



Human Resources Strategy 2003-2005

Partnership, Development and Performance

Executive Summary

Department of Social & Family Affairs



Our Human Resources Goal

Developing an effective, adaptable and capable organisation and a culture of pride, innovation and performance with a high level of involvement and participation by people at all levels and a climate which fosters personal and career development.

(Taken from our Strategy Statement 2003-2005.)

Message from the Secretary-General

Colleagues,

This is the first Human Resources Strategy to be produced by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Its implementation period is three years (2003-2005). The idea of a Human Resources Strategy is to focus on the human side of working life. It represents an acknowledgement of the fact that the Department is built on the contribution and the commitment of the people who work here. It sets out how we will improve the work environment and provide the opportunities for people to have worthwhile and satisfying experiences in their jobs. This Strategy is aimed, ultimately, at enhancing the service we provide but also at making work rewarding and fulfilling for everybody in our organisation.

The title "*Partnership, Development and Performance*" sums up three key themes of the Strategy. We recognise that partnership-based approaches and the provision of high quality training and development are crucial to the achievement of the level of performance which is needed to meet our overall objective of providing an excellent service to all of our customers. Clearly, that provides particular challenges to us now, as we work together to do so in an environment of extremely tight budgetary conditions.

People from across the Department have contributed to the preparation of this Strategy during a lengthy process of consultation which included the extensive use of our Partnership structures. It is intended that the implementation of the Strategy will be monitored via Partnership and that updates on progress will be regularly communicated to all. I look forward to the challenge of delivering, together, the commitments it contains.

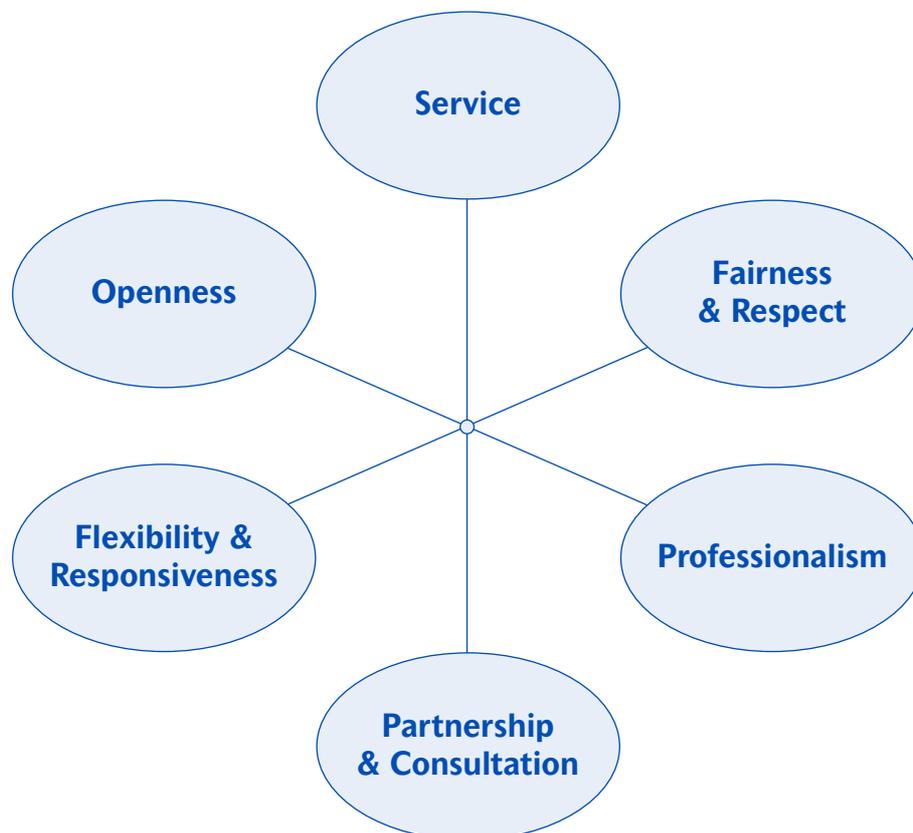


John Hynes
Secretary-General

January 2003

Our Values and Guiding Principles

The Strategy is based on the following Values and Guiding Principles as set out in detail in our Strategy Statement 2003-2005:



Our Human Resources Objectives

Our Strategy has five Objectives. They are:

1. Ensure that Human Resource Management supports the achievement of our strategic and business objectives.
2. Promote a positive working environment, equality of opportunity for all employees and a culture of mutual respect.
3. Promote personal and career development for all employees so that they can reach their potential and, therefore, contribute fully to the achievement of our strategic and business objectives.
4. Re-orient the Human Resource Management function to support the devolution of authority and responsibility for the day-to-day management of human resources issues to line management.
5. Strengthen and extend the Partnership process and other consultative, participative and communications processes across our organisation.

