

**Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014 (Croke Park Agreement)**

**PART A – PROGRESS ON AGENCY ACTION PLAN**

**PENSIONS BOARD**

**1. Better human resource management:** *Actions to include under this heading include reductions in numbers, redeployment, reconfiguration of service delivery, revisions in attendance arrangements, better attendance and absence management etc.*

Terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (ref to relevant paragraph)	Timeframe	Action	Comment
<p><i>Better attendance and absence management</i></p> <p>4.10</p>	<p>10% reduction in days lost by end 2011.</p>	<p>The Board aims to reduce sick leave by 10% by the end of 2011. HR will circulate quarterly absence reports to all senior managers. Year end absence reports will be completed with comparisons against previous years to highlight any potential trends. The provisions of Circular 09/2010: Management of Sick Leave will be brought to the attention of all staff members. Employees on long-term sick leave will be referred to the Board’s occupational health providers within four weeks, if appropriate. Sick leave review meetings and return to work meetings will be conducted throughout the lifetime of the Agreement.</p>	<p>Circular 09/2010 was discussed at partnership and by the senior manager team. This circular is now implemented and published on the Board’s intranet.</p> <p>Revised procedures based on this circular are in place for line managers. Sick leave is actively managed and reports are presented to the senior managers on a quarterly basis by HR.</p>
<p><i>Attendance Patterns</i></p> <p>1.4 4.4</p>	<p>Bank time eliminated from end 2010.</p> <p>Q2-Q3 2011</p>	<p>Bank time will be eliminated and attendance patterns at holiday periods will be reviewed. A revised policy will be circulated.</p>	<p>Bank time and privilege days have been discontinued with effect from January 2011.</p> <p>Office is opened from 9 – 5pm each day including lunch.</p>
<p><i>Recording attendance</i></p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>Q1 2011</p>	<p>The Board will utilise an electronic Time Management System in order to record attendance patterns of all staff and allow leave etc. to be monitored and recorded electronically without the need for paper or duplication of effort.</p>	<p>With effect from January 2011 paper annual leave sheets have been discontinued and replaced by an electronic time management system.</p>



<p><i>Redeployment of Staff within the Board.</i></p> <p>1.7 1.8 4.3 4.4</p>	<p>With effect from 2010</p>	<p>The Board will continue to reorganise and redeploy staff according to operational requirements. Staff members will be moved within the organisation according to their skills and expertise in order to maximise productivity and to focus on the key objectives of the Board. This will enhance efficiency and service delivery.</p>	<p>10% of staff have already been redeployed to meet the organisation's core priorities due to scarce resources.</p> <p>With effect from March 2011 the Board has received departmental sanction for twelve additional staff members. Six posts will be recruited on fixed-term contracts for a period of three years and six posts will transfer from the Department's Employment Control Framework by end of 2012.</p>
<p>1.4</p>	<p>With effect from January 2011.</p>	<p>Deductions of pay for all days of absence will be standardised at a 1/5 of weekly pay, in the interests of equity and consistency across all staff taking unpaid leave or availing of reduced hours working patterns.</p>	<p>This has been implemented.</p>

**2. Better Business Processes:** *Actions under this heading would include efficiency measures and improvements to the processes by which your Department/Body delivers its services to the public, including changes to the technology used, better data management, including around identity, and so on.*

Terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (ref to relevant paragraph)	Timeframe	Action	Comment
<p><i>Service Delivery Options</i></p> <p>1.4 4.3</p>	<p>The project will be operational in the first quarter of 2011.</p>	<p>The Pensions Board is introducing a new on-line data portal for pension schemes. This system will handle the payment of scheme fees, amendments, new registrations and the submission of annual scheme information on-line. Currently amendments in the Pensions Board are carried out through a manual process. When the system is operational, amendments will be done on-line for all pension schemes. This will result in significant administrative savings for the Pensions Board and also efficiencies for all the Board's stakeholders. The system is currently in the final stages of testing and will be launched in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2011.</p>	<p>The system went live in February 2011 for the payment of Pensions Board fees and also to allow scheme amendments to be made. There are currently 850+ users registered on-line.</p> <p>Further development is ongoing and new pension scheme registrations will be processed through the on-line system in conjunction with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners by Q2 2011.</p>
<p><i>Accounts payments and receipts</i></p> <p>1.4 1.10 4.13 4.16</p>	<p>Q1 2011</p> <p>Q2 2011</p> <p>Q2 2011 frequency of payments monthly.</p>	<p>Introduce the use of Electronic Fund Transfer for 100% of payments to staff and suppliers.</p> <p>Introduce payment from fee managers by Electronic Fund Transfer/Credit card payments.</p> <p>Greater efficiencies will be sought in payroll and pensions administration, including through reviewing the frequency of payments.</p>	<p>100% payments to staff and 90% payments to suppliers are by electronic fund transfer.</p> <p>This was introduced with effect from March 2011.</p> <p>All payments are currently paid monthly. At present a review of the preparation and issuing of benefits statements and general administration is underway.</p>

