

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT 2010-2014

(CROKE PARK AGREEMENT)

THE COURTS SERVICE

REVISED ACTION PLAN

NOVEMBER 2012

1. Better human resource management: *Actions 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	Action	Target Date for Implementation	Current Position /Targeted Savings 2013
P3 1.4 P4 1.9 P5 1.10/11 P27 4.4 P55 6.3.10	Replacement of the current single jurisdictional provincial Circuit and District Court with a unified multi-jurisdictional office in each county	2013	<p>Combined offices have been established in 13 counties. There are twelve counties remaining with District and Circuit Court offices to be combined.</p> <p>The roll-out is scheduled to be completed by the target date</p>
P3.14 P5 1.10 P12.6	General Flexibility i.e. cross jurisdictional working – Reorganisation of service delivery	Within period of agreement	A formal response to the proposal has now been submitted by the PSEU. Further discussions will be held shortly
	Reduction in Absenteeism:	End 2013	<p>Reducing absenteeism is a Corporate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the Courts Service.</p> <p>Active management of absences is being undertaken by the Courts Service in accordance with circulars and guidance relating to same.</p> <p>Close liaison between the Courts Service and (i) the Office of the Chief Medical Officer and (ii) the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service is an integral part of our approach to reduce absences.</p> <p>Our KPI is that rate of days lost to sick leave should be reduced to 3.0 %</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	Action	Target Date for Implementation	Current position/Targeted Savings 2013
P3.14 P51.10 P29 4.3	Logging/recording of information using Digital Audio Recording (DAR) in the Criminal Courts	End 2012	An Implementation Group has been established. A pilot will commence shortly. If successful significant savings will be realised from early 2013. The annual cost of logging in criminal matters is €420K.
P3.14 P5 1.10 P29 4.3	Optimisation of the use of Courtroom technology such as <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Videolink 2. Video display 3. 3 Video conferencing 4. DAR 5. evidence presentation 6. evidence dissemination 7. the development and use of an electronic courtbook 	Within period of agreement	A number of these items were discussed by Justice Sector Efficiency Group. There is further scope, through bilateral cooperation, to maximise the benefits of these technologies.

<p>P3.14 P5 1.10</p>	<p>Reduction in external ICT support</p>	<p>End 2012</p>	<p>The ICT Unit has reduced dependence on external service providers by carrying out a number of functions in-house which were traditionally outsourced. These relate in particular to the areas of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business process analysis • Re-design • Training • Project Management <p>In addition the unit has assumed responsibility for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The processing of the electoral register element of the Jury System previously carried out by an external contractor • Support for the telephone system previously carried out by the external provider <p>Savings continue to be made</p>
<p>P3.14</p>	<p>The application of Business Process Improvement across the organisation</p>	<p>Ongoing process to be rolled out to full organisation by 2014</p>	<p>A LEAN (Business Process Improvement Team) has been established in the Courts Service. A report from the team containing recommendations for improvements was considered and agreed by the Senior Management Team. The implementation of the agreed recommendations is progressing in conjunction with the rollout of the Combined Court Office Project.</p>

P5 1.10/11 P29 4.13 P30 4.15 P55 6.3.10	Centralisation of Process which may include but is not limited to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Processing legal aid claims 2. Probate 3. Summary Judgements/ Issue of Civil proceedings 4. Phone calls to Court offices 5. Summoning of Juries 6. Small Claims 7. Fines Notice and warrant issue 8. Sheriff's business 	Phased within period of agreement and beyond	A draft report has been prepared by the Centralisation Group and will be considered by the SMT shortly. Legislative changes required to centralise certain function will be addressed by the Legal Services Bill 2012
P3 1.4 P4 1.9	Electronic transmission of Charge Sheets from An Garda Siochana to the Courts Service	Early 2013	Investment costs of C €1.8 m would be required to deliver this project. If funding was available the project could be accelerated. The annual savings realisable post implementation would be in the region of €1.7m. mainly through staff savings across both organisations.
P3 1.4 P4 1.9	Printing of summonses by outsourced contractor	2013 depending on legislation	Development work to allow implementation of this action in early 2013 has commenced. The annual savings on staff and equipment costs are estimated at €65K. Further savings up to €80K may be realised through a change in distribution arrangements.
P3 1.4 P4 1.9	Extension of Video Conferencing arrangements between prison Service and Courts	Phased within period of agreement	The technical arrangements are in place. There is further scope to maximise the benefit of this technology.
P5 1.10 P27 4.4 P55 6.3.10	Expand the adjudicative role of the County Registrars by extending the areas in which County Registrars may exercise adjudicative functions and other functions	Ongoing depending on legislation	Discussions are ongoing. Legislative changes will be required.