Objective 1: Achieving our Strategic and Business Objectives

Ensure that Human Resource Management supports the achievement of our strategic and business objectives.

This will be done by taking the following Actions:

- Ensuring that the HR aspects are considered in all departmental strategies and projects
- Implementing the HR-related elements of the Internal Customer Service Plan
- Implementing the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)
- Developing new approaches to fostering a strong performance culture
- Promoting the value of team-based approaches to our work
- Providing support to managers at all levels in the organisation to carry out their responsibilities successfully
- Efficient and effective managing of resources and prioritisation of work
- Developing and implementing effective and progressive policies in the areas of:
 - Placement & Mobility
 - Promotion
 - Recruitment
 - Performance
 - Attendance & Absenteeism
 - Equality/Diversity
 - Devolution of Authority & Responsibility for HR Functions
- Fostering good industrial and employee relations throughout the Department
- Maintaining good relations and a co-operative approach with the Department of Finance and the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commission

Objective 2: Ensuring a Positive Working Environment

Promote a positive working environment, equality of opportunity for all employees and a culture of mutual respect.

This will be done by taking the following Actions:

- Promoting staff welfare and a safe working environment based on our Safety Statement and the Civil Service Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Promoting equality of opportunity for all employees based on the Civil Service Gender Equality and Diversity Policies
- Operating a range of flexible working arrangements

Objective 3: Reaching Our Potential

Promote personal and career development for all employees so that they can reach their potential and, therefore, contribute fully to the achievement of our strategic and business objectives.

This will be done by taking the following Action:

- Implementing the Training and Development Strategy 2003-2005

Objective 4: Creating a New Human Resource Management Environment

Re-orient the Human Resource Management function to support the devolution of authority and responsibility for the day-to-day management of human resources issues to line management.

This will be done by taking the following Actions:

- Progressing the devolution of certain HR functions to line managers in a consultative, planned and supportive manner
- Providing HR support systems to underpin this devolution
- Creating an enhanced strategic and advisory role for Personnel Branch

Objective 5: Strengthening Partnership, Consultation and Involvement

Strengthen and extend the Partnership process and other consultative, participative and communications processes across our organisation.



This will be done by taking the following Actions:

- Strengthening the Partnership structures and processes across the Department
- Promoting other staff participation, consultation and involvement processes and opportunities
- Carrying out a programme of staff surveys

Making It Happen

A diverse range of factors will determine how successful we will be in implementing our Human Resources Strategy. The necessary approach could be summarised as creating an organisational culture that is receptive to and will support the implementation of the Strategy. A fundamental principle that underlies the Strategy is that we all have a shared responsibility to put it into action and, thus, realise its benefits. It is also clear that the Department's senior management, line managers and supervisory staff all have crucial parts to play due to the influence they have in their areas of responsibility.

A number of programmes and initiatives are fundamental to the successful implementation of this Strategy. These include the Partnership process, the Internal Customer Service Plan, the PMDS process and the Training and Development Strategy.

As with any wide-ranging programme of work there will need to be effective co-ordination and alignment in the development and implementation of the various strands of the Strategy. We will need to be imaginative and flexible in how we plan and carry out the actions within the Strategy. Finally, an appropriate allocation, distribution and management of resources, monitored on an ongoing basis, will be necessary to drive forward the ambitious programme of change set out in the Strategy.

Extracts from our Human Resources Strategy 2003-2005

“...the need to make significant, tangible progress in the HR area was described as perhaps the greatest challenge facing the whole Delivering Better Government/SMI process.”

“A key theme of this Strategy is the enhancement of organisational, team and individual performance in order to provide a professional service to our customers and shareholders.”

“We, therefore, must create an organisational culture where training and development is seen as a core value and as an investment by both managers and staff.”

“In parallel with Partnership there is a need to maximise the participation and involvement of staff whereby they can input to discussions regarding their jobs, their work environment and their personal and career development.”



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