

## **Vote 18 Office of the Ombudsman**

---

## Introduction

As Accounting Officer for Vote 18, I am required each year 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 2011 for the salaries and expenses of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Standards in Public Office Commission, the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the sums granted by Dáil Éireann under the Appropriation Act 2011, including the amount that could be used as appropriations-in-aid of expenditure for the year.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles and notes 1 to 5 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

Along with the Account, I have submitted a statement in the standard format on the system of internal financial control that operates in the Office of the Ombudsman. The actions that have been taken, or that are planned, to enhance the Office's system of internal financial controls include the following:

The Office uses the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS), inter alia, for identifying staff training needs, including financial management and accounting skills. The required training is then organised or sourced as appropriate.

Risk management is increasingly integral to the Office's strategic and business processes. This is brought about through risk registers, strategic and business plans and individual PMDS targets.

The Office has in place modern computer desktop hardware and software, which is available to all staff. Servers, networks and systems, back-up and firewall facilities are also in place. This system was reviewed in 2010 and it is functioning effectively.

The evaluation of internal controls is performed by the Office's internal auditor and this process is supported by an Audit Committee which includes three external members. The Committee, in developing its audit plans, also has regard to any comments the Comptroller and Auditor General may make arising from an audit of the Appropriation Account.

A merger with the Office of the Commission for Public Service Appointments and the Office of the Ombudsman has been agreed following approval to proceed having been received from the Department of Finance. Legislative changes are required to formally complete the merger. Certain aspects of the merger have proceeded in advance of the legislation. The two organisations agreed a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2010 dealing with administrative matters to provide a flexible basis for both offices. The areas covered in the Memorandum are personnel matters relating to CPSA staff, finance matters and management of budgets, training and associated payments and general staff matters.

**Bernadette McNally**  
Accounting Officer  
Office of the Ombudsman  
12 July 2012

## **Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General**

I have audited the Appropriation Account of Vote 18: Office of the Ombudsman for 2011 under Section 3 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993. The Account has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles. The duties of the Accounting Officer and of the Comptroller and Auditor General in relation to the Appropriation Accounts, and the basis of the audit opinion, are set out in Part 1 to this volume.

I have obtained all the information and explanations I considered necessary for the purposes of my audit. In my opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Office of the Ombudsman. The Appropriation Account is in agreement with the books of account.

In my opinion, the Appropriation Account properly presents the receipts and expenditure of the Vote for the year ended 31 December 2011.

**Seamus McCarthy**  
Comptroller and Auditor General  
20 July 2012

## Vote 18 Office of the Ombudsman Appropriation Account 2011

Service	2011 Estimate provision  €000	2011 Outturn  €000	2010 Outturn  €000
<b>Programme expenditure</b>			
A Ombudsman function	4,769	4,432	4,537
B Standards in Public Office Commission	1,044	861	862
C Office of the Information Commissioner/ Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information	1,659	1,500	1,525
<b>Gross expenditure</b>	<b>7,472</b>	<b>6,793</b>	<b>6,924</b>
<b>Deduct</b>			
D. Appropriations-in-aid	<b>393</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>7,079</b>	<b>6,425</b>	<b>6,552</b>
<b>Surplus to be surrendered</b>		<b>€653,534</b>	<b>€1,087,311</b>

Administration	2011 Estimate provision  €000	2011 Outturn  €000	2010 Outturn  €000
(i) Salaries, wages and allowances	5,909	5,535	5,556
(ii) Travel and subsistence	53	34	42
(iii) Training and development and incidental expenses	490	268	398
(iv) Postal and telecommunications services	86	67	69
(v) Office equipment and external IT services	199	179	201
(vi) Office premises expenses	238	205	153
(vii) Consultancy services and value for money and policy reviews	115	50	162
(viii) Legal fees	382	455	343
	<b>7,472</b>	<b>6,793</b>	<b>6,924</b>

## Notes to the Appropriation Account

### 1 Operating Cost Statement 2011

	Note	€000	2011 €000	2010 €000
Pay			5,535	5,556
Non pay			1,258	1,368
<b>Gross expenditure</b>			<u>6,793</u>	<u>6,924</u>
Deduct				
<b>Appropriations-in-aid</b>			368	372
<b>Net expenditure</b>			<u>6,425</u>	<u>6,552</u>
<b>Changes in capital assets</b>				
Purchases cash		(72)		
Depreciation		82	10	42
<b>Changes in net current assets</b>				
Increase in closing accruals		115		
Decrease in stock		1		
			116	(49)
<b>Direct expenditure</b>			<u>6,551</u>	<u>6,545</u>
Net allied services expenditure	1.1		1,691	1,576
<b>Total operating cost</b>			<u><u>8,242</u></u>	<u><u>8,121</u></u>

#### 1.1 Net Allied Services

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following estimated amounts in relation to Vote 18 borne elsewhere.

Vote		2011 €000	2010 €000
6	Finance	74	69 <sup>1</sup>
7	Superannuation and Retired Allowances	490	349
10	Office of Public Works	1,127	1,158
		<u>1,691</u>	<u>1,576</u>

<sup>1</sup>Figure was omitted in error in 2010.

