

## **Appropriation Account 2021**

---

### **Vote 17**

### **Public Appointments Service**

---

## **Introduction**

As Accounting Officer for Vote 17, 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 2021 for the salaries and expenses of the Public Appointments Service.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the sums

- (a) granted by Dáil Éireann under the Appropriation Act 2021, including the amount that could be used as appropriations-in-aid of expenditure for the year, and
- (b) provided for capital supply services in 2021 out of unspent 2020 appropriations, under the deferred surrender arrangements established by section 91 of the Finance Act 2004.

A surplus of €1.337 million is liable for surrender to the Exchequer.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles and notes 1 to 5 form part of the account.

### ***Role of the Board***

The Public Appointments Service was established under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004. It provides for a Chief Executive of the Service, and the appointment of a Board, consisting of eight external members and the Chief Executive in an ex officio basis.

The statutory functions of the Board are more advisory in nature than the traditional functions of State boards and essentially relate to giving advice or guidance to the Chief Executive. In general, they include

- representing the interests of the public service and ensuring that all appropriate service standards are being achieved
- considering and approving plans and strategic objectives put forward by the Chief Executive
- monitoring and advising the Public Appointments Service in the performance of its functions
- ensuring that appropriate review procedures are developed and implemented in relation to recruitment and promotion competitions, having regard to any relevant codes of practice issued by the Commission for Public Service Appointments
- publishing the annual report of the Public Appointments Service.

## **Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles**

The standard accounting policies and principles for the production of appropriation accounts, as set out by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in circulars 1 and 9 of 2022, 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 Public Appointments Service.

This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to me and my other obligations as Head of the Office. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions 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.

### ***Shared services***

I have fulfilled my responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the service management agreement between the Public Appointments Service and the National Shared Services Office for the provision of shared services (e.g. human resources and payroll).

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 the Public Appointments Service.

### ***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 Public Appointments Service
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems

- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines.

***Internal audit and Audit Committee***

I confirm that the Public Appointments Service 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 Public Appointments Service 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.

***Non-compliance with procurement rules***

I confirm that the Public Appointments Service ensures that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines. The Public Appointments Service has provided details of two non-competitive contracts in the annual return in respect of circular 40 of 2002 to the Comptroller and Auditor General and to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

***Risk and control framework***

The Office 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 Office 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 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 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 Office has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures (discussed further in the next section). The Office'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 Public Appointments Service 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 2021 that require disclosure in the appropriation account.

***Covid-19 control issues***

Senior management completed a review of the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and remote working on the Office's systems of internal control for 2021. No significant gaps, weaknesses or areas of non-compliance were noted. A small number of procedures and internal controls were adapted to ensure they continue to function effectively in a remote working environment.

**Shirley Comerford**  
Accounting Officer  
Public Appointments Service

31 March 2022

## **Comptroller and Auditor General**

### **Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas**

#### **Vote 17 Public Appointments Service**

##### **Opinion on the appropriation account**

I have audited the appropriation account for Vote 17 Public Appointments Service for the year ended 31 December 2021 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 17 Public Appointments Service for the year ended 31 December 2021, 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 appendix to this report. I am independent of the Public Appointments Service 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 appendix to this report.

I have nothing to report in that regard.

**Seamus McCarthy**

Comptroller and Auditor General

12 September 2022

## Appendix to the report

### Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer

The Accounting Officer is responsible for

- the preparation of the appropriation account in accordance with Section 22 of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866
- ensuring the appropriation account complies with the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's *Public Financial Procedures*, and with other directions of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform
- ensuring the regularity of transactions, and
- implementing such internal control as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the appropriation account free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under section 3 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 to audit the appropriation account and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas stating whether, in my opinion, the account properly presents the receipts and expenditure related to the vote.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the appropriation account.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- I assess whether the accounting provisions of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's *Public Financial Procedures* have been complied with.

I communicate with the Accounting Officer regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

I report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- the accounting records were not sufficient to permit the appropriation account to be readily and properly audited, or
- the appropriation account is not in agreement with the accounting records.

### Reporting on the statement on internal financial control

My opinion on the appropriation account does not cover the Accounting Officer's statement on internal financial control, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the appropriation account, I am required under the ISAs to read the statement on internal financial control and, in doing so, consider whether the information contained therein is materially inconsistent with the appropriation account or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement, I am required to report that fact.