<p><i>ICT maintenance and support</i></p> <p>4.15</p>	<p>Q2 2011</p>	<p>Review the existing ICT maintenance and support arrangements with a view to achieving savings and more efficient delivery of services. Communicate with the Department regarding the possibility of the Department undertaking the ICT maintenance and support on behalf of the Pensions Board or to share ICT services.</p>	<p>The Department of Social Protection indicated that due to an increased workload it would not be feasible at this point to undertake to support the Board's ICT infrastructure.</p> <p>The Board has published a request for tender on the e-tenders website for ICT maintenance and support services.</p>
<p><i>Procurement</i></p> <p>1.10 1.11 4.15</p>	<p>Commenced 2010 and will continue throughout the lifetime of the agreement.</p> <p>Q3 2011</p>	<p>Corporate Procurement Plan developed, continue to review and implement appropriate procurement strategies for high spend categories and maintain a central register for all contracts entered into by the Pensions Board.</p> <p>Detailed purchases rules and authorisation thresholds to be reviewed and revised.</p>	<p>The Board approved the Corporate procurement plan in January 2011.</p> <p>The Board have reviewed the existing cleaning contract and expect to achieve a significant saving on this expenditure.</p> <p>Detailed purchases rules and authorisation thresholds will be reviewed in Q3 2011</p>
<p><i>Revisions to regulatory actions</i></p> <p>1.10 1.12 4.4 4.14</p>	<p>The revised strategy for processing CWPS reports is in train. 8 prosecutions were initiated by the Board in 2010 with another 20 prosecutions being initiated in 2011 for offences related to CWPS. It is anticipated that in the region of 15-20 prosecutions per annum will be taken by the Board.</p>	<p>1. Construction Workers Pension Scheme (CWPS): The CWPS scheme is designed to enable employers in the construction industry to discharge their obligation under an employment agreement relating to pensions life assurance and sick pay. The Pensions Board has been in receipt of a large number of reports in respect of failure by employers participating in the CWPs to remit member contributions to the scheme, as required by Section 58A of the Pensions Act, Currently, the Board has over 230 cases under active investigation. The investigation and prosecution of these cases is highly specialised, labour intensive and the Board has limited resources. Against this backdrop and with the downturn in the economy and less co-operation from defaulting employers, the Board reviewed its strategy towards dealing with CWPS cases in Q2 2010. The Board's revised strategy and prosecution guidelines have been affirmed by Senior Counsel. All</p>	<p>1. Thirteen (13) criminal prosecutions are currently being undertaken by the Board. A further 7 cases are at an advanced stage before the Courts: 4 cases are in for hearing before the Courts; 2 cases have been adjourned by the Courts for sentencing where the Accused has been directed by the Court to make restoration of outstanding pension contributions to the trustees of the pension scheme (CWPS); one other case has been adjourned for sentencing where the Court has directed that the Accused return to this jurisdiction from Australia to face sentencing. A further case was withdrawn by the Board where all outstanding pension contributions (including both employer and employee portions) had been paid to the pension scheme on the morning of the Court case.</p> <p>Other CWPS cases are being reviewed and progressed by the Board in line with the revised strategy thereby creating a framework where the Board will achieve its yearly prosecution targets.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the target to initiate 15-20 criminal prosecutions in 2011 will be achieved.</p>

