

Appropriation Account 2019

Vote 12

Superannuation and Retired Allowances

Introduction

As Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, I am the Accounting Officer for Vote 12, and am accordingly required to prepare the appropriation account for the Vote, and to submit the account to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

In accordance with this requirement, I have prepared the attached account of the amount expended in the year ended 31 December 2019 for pensions, superannuation, occupational injuries, and additional and other allowances and gratuities under the Superannuation Acts 1834 to 2004 and sundry other statutes; extra-statutory pensions, allowances and gratuities awarded by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform; fees to medical referees and occasional fees to doctors; compensation and other payments in respect of personal injuries; fees to Pensions Authority and other professional fees, miscellaneous payments, etc.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the sums granted by Dáil Éireann under the Appropriation Act 2019, including the amount that could be used as appropriations-in-aid of expenditure for the year.

A surplus of €110.322 million is liable for surrender to the Exchequer.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles and notes 1 to 6 form part of the account.

Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

The standard accounting policies and principles for the production of appropriation accounts have been applied in the preparation of the account.

Statement on Internal Financial Control

Responsibility for system of internal financial control

As Accounting Officer, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Department.

This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to me and my other obligations as Secretary General. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, all transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

The position in regard to the financial control environment, the framework of administrative procedures, management reporting and internal audit is as follows.

Shared services

I have fulfilled my responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the service management agreement between this Department and the National Shared Service Office for the provision of HR and payroll shared services.

I rely on a letter of assurance from the Accounting Officer of the Vote for the National Shared Services Office that the appropriate controls are exercised in the provision of shared services to this Department.

Financial control environment

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place.

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee to advise me in discharging my responsibilities for the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative controls and management reporting

I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that

- there is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management
- there are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts
- a risk management system operates within the Department
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

I confirm that the Department has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter which I have approved. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which the Department is exposed and its annual internal audit plans, approved by me, are based on this analysis. These plans aim to cover the key controls on a rolling basis over a reasonable period. The internal audit function is reviewed periodically by me and by the Audit Committee. I have put procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

Risk and control framework

The Department has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, to mitigate those risks.

A risk register is in place which identifies the key risks facing the Department and these have been identified, evaluated and graded according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the management board on a quarterly basis. The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level.

The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and assigns responsibility for operation of controls to specific staff.

Ongoing monitoring and review

Formal procedures have been established for monitoring control processes and control deficiencies are communicated to those responsible for taking corrective action and to management and the management board, where relevant, in a timely way. I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

Review of effectiveness

I confirm that the Department has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures. The department's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by the work of the internal and external auditors and the senior management within the Department responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal financial control framework.

Internal financial control issues

No weaknesses in internal financial control were identified in relation to 2019 that resulted in, or may result in, a material loss.

Robert Watt
Accounting Officer
Superannuation and Retired Allowances

11 March 2020

Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Vote 12 Superannuation and Retired Allowances

Opinion on the appropriation account

I have audited the appropriation account for Vote 12 Superannuation and Retired Allowances for the year ended 31 December 2019 under section 3 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993.

In my opinion, the appropriation account

- properly presents the receipts and expenditure of Vote 12 Superannuation and Retired Allowances for the year ended 31 December 2019, and
- has been prepared in the form prescribed by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit of the appropriation account in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the *Preface to the Appropriation Accounts*. I am independent of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Report on the statement on internal financial control, and on other matters

The Accounting Officer has presented a statement on internal financial control together with the appropriation account. My responsibilities to report in relation to the information in the statement, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the *Preface to the Appropriation Accounts*.

I have nothing to report in that regard.

Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General

23 September 2020

Vote 12 Superannuation and Retired Allowances

Appropriation Account 2019

| | Estimate provision | | 2019 Outturn | 2018 Outturn |
|---|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | €000 | €000 | €000 | €000 |
| Programme expenditure | | | | |
| A Superannuation and retired allowances | | | | |
| <i>Original</i> | 609,900 | | | |
| <i>Supplementary</i> | 5,001 | | | |
| | | 614,901 | 598,656 | 573,180 |
| Gross expenditure | | | | |
| <i>Original</i> | 609,900 | | | |
| <i>Supplementary</i> | 5,001 | | | |
| | | 614,901 | 598,656 | 573,180 |
| B Appropriations-in-aid | | | | |
| <i>Original</i> | 238,603 | | | |
| <i>Supplementary</i> | 5,000 | | | |
| | | 243,603 | 337,680 | 252,128 |
| Net expenditure | | | | |
| <i>Original</i> | 371,297 | | | |
| <i>Supplementary</i> | 1 | | | |
| | | 371,298 | 260,976 | 321,052 |

Surplus

The surplus of the amount provided over the net amount applied is liable for surrender to the Exchequer.

| | 2019 € | 2018 € |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Surplus to be surrendered | 110,322,479 | 45,099,294 |

Robert Watt
Accounting Officer
Superannuation and Retired Allowances

11 March 2020

Notes to the Appropriation Account

Note 1 Operating Cost Statement 2019

This note is not applicable. The administration costs of this Vote are borne on Vote 18 – National Shared Services Office. The costs involved in formulation of superannuation policy are borne on Vote 11 – Office of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Note 2 Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2019

| | Note | 2019 €000 | 2018 €000 |
|----------------------------------|------|---------------|---------------|
| Current assets | | | |
| Bank and cash | 2.1 | 16,080 | 41,405 |
| Other debit balances | 2.2 | 751 | 273 |
| Total current assets | | <u>16,831</u> | <u>41,678</u> |
| Less current liabilities | | | |
| Other credit balances | 2.3 | 14,737 | 22,193 |
| Net Exchequer funding | 2.4 | 2,094 | 19,485 |
| Total current liabilities | | <u>16,831</u> | <u>41,678</u> |
| Net current assets | | <u>—</u> | <u>—</u> |
| Net assets | | <u>—</u> | <u>—</u> |
| Represented by: | | | |
| State funding account | 2.5 | <u>—</u> | <u>—</u> |

2.1 Bank and cash

| at 31 December | 2019 | 2018 |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | €000 | €000 |
| PMG balances and cash | 16,052 | 41,399 |
| Other bank account balances | 28 | 6 |
| | <u>16,080</u> | <u>41,405</u> |

2.2 Other debit balances

| at 31 December | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|------------|------------|
| | €000 | €000 |
| Recoupable pensions owed by other departments | 269 | 273 |
| National Shared Services Office ^a | 482 | — |
| | <u>751</u> | <u>273</u> |

Note ^a In October 2019 an excess amount of €482,000 was provided to the National Shared Services Office. This amount was recovered in 2020.

2.3 Other credit balances

| at 31 December | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| | €000 | €000 |
| Amounts due to the State | | |
| Income tax | 7,336 | 16,188 |
| Local property tax | 138 | 322 |
| Universal social charge | 1,264 | 3,020 |
| | <u>8,738</u> | <u>19,530</u> |
| Voluntary pension deductions held in suspense | 4,142 | — |
| Other credit suspense items | 1,857 | 2,663 |
| | <u>14,737</u> | <u>22,193</u> |

2.4 Net Exchequer funding

| at 31 December | 2019 | 2018 |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | €000 | €000 |
| Surplus to be surrendered | 110,322 | 45,099 |
| Exchequer grant undrawn | (108,228) | (25,614) |
| Net Exchequer funding | 2,094 | 19,485 |
| Represented by: | | |
| Debtors | | |
| Bank and cash | 16,080 | 41,405 |
| Debit balances: suspense | 751 | 273 |
| | 16,831 | 41,678 |
| Creditors | | |
| Due to State | (8,738) | (19,530) |
| Credit balances: suspense | (5,999) | (2,663) |
| | (14,737) | (22,193) |
| | 2,094 | 19,485 |

2.5 State funding account

| | Note | 2019 | 2018 |
|-------------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| | | €000 | €000 |
| Balance at 1 January | | — | — |
| Disbursements from the Vote | | | |
| Estimate provision | Account | 371,298 | |
| Surplus to be surrendered | Account | (110,322) | |
| Net vote | | 260,976 | 321,052 |
| Net programme cost | | (260,976) | (321,052) |
| Balance at 31 December | | — | — |

