices that have experience at Principal Officer level in another organisation. Overall, 46% of SPS members in these 19 Departments/Offices have worked in another organisation at Principal Officer level or above. In some cases, a high degree of diversity is apparent where there have been transfers of functions or establishment of new Departments, e.g. establishment of Dept of Children and Youth Affairs and Dept of Public Expenditure and Reform in 2011. Diversity of experience at senior levels also results from mobility and recruitment from outside the Civil Service. *[Source: Departments/Offices Q4 2016/Q1 2017].*

APPENDIX 3

The documents referenced throughout the SPS Leadership Development Strategy, 2017-2020 can be accessed through the following links

1. **Civil Service Renewal Plan**
   http://www.per.gov.ie/en/civil-service-renewal/

2. **TLAC Report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, 2015**
   http://www.per.gov.ie/en/top-level-appointments-committee-tlac/

3. **Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, 2015**
   http://www.per.gov.ie/en/civil-service-employee-engagement-survey/

4. **Public Service Reform Plan**
   http://reformplan.per.gov.ie/