<p>1.10 4.14</p>	<p>On-site inspections of RAs will be accelerated throughout 2011 and beyond. The Board carried out 5 such inspections in 2011 and intends to inspect a further 14 such entities in 2011 with that number increasing on a yearly basis.</p>	<p>cases are now being reviewed and progressed to prosecution in line with that strategy. The strategy also takes into account a legislative amendment sought by the Board whereby it can prosecute cases on the basis of employee payslip evidence alone thereby obviating the need for a full on-site investigation of employers' premises with all of its attendant legalities and related costs for specialist resources e.g. forensic accounting and IT expertise. Furthermore, the Board's regulatory activity in this area has resulted in approx €5m being returned to the CWPS by offending employers.</p> <p>2. Inspections of Registered Administrators (RAs): Since 2008 RAs are statutorily obliged to register with the Pensions Board where they perform certain core administration functions on behalf of scheme trustees. The core administration functions are the preparation of annual scheme reports, annual benefit statements and maintenance of sufficient and accurate records of members and their entitlements. The Board assess levels of compliance with RA obligations through a process of direct engagement with these entities, which until the second half of 2010, had been through a series of meetings with RAs on Board premises. Through the provisions of the Act introducing the RA regime, the Board sought jurisdiction to investigate/inspect the activities of RAs on the premises of the said RAs. Since September 2010 the Board has been carrying out on-site inspections of RAs in order to assess their competence and capacity to discharge their RA core administration functions and their levels of compliance with the Pensions Act.</p>	<p>2. On-site inspections of RAs for 2011 have commenced with three inspections being completed to date and a further eleven inspections scheduled throughout the year.</p>
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<p>1.10 4.11</p>	<p>RA on-site inspection training was delivered to senior members of the Regulation Team in 2010 both on the Board's premises and in the field, i.e. as part of actual RA inspections. This training will be delivered to all Team members throughout 2011 and onwards as the entire Team will be involved in the inspection process.</p>	<p>3. Inspections training for Regulation Team Staff: As RA on-site inspection was a new area of regulatory activity for the Regulation Team, the Board sought an external resource in 2010 to assist it in the development of appropriate procedures and methodology for such inspections. The specific deliverables for this Inspection Services project included a training programme for the Regulation Team to ensure its capacity to verify the competence of and capacity of RAs to maintain sufficient records to undertake specified core administration functions as certified in their application to the Board for RA registration.</p>	<p>3. The RA on-site inspections are being carried out without external resources as is it considered that senior members of the Regulation Team have now got sufficient competency and experience to discharge this function. Internal training is being scheduled for remainder of Team members to ensure that there will be full Team involvement in the inspection process.</p>
<p>1.10 4.1 4.14</p>	<p>The pro-active risk-based approach to supervising the operation of the Pensions Act will be in place for the duration of the Agreement.</p>	<p>4. Pensions Board approach to Regulation: the Board continues to develop a pro-active approach to regulation which utilises a risk-based model based on a hierarchy of risk priorities. Regulatory activity is directed to most suitable areas to ensure that regulatory practices are efficient.</p>	<p>4. All regulatory activity is aligned to pro-actively supervise the Board's hierarchy of risk priorities and the work objectives of the Regulation Team reflect this approach.</p>

**3. Delivering for the Citizen:** *Actions under this heading would include efficiency measures and improvements to the processes by which your Department/Body, its services to the public, including changes to the technology used, better data management, including around identity, and so on.*

Terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014	Timeframe	Action	Comment
<p><i>Provision of information to pension scheme members and the public generally.</i></p> <p>4.1 4.4 4.13</p>	<p>Ongoing commitment to maximise use of ICT to deliver this service.</p>	<p><b>Information Services</b> - Development and deployment of online information services to facilitate more efficient and cost effective access for all Pensions Board stakeholders.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.1 4.4 4.13</p>		<p>The Pensions Board singular website <a href="http://www.pensionsboard.ie">www.pensionsboard.ie</a> is constantly promoted as the optimum point of contact for the Board and as a central educational and information resource.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.1 4.4 4.13</p>	<p>This publishing policy was commenced in 2008 and each year it is enhanced further.</p>	<p>Annual Report is only published and available online.</p> <p>Policy Reports are only published and available online.</p> <p>Information booklets are published, updated and available online – very limited print runs and only of certain booklets.</p> <p>Information checklists are published, updated and available online.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.1 4.4 4.13</p>	<p>Commenced in 2007 when all newsletter requirements transferred on line.</p>	<p>News by email alert service to over 3,000 industry and general contacts. This is a free service and anybody can subscribe.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>4.1 4.4 4.13</p>	<p>Commenced in 2010 and ongoing promotion.</p>	<p>Enhanced promotion of online (email/website) as the optimum method for the general public and pensions industry to engage and communicate with the Board's information and enquiry service.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.1 4.4 4.13</p>	<p>Commenced in January 2010. This training will be an ongoing service provided by the Board.</p>	<p>Free online trustee training e-learning system to support the mandatory requirement for pension scheme trustees to receive trustee training.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.1 4.4 4.13</p>	<p>Commenced in June 2010.</p>	<p>The Board publishes on its website a list of registered trustee trainers to support the mandatory requirement for pension scheme trustees to receive trustee training. The Board operates a self-certification process for the trustee trainers availing of this facility.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.1 4.4 4.13</p>	<p>This research activity was commenced in 2008 and each year it is enhanced further.</p>	<p>The Board will measure volumes of enquiries and website visitors and monitor response times. We will analyse enquiries to ensure the relevance of our information services and guidance and will use market research surveys to measure awareness of pensions and of the Board.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>