

## **Minutes of fifty-ninth meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1, at 12 noon on 24th April 2015**

**Present:** Ms. Judith Eve (Chairman), Ms. Fiona Tierney, Mr. Paul Lemass, Ms. Anne-Marie Taylor, Dr. Eddie Molloy, Ms. Eimear Kenny, Mr. William Beausang, Ms. Catherine Dobbins (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Two appointments to the Board are outstanding (from the Minister for Health and the Minister for Justice and Equality).

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### **Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**

The minutes were agreed and these will be published on the website.

It was noted that following an invitation from the Board, Andrew Patterson from the CPSA will attend the next Board meeting.

Discussions in relation to an induction programme for those appointed as PO are ongoing.

The Board was updated on the meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> March with the Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners; it was agreed that it was a very useful means of establishing relationships with other public service recruitment related bodies and that it would be useful to continue to hold these meetings on a regular basis.

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **CEO's Report**

#### Operational Report

The CEO discussed the operational report, highlighting significant activities and developments in PAS since the last Board meeting.

The highlights included progress on the Clerical Officer, Executive Officer, Principal Officer and graduate campaigns as set out in the operational report. The Board welcomed the high level of external applications received for the PO and discussed the assessment centre approach being adopted at stage two of the campaign. It was noted that a campaign for AP is scheduled to be advertised by the end of May.

The CEO updated the Board on the range of campaign activity underway, or being planned, for the local authority sector, including Director of Services, Senior Executive Officer in addition to a range of professional and technical posts for engineers, planners, architects and lawyers.

The CEO updated the Board on the request from the HSE to recruit over 200 hospital consultants and the concern from some areas in relation to the new structure for selection boards (resulting in certain campaigns being delayed).

The CEO updated the Board on progress with the Garda Trainee and the Mature Code Nurses testing taking place this month.

The Board discussed the ongoing activity levels in relation to state board appointments and welcomed the co-operation from the departmental liaison officers and the quality assurance processes in place. It was noted that the website would be updated shortly on progress to date, including a schematic with the potential timelines involved (which will also be set out in the booklet). The CEO updated the Board on the exploration of options in relation to potential software for this area, and additional means of highlighting and promoting the new process.

The Board welcomed the nomination of PAS for GradIreland awards.

The Board agreed that they would like to see a trend report in the Board papers to reflect the increase in volume of recruitment activity.

The Board considered some of the future challenges and opportunities facing PAS. There will also be a need for PAS to recruit for specialist skills which may involve a number of individual campaigns. It was agreed that many clients would prefer to give even more work to PAS (should it have the capacity) as it is recognised that PAS has the appropriate expertise. The Board considered that these demands may result in a different shape of organisation over the next three to five years with a greater focus on value-added work for PAS staff and increased outsourcing of other work. It was agreed that it may be worthwhile to review the Strategic Plan at the next Board meeting.

### Financial Report

The Board noted the Financial Report and the level of expenditure to date.

### **Internal Audit Committee Annual Report**

Ms. Sylva Langford, Chairperson of the Internal Audit Committee, presented the 2014 Annual Report to the Board. She discussed the role of the Committee in monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Audit Plan in 2014. She informed the Board that the Audit Committee's Charter and Terms of Reference were revised in 2014 (in line with the new guidelines published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform), and are now submitted to the Board for approval.

She discussed the Internal Audit Report on Accounting and Reporting and the Review which produced a revised Risk Management Policy and Corporate Risk Register. She stated that the Internal Audit Committee are satisfied that any recommendations or issues (including those arising from these report) are always accepted and implemented; with most issues tending to relate to the documentation of processes. She confirmed that the Committee ensures that recommendations from previous audits are all implemented and retain these issues on the agenda until the recommendations have been implemented.

The Board was informed that a representative of the C&AG's Office had attended a meeting of the Internal Audit Committee in December 2014; she stated that this meeting highlighted the need to closely monitor the terms of Service Level Agreements which are signed with the various shared service bodies.

Ms. Langford informed the Board that risk is on the agenda of each Internal Audit committee meeting; the committee would currently view the reputational risk attached to the new area of work for PAS in relation to State Boards as the most critical current risk.

The Board thanked Ms. Langford for her own input and commitment and stated that they would take her advice very seriously. They asked her to thank the Audit Committee for their work during the year on internal audit and risk management issues.

### **Update from the Internal Audit Committee**

The Report on Data Protection was noted.

### **Corporate Risk Register**

The Corporate Risk register was noted, and the Board agreed to revert with any issues identified.

The CEO highlighted some recent risks in relation to the selection board appointment process and the Board discussed the enhanced procedures in relation to how to deal with conflicts of interest.

The CEO also highlighted some recent requests for review in relation to some senior level campaigns, and agreed to keep the Board updated on the outcome of these.

### **Annual Report 2014**

The Board agreed to read the draft report and send in any observations before 8<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Key Strategic Issue – Online Testing**

The Board discussed the paper circulated on this topic and noted the reduced cost of delivery and the shorter timelines. The Board welcomed the focus on security, integrity and verification. The Board discussed the communication needed around the new assessment methods in order to assure clients and candidates in relation to validity of such tests in predicting performance in the role.

The Board agreed that it would be useful to see mock tests being run in the SMART Centre at the next Board meeting (if possible).

### **Next Meeting**

19<sup>th</sup> June at 11am.