Note 3 Vote Expenditure

Programme A Superannuation and Retired Allowances

| | | 2019 | | 2018 | |
|-----|---|---|---------|---------|---------|
| | | Estimate provision | Outturn | Outturn | |
| | | €000 | €000 | €000 | |
| A.1 | Superannuation allowances, compensation allowances, pensions and certain children's allowances | <i>Original</i> 441,664 <i>Supplementary</i> (8,431) | 433,233 | 429,927 | 403,005 |
| A.2 | Payments under the contributory pensions schemes for spouses and children of civil servants, members of the judiciary and court officers | <i>Original</i> 42,500 <i>Supplementary</i> 116 | 42,616 | 42,912 | 42,327 |
| A.3 | Ex-gratia pensions for widows and children of civil servants, members of judiciary and court officers | <i>Original</i> 370 <i>Supplementary</i> (37) | 333 | 303 | 352 |
| A.4 | Additional allowances and gratuities in respect of established officers and payments in respect of transferred service | <i>Original</i> 101,600 <i>Supplementary</i> 14,095 | 115,695 | 103,406 | 104,865 |
| A.5 | Pensions, allowances and gratuities in respect of unestablished officers and their spouses and children and other pensions and payments in respect of transferred service | <i>Original</i> 22,500 <i>Supplementary</i> (675) | 21,825 | 21,297 | 22,005 |
| A.6 | Injury grants and medical fees | <i>Original</i> 385 <i>Supplementary</i> (2) | 383 | 375 | 325 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| A.7 | Pension related fees and other expenses | | | | |
| | | <i>Original</i> | 426 | | |
| | | <i>Supplementary</i> | <u>(65)</u> | | |
| | | | | 361 | 237 |
| A.8 | Payments in respect of liability under Chapter 2C of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 | | | 400 | 145 |
| A.9 | Pension liabilities of former public services bodies payable under statute | | | 55 | 54 |
| | | | | <u>614,901</u> | <u>598,656</u> |
| | | | | | <u>573,180</u> |

Significant variations

The expenditure outturn varied from the amount originally provided by more than +/- 5% and €100,000 in respect of the following subheads.

A.7 Pension related fees and other expenses

Estimate provision: €426,000, outturn: €237,000

A provision for legal fees remained unused at the 2019 year end resulting in a lower than expected 2019 outturn.

A.8 Payments in respect of liability under Chapter 2C of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997

Estimate provision: €400,000, outturn: €145,000

This Act provides that individuals who became liable for 'chargeable excess' income tax can choose to repay any chargeable excess over a post retirement period of up to 20 years, but the full amount owing must be paid by the pension administrator to the Collector General within three months of the person's retirement. Where this occurs it is shown as a charge under subhead A.8. The shortfall in expenditure of €255,000 relative to the estimate provision of €400,000 was due to less people exercising their right to create a charge to the Vote than expected.

Note 4 Receipts

4.1 Appropriations-in-aid

| | 2019 | | 2018 |
|---|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Estimated | Realised | Realised |
| | €000 | €000 | €000 |
| 1 Receipt from the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 1993 (No. 38 on 1993) in respect of pension liability of staff | | 28,000 | 28,000 |
| 2 Receipts in respect of pension liability of staff on loan, etc. | | 1,703 | 933 |
| 3 Contributions to spouses' and children's pension scheme for civil servants and others | | 18,200 | 17,239 |
| 4 Receipts in respect of the contributory scheme introduced for established civil servants who were appointed on and after 6 April 1995 (Circular 6/95) | | 29,900 | 33,074 |
| 5 Repayment of gratuities, etc. | | 700 | 640 |
| 6 Purchase of notional service | | 5,000 | 5,244 |
| 7 Single Scheme contributions | | | |
| | <i>Original</i> | 155,000 | |
| | <i>Supplementary</i> | 5,000 | |
| | | 160,000 | 252,550 |
| 8 Miscellaneous | | 100 | — |
| Total | | 243,603 | 337,680 |
| | | | 252,128 |

Significant variations

Overall, appropriations-in-aid were €94.077 million more than the original estimate. Explanations for variances are set out below:

2 Receipts in respect of pension liability of staff on loan, etc.

Estimate: €1.703 million, realised: €933,000

The decrease of €800,000 was due to a decrease in the level of receipts of staff on loan. It is difficult to predict the number of staff on loan year to year.