### Reporting on other matters

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit. I am required to report under section 3 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 if I identify any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

I am also required under the 1993 Act to prepare, in each year, a report on such matters arising from my audits of the appropriation accounts as I consider appropriate. In such cases, the certificates of opinion on the relevant appropriation accounts refer to the relevant chapter(s) in my annual *Report on the Accounts of the Public Services*.

## Vote 17 Public Appointments Service

### Appropriation Account 2021

		2021	2020
		Estimate provision	Outturn
	€000	€000	€000
<b>Programme expenditure</b>			
A Civil and public service – redeployment/recruitment/selection			
	<i>Estimate provision</i>	16,790	
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	200	
	<i>Supplementary</i>	3,665	
		20,655	19,525
<b>Gross expenditure</b>		<b>20,655</b>	<b>19,525</b>
<i>Deduct</i>			
B Appropriations-in-aid		<b>154</b>	<b>361</b>
<b>Net expenditure</b>			
	<i>Estimate provision</i>	16,636	
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	200	
	<i>Supplementary</i>	3,665	
		<b>20,501</b>	<b>19,164</b>
			<b>13,940</b>
			<b>13,940</b>

### Surplus

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

	2021	2020
	€	€
Surplus	1,336,709	2,813,439
Deferred surrender	—	(200,000)
<b>Surplus to be surrendered</b>	<b>1,336,709</b>	<b>2,613,439</b>

**Shirley Comerford**  
Accounting Officer  
Public Appointments Service

31 March 2022



## Notes to the Appropriation Account

### Note 1 Operating Cost Statement 2021

		2021	2020
	€000	€000	€000
Pay		10,011	8,912
Non pay		9,514	5,028
<b>Gross expenditure</b>		<b>19,525</b>	<b>13,940</b>
<i>Deduct</i>			
<b>Appropriations-in-aid</b>		361	312
<b>Net expenditure</b>		<b>19,164</b>	<b>13,628</b>
<b>Changes in capital assets</b>			
Purchases cash	(54)		
Depreciation	175	121	(73)
<b>Changes in net current assets</b>			
Decrease in closing accruals	(239)		
Decrease in stock	1	(238)	(92)
<b>Direct expenditure</b>		<b>19,047</b>	<b>13,463</b>
<b>Expenditure borne elsewhere</b>			
Net allied services expenditure (note 1.1)		4,023	3,849
<b>Net programme cost</b>		<b>23,070</b>	<b>17,312</b>

#### 1.1 Net allied services expenditure

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following estimated amounts in relation to Vote 17 borne elsewhere.

		2021	2020
		€000	€000
Vote 9	Office of the Revenue Commissioners	45	45
Vote 12	Superannuation and Retired Allowances	1,020	954
Vote 13	Office of Public Works	2,908	2,799
Vote 18	National Shared Services Office	21	22
Vote 43	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer	29	29
		<b>4,023</b>	<b>3,849</b>

## Note 2 Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €000	2020 €000
<b>Capital assets</b>	2.1	436	556
<b>Current assets</b>			
Bank and cash	2.2	400	719
Stocks	2.3	25	26
Prepayments	2.4	631	432
Accrued income		41	47
Other debit balances	2.5	1,215	1,895
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>2,312</b>	<b>3,119</b>
<b>Less current liabilities</b>			
Accrued expenses	2.6	170	215
Other credit balances	2.7	451	321
Net Exchequer funding	2.8	1,164	2,293
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>1,785</b>	<b>2,829</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>527</b>	<b>290</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>963</b>	<b>846</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
<b>State funding account</b>	2.9	<b>963</b>	<b>846</b>

**2.1 Capital assets**

	Office and IT equipment €000	Furniture and fittings €000	Leasehold improvement €000	Total €000
<b>Gross assets</b>				
Cost or valuation at 1 January 2021	7,074	375	691	8,140
Additions	54	—	—	54
Disposals	(446)	—	(691)	(1,137)
Cost or valuation at 31 December 2021	6,682	375	—	7,057
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>				
Opening balance at 1 January 2021	6,727	165	691	7,583
Depreciation for the year	146	29	—	175
Depreciation on disposals	(446)	—	(691)	(1,137)
Cumulative depreciation at 31 December 2021	6,427	194	—	6,621
<b>Net assets at 31 December 2021</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>436</b>
Net assets at 31 December 2020	346	210	—	556