3. Delivering for the Citizen: *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	Action	Target Date for Implementation	Targeted Savings 2013
P3 1.4 P4 1.9	Rationalise the number of stand alone District Court offices	2013	In accordance with its Strategic Plan, the Courts Service is considering the future of a number of stand alone District Court offices. Savings will be realised following the amalgamation of these offices with those in County towns.
P3 1.4 P4 1.9 P5 1.10/11 P27 4.4 P55 6.3.10	The creation of a single multi-jurisdictional Civil Office in Dublin to include the licensing function	2014	The creation of a single staff pool and the merging of business procedures has commenced in Dublin District and Circuit Civil Offices in advance of a move to a fully multi-jurisdictional office.
P3 1.4 P4 1.9 P5 1.10/11 P27 4.4 P55 6.3.10	The creation of a single multi-jurisdictional Family Law Office in Dublin	2014	No report at this stage

Terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014	Action	Target Date for Implementation	Targeted Savings 2013
P3 1.4	Rationalisation of Court venues	Implement findings of review during 2012 and beyond	<p>The programme to rationalise the number of Court venues is continuing. The number of Court venues outside Dublin (excluding Cork City) is now 96, from a high of 267.</p> <p>A further review is under consideration by the Building Committee.</p> <p>Since January 2012 sittings of the High Court on Circuit have been rationalised and integrated with High Court Personal Injury sittings in regional venues. This initiative has reduced the number of judge sitting days with a corresponding reduction in travel and subsistence costs for these sittings and has increased judicial availability for motions, trial work and writing reserved judgements.</p>
P3 1.4 P5 1.10 P29 4.3	The Introduction of e-filing	Within period of agreement	Implementation of this system will be dependant on the inclusion of a number of relevant provisions in the Legal Services Bill 2012.
P5 1.10/11 P29 4.13 P30 4.15 P55 6.3.10	Introduction of 1 st phase of CCMS – Judgements online	Pilot by mid 2012	As above
	<p>Implementation of the provisions of the Fines Act, 2010</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Payment of fines by instalments 2. Statutory Receiver 	End 2012	The implementation is dependant on revisions to the Act. Discussions are ongoing. Approval in principle has been received from D/PER to explore options for the outsourcing of the payment of fines function.

Terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014	Action	Target Date for Implementation	Targeted Savings 2013
	Implementation of the requirements of the Insolvency Bill 2011	Early 2013	N/A
	Centralisation of Custody Cases	Pilot in progress. This action will be rolled out nationally in Q4 2012 and 2013 subject to successful completion of the pilot	Savings will accrue to Irish Prison Service and An Garda Siochana
	Extend the use of Alternative Courts to Cork and Limerick	2013	Savings will accrue to Irish Prison Service and An Garda Siochana

Appendix – The following table highlights the areas of interagency co-operation within the Justice Sector and which are already detailed in the Justice Sector Plan

Terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014	Action/commitment	Target Date as per Current Action Plan	Targeted Savings 2013
DEPARTMENT AND AGENCIES			
	<u>Inter-agency Co-operation in the Criminal Justice Sector</u>		
	<p>Actions to improve efficiencies and effectiveness between and among An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, Irish Prison Service and Probation Service, either bilaterally or multilaterally, driven by a Programme Management Office (PMO) established in the Department in Autumn 2011, as follows:-</p>		<p>A large proportion of savings will be realised through reduced headcount which in turn will require a more efficient and effective method of service delivery.</p>
	<p>Continued emphasis on collaborative efforts across the criminal justice agencies, in particular through the Garda GRACE Programme and the Working Group on Efficiency Measures in the District and Circuit Court (chaired by the Department with representatives from the Judiciary and the relevant agencies, assisted by an Advisory Committee including legal practitioners) to identify and implement measures to reduce delays, repeat court appearances and the length of time Gardaí spend in court.</p> <p>Implementation of the following measures is underway:</p>		

Terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014	Action/commitment	Target Date as per Current Action Plan	Targeted Savings 2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralised custody courts: A pilot programme was introduced in four court Districts in May/June 2012 (Letterkenny, Ennis, Gorey and Trim). Savings were achieved for the Irish Prison Service and greater efficiencies for the Courts Service. A detailed review of the pilot is currently being undertaken to identify the financial savings and lay the basis for further expansion. 	Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Trial Procedure: A pre-trial procedure is being introduced on a pilot basis in the Dublin and the Midland Circuit Courts (starting for certain cases in the Midland Circuit from 1 November). This is designed to prompt an early assessment of a case's readiness for trial and will generate savings and efficiencies particularly for the courts and the DPP's Office but also the Prison Service and An Garda Síochána by moving cases on for trial quicker and facilitating shorter trials. 	To be evaluated during pilot phase to assess savings/efficiencies and to inform the development of legislation.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of video link between courts and prisons: Video conferencing facilities are now installed in all prisons and in the main relevant courthouses. This maximises the potential to achieve savings for the Irish Prison Service and An Garda Síochána. Further reliance on this technology is dependent on legislative amendments which have been developed but await enactment. 	Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same-Day Pre-Sanction Reports: Since mid 2011 the Probation Service has provided same-day assessment reports to the District Courts for cases in which community service orders are under consideration thus reducing waiting times for such reports and eliminating the need for adjournments of cases. A similar pilot scheme in relation to same day pre-sanction reports was introduced in 2012 in the Criminal Courts of Justice. The potential of this to deliver efficiencies for both the Probation Service and the courts will be evaluated at end of 2012. 	Ongoing	

Terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014	Action/commitment	Target Date as per Current Action Plan	Targeted Savings 2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximising the use of the Criminal Courts of Justice building: A review is underway on the needs of the key agencies (Courts Service, Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána, Chief Prosecution Solicitor's Office) with staff on site with a view to identifying how the maximum use of the CCJ building can be achieved to the benefit of those agencies. 	Ongoing	
	Other initiatives include:		
	<p>Expansion of CJIP starting with electronic transmission of Charge Sheets from An Garda Síochána to the Courts Service.</p> <p>*Note: Investment costs estimated at €1.8 m would be required to deliver this project. However, <u>annual</u> savings realisable post implementation are estimated at €1.7m. mainly through staff savings across both organisations. Revised business case is currently being prepared. If funding was available the project could be prioritised and accelerated.</p>	2013 (if funding was available)	Potential annual savings of €1.7m across the Courts Service and An Garda Síochána
	The IPS in conjunction with the Probation Service has commenced the national roll out of the Community Return Programme involving cross-sectoral working and joint management by the co-location of staff from IPS and the Probation Service. This will achieve the placement, per annum, of 400 prisoners serving sentences of 1-8 years.	Ongoing	
	The Probation Service will continue to expand the joint sex offender management model SORAM nationally in co-operation with An Garda Síochána and including Children and Family Services with HSE participating in 5 original areas.		

	Joint PS/IPS Integrated Offender Management Strategy		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish joint high level PS/IPS management group to drive out new community initiatives as an alternative to custody including Community Return schemes in a range of locations nationally. 	2012 / 2013	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate partnership arrangements through joint structures. High level IPS/PS management group to develop communication/information programme on community sanctions as a sentencing alternative to custody. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with the IPS, the Probation Service will undertake a feasibility study of the provision of pre and post release programmes for short term prisoners through a social impact investment programme. 	April 2013	
	Develop and agree protocols for information sharing between the key agencies in the criminal justice system:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protocols for information sharing between the key agencies in the criminal justice system (Gardaí, the Courts Service, Probation and IPS) will be explored, developed and implemented. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch the Criminal Records Office (CRO) database allowing the Garda Vetting Unit to link electronically and update the IT based CRO Probation Service database. 	December 2013	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with the Court Service, the Probation Service will introduce a system allowing Probation Service staff access to Courts database to access Court results. 	March 2013	