3 Contributions to spouses' and children's pension scheme for civil servants and others

Estimate: €18.2 million, realised: €17.239 million

The decrease of €1 million was due to lower than expected contributions to spouses' and children's pension scheme for civil servants and others. This can fluctuate from year to year.

4 Receipts in respect of the contributory scheme introduced for established civil servants who were appointed on and after 6 April 1995 (Circular 6/95)

Estimate: €29.9 million, realised: €33.074 million

The increase of €3.2 million was due to an underestimation of the level of receipts from the cohort of civil servants appointed on or after 6 April 1995 and before 1 January 2013 and are members of the established scheme. The number in this cohort will decrease as retirements occur. However, the level of contributions is affected by changes in the salary levels of this cohort which may increase in line with career progression.

7 Single Scheme contributions

Estimate: €155 million, realised: €252.5 million

The increase of €97.5 million was largely due to an increased level of receipts in the final months of the year. The amount credited to the Vote in respect to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme represents contributions made by all new public servants who commence employment after 1 January 2013. While there is central oversight of total public service employee numbers, the number of new entrants, the timing of their engagement and the grade and pay level at which they are engaged in individual sectors in any year is managed in those sectors and is subject to wide variation. Due to the nature of recruitment and retirement processes across the public service, a level of variation in estimates versus receipts will remain.

Note 5 Staffing and Remuneration

5.1 Staff

All staff employed in the administration and payment of superannuation charged to this Vote are paid from Vote 18 – National Shared Services Office. Staff engaged on the formulation of superannuation policy are charged to Vote 11 – Office of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

5.2 Pensioners

A breakdown of the total numbers of pensioners in payment by heading at year end is set out below.

| | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| A.1 Superannuation allowances, compensation allowances, pensions and certain children's allowances | 18,858 | 17,684 |
| A.2 Payments under the contributory pensions schemes for spouses and children of civil servants, members of the judiciary and court officers | 2,940 | 2,888 |
| A.3 Ex-gratia pensions for widows and children of civil servants, members of the judiciary and court offices | 20 | 24 |
| A.5 Pensions, allowances and gratuities in respect of unestablished officers and their spouses and children and other pensions and payments in respect of transferred service | 4,546 | 4,594 |
| A.9 Pension liabilities of former public service bodies payable under statute | 3 | 3 |
| | 26,367 | 25,193 |

5.3 Pension payment agency services

The Department (Vote 12) makes pension payments, on an agency basis, to former staff of the bodies detailed below.

| Name of body | Number of pensioners | Gross value (per annum) €m |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Vocational Education Committee/Institute of Technology/ Educational Training Board pensions | 10,548 | 293 |
| FÁS/SOLAS pensions | 1,548 | 31 |

The amounts paid are charged to the Vote for Education and Skills (Vote 26).

5.4 Overpayments of pensions

Overpayments at year end were €161,410 (37 cases), (2018: €146,571 (37 cases)). All of these cases have recoupment plans in place.

Note 6 Miscellaneous

6.1 Abatement of pensions

The Pensions (Abatement) Act 1965 and the Public Service (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012 provides that the pensions of civil servants who are retained or re-employed after normal retirement age are abated as necessary to ensure that their total pay in the period of retention or re-employment does not exceed the remuneration which they would have received if they had remained in the posts they had held on the last day of their reckonable service. The legislation also provides that such abatements may be waived at the discretion of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

In 2019, the pensions of 90 retired civil servants were fully or partially abated. The total amount abated in 2019 was €855,410.

6.2 Compensation and legal costs

There were no payments in 2019 or 2018 in respect of claims taken against the Department.