

Civil Service Management Board

25th June 2021

Note of Meeting

Item 1 – Blended Working in the Civil Service

The CSMB discussed the updated paper on Blended Working in the Civil Service and noted that the Civil Service will provide an important signal for the wider public service and beyond.

The CSMB discussed how Departments and Offices might approach bringing employees back to the workplace during the transition phase and noted that – subject to public health advice - this would likely occur from Autumn 2021 to end March 2022.

It was noted that there were a lot of shared views and agreement on general principles but more diverse views on the implementation of a shared approach in different organisational contexts. Nevertheless, it was agreed that a clear statement is required as soon as possible on blended working so that it can be communicated to employees so both employers and staff can plan. It was also highlighted that the timing of engaging with the unions is important.

There was a wide-ranging discussion, including:

- The need to combine a flexible approach with a unified Civil Service framework;
- Minimum office attendance requirements;
- Location options, facilities and equipment to enable effective and safe working;
- Balancing the need for attractive options, employer of choice, and competitiveness while continuing to review impacts of gender equality and work imbalance; and
- Distribution of work, productivity, performance management, corporate culture and communications.

The CSMB agreed that:

- Final amendments would be made to the policy on the basis of the discussion and the acting Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform would contact the members of the CSMB individually to ensure no outstanding issues remain;
- the policy should not be so prescriptive as to bind the hands of Departments with very different operational requirements, and emphasise the evolving approach;
- the Civil Service should not confine itself to the target of 20% home working, outlined in the Programme for Government, where it is possible for this target to be exceeded;
- public health advice dependent, the transition period out of enforced remote working would run from September 2021 to end March 2022;
- the next phase of blended working will continue to review practices and experiences to inform a more settled long-term policy; and
- as the Civil Service approach to blended working will likely have wider implications for the public service, the finalised blended working policy will be brought to Government for approval on 13th July.

Item 2 - Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025, Public Service Apprenticeship Recruitment Plan

The CSMB noted this paper and highlighted the importance of the Civil Service delivering on its commitments in the plan.

AOB

NSSO Project

The Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and interim Chair of the National Shared Services Office (NSSO) Advisory Board, updated the CSMB on the status of the NSSO Project. It was agreed that the CSMB would receive a quarterly update on progress made to projects under the NSSO, including on the FMMS project and the Human Capital Management System.

Attendance

Martin Fraser, Department Taoiseach

Seán Ó Foghlú, Department of Education

Kevin McCarthy, Department of Rural and Community Development

Katherine Licken, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Maurice Buckley, Office of Public Works

Damien Moloney, Office of the Attorney General

Pádraig Dalton, Central Statistics Office – will VC in to the meeting

Oonagh McPhillips, Department of Justice

Niall Burgess, Department of Foreign Affairs

David Moloney, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Brendan Gleeson, Department Agriculture, Food and Marine

Orlaigh Quinn, Department Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Fergal Lynch, Department Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Mark Griffin, Department Environment, Climate and Communications

John Hogan, Department of Finance

Niall Cody, Revenue

Shirley Comerford, Public Appointments Service

John McKeon, Department of Social Protection

Ken Spratt, Department of Transport

Secretariat

Liz Canavan, Department of the Taoiseach

Colin Menton, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Fiona Curran, Department of the Taoiseach

Apologies

Jacqui McCrum, Department of Defence

Jim Breslin, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Graham Doyle, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Robert Watt, Department of Health