**2 Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2011**

	Note	2011 €000	2010 €000
<b>Capital assets</b>	2.1	204	214
<b>Current assets</b>			
Bank and cash	2.2	290	154
Stocks	2.3	17	18
Prepayments		79	157
Other debit balances		16	19
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>402</b>	<b>348</b>
<b>Less current liabilities</b>			
Accrued expenses		58	21
Other credit balances	2.4	259	198
Net liability to the Exchequer	2.5	47	(25)
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>364</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>242</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
<b>State funding account</b>		<b>242</b>	<b>368</b>

**2.1 Statement of Capital Assets**

	Office equipment €000	Furniture and fittings €000	Total €000
<b>Gross assets</b>			
Cost or valuation at 1 January 2011	950	477	1,427
Prior year adjustment <sup>1</sup>	(86)	—	(86)
Additions	46	26	72
Disposals	(35)	—	(35)
Cost or valuation at 31 December 2011	875	503	1,378
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>			
Opening balance at 1 January 2011	831	382	1,213
Prior year adjustment <sup>1</sup>	(86)	—	(86)
Depreciation for the year	58	24	82
Depreciation on disposals	(35)	—	(35)
Cumulative depreciation at 31 December 2011	768	406	1,174
<b>Net assets at 31 December 2011</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Net assets at 31 December 2010</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>214</b>

<sup>1</sup>Following a review of the asset register, a prior year adjustment arose in respect of certain asset values and related depreciation.

**2.2 Bank and Cash**

at 31 December	2011 €000	2010 €000
PMG balance and cash	290	151
Other cash balances	—	3
	290	154

**2.3 Stocks**

at 31 December	2011 €000	2010 €000
Stationery	4	6
IT consumables	13	12
	17	18

**2.4 Other Credit Balances**

at 31 December

2011	2010
€000	€000

**Amount due to the State**

Income Tax	100	72
Pay Related Social Insurance	26	36
Professional Services Withholding Tax	3	18
Value Added Tax	1	—
Pension contributions	11	11
	<u>141</u>	<u>137</u>
Payroll deductions held in suspense	37	34
Other credit suspense items	81	27
	<u>259</u>	<u>198</u>

**2.5 Net Liability to the Exchequer**

at 31 December

2011	2010
€000	€000

Surplus to be surrendered	654	1,087
Exchequer grant undrawn	(607)	(1,112)
Net liability to the Exchequer	<u>47</u>	<u>(25)</u>

**Represented by:****Debtors**

Bank and cash	290	154
Debit balances: suspense	16	19
	<u>306</u>	<u>173</u>

**Creditors**

Due to State	(141)	(137)
Credit balances: suspense	(118)	(61)
	<u>(259)</u>	<u>(198)</u>

47	(25)
----	------



### 3 Programme Expenditure

		2011 Estimated €000	2011 Outturn €000	2010 Outturn €000
<b>A</b>	<b>Ombudsman function</b>			
A.1	Administration - pay	4,124	4,006	3,938
A.2	Administration - non pay	645	426	599
		<u>4,769</u>	<u>4,432</u>	<u>4,537</u>
<b>B</b>	<b>Standards in Public Office Commission</b>			
B.1	Administration - pay	626	612	584
B.2	Administration - non pay	418	249	278
		<u>1,044</u>	<u>861</u>	<u>862</u>
<b>C</b>	<b>Office of the Information Commissioner/ Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information</b>			
C.1	Administration - pay	1,159	917	1,034
C.2	Administration - non pay	500	583	491
		<u>1,659</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,525</u>

#### Explanation of significant variations

An explanation is provided below in the case of each heading where the outturn varied from the amount provided by more than €100,000 and by more than 25%.

Heading	Less/(more) than provided €000	Explanation
A.2	219	Further to an exercise carried out by the National Procurement Service, savings were achieved on both headings in respect of heat, light and fuel costs. Expenditure in respect of telecoms was also down following a tender for same. It can be difficult to predict the costs associated with legal advice with any degree of accuracy. Legal fees were lower than expected in 2011.
B.2	169	

In addition, expenditure on travel and subsistence charged to A.2 was lower than anticipated and the spend on consultancy charged to B.2 fell below the expected level.

## 4 Receipts

### 4.1 Appropriations-in-aid

	2011 Estimated €000	2011 Realised €000	2010 Realised €000
1. Miscellaneous	5	6	9
2. Receipts from pension-related deduction on public service remuneration	388	362	363
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>372</b>

#### Explanation of significant variations

An explanation is provided below in the case of each heading where the outturn varied from the amount provided by more than €100,000 and by more than 5%. However, no outturn on this Vote met these criteria in 2011.

### 4.2 Extra receipts payable to the Exchequer

A receipt totalling €7,413 was transferred to the Exchequer during the year. This amount was in respect of legal costs which were recovered.

## 5 Employee Numbers and Pay

	2011	2010
<b>Number of staff at year end</b> (full time equivalents)	87	88
	<b>2011 €000</b>	<b>2010 €000</b>
Pay	5,256	5,273
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	19	29
Overtime	33	41
Employer's PRSI	227	213
<b>Total pay</b>	<b>5,535</b>	<b>5,556</b>

### 5.1 Allowances and overtime payments

	Number of recipients	Recipients of €10,000 or more	Maximum individual payment 2011 €	Maximum individual payment 2010 €
Higher, special or additional duties	3	1	10,493	11,131
Overtime and extra attendance	20	2	10,487	11,793

**Note:** Certain individuals received extra remuneration in more than one category.

### 5.2 Performance and Merit Payments

A sum of €8,446 was spent on merit awards (including 11 individual awards ranging from €400 to €1,000).