**2.2 Bank and cash**

at 31 December	2021 €000	2020 €000
PMG balances	356	711
Commercial bank account balance	43	7
Petty cash	1	1
	<b>400</b>	<b>719</b>

**2.3 Stocks**

at 31 December	2021 €000	2020 €000
Stationery	11	11
IT consumables	14	15
	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>

**2.4 Prepayments**

at 31 December	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
IT services and supports	405	342
Specific programme costs	210	77
Administration expenses	16	13
	<b>631</b>	<b>432</b>

**2.5 Other debit balances**

at 31 December	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
Salary suspense	212	39
Advances to OPW	946	1,800
Recoupable travel pass scheme	6	21
Other debit suspense items	51	35
	<b>1,215</b>	<b>1,895</b>

**2.6 Accrued expenses**

at 31 December	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
IT services and supports	116	133
Specific programme costs	32	44
Administration expenses	22	38
	<b>170</b>	<b>215</b>

**2.7 Other credit balances**

at 31 December	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
<b>Amounts due to the State</b>		
Income tax	202	181
Pay related social insurance	113	96
Professional services withholding tax	47	28
Value added tax	24	15
Local property tax	—	1
	<b>386</b>	<b>321</b>
Payroll deductions held in suspense	65	—
	<b>451</b>	<b>321</b>

**2.8 Net Exchequer funding**

at 31 December	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
Surplus to be surrendered	1,337	2,613
Deferred surrender	—	200
Exchequer grant undrawn	(173)	(520)
<b>Net Exchequer funding</b>	<b>1,164</b>	<b>2,293</b>

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

Bank and cash	400	719
Debit balances: suspense	1,215	1,895
	<u>1,615</u>	<u>2,614</u>

**Creditors**

Due to the State	(386)	(321)
Credit balances: suspense	(65)	—
	<u>(451)</u>	<u>(321)</u>
	<u><b>1,164</b></u>	<u><b>2,293</b></u>

**2.9 State funding account**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
		<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
Balance at 1 January		846	681
Disbursements from the Vote			
Estimate provision	Account	20,501	
Surplus to be surrendered	Account	<u>(1,337)</u>	
Net vote		19,164	13,628
Expenditure (cash) borne elsewhere	1.1	4,023	3,849
Net programme cost	1	<u>(23,070)</u>	<u>(17,312)</u>
<b>Balance at 31 December</b>		<u><b>963</b></u>	<u><b>846</b></u>

**2.10 Commitments**

<b>Global commitments</b>		
at 31 December	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
Procurement of goods and services	115	232
Capital projects	988	4,612
<b>Total of legally enforceable commitments</b>	<b>1,103</b>	<b>4,844</b>

### Note 3 Vote Expenditure

#### Analysis of administration expenditure

All of the allocation for Vote 17 Public Appointments Service is classified as administration expenditure applied towards a single programme: civil and public service – redeployment/recruitment/selection.

		<b>2021</b>		<b>2020</b>
		<b>Estimate provision</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
		<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
i	Salaries, wages and allowances			
	<i>Original</i>	9,383		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>800</u>		
		10,183	10,011	8,912
ii	Travel and subsistence	30	57	42
iii	Training and development and incidental expenses	381	458	348
iv	Postal and telecommunications services	100	67	88
v	Office equipment and external IT services			
	<i>Estimate provision</i>	1,465		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	<u>200</u>		
		1,665	1,472	1,231
vi	Office premises expenses			
	<i>Original</i>	1,949		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>2,865</u>		
		4,814	3,841	465
vii	Recruitment costs – research and corporate governance	80	100	53
viii	Recruitment costs – advertising and testing	1,447	1,450	1,575
ix	Recruitment costs – interview boards	1,955	2,069	1,226
		<b>20,655</b>	<b>19,525</b>	<b>13,940</b>

**Significant variations**

The following outlines an analysis of the administration expenditure of the Vote and outlines the reasons for significant variations (+/- 25% and €100,000).

**vi    Office premises expenses**

*Estimate provision €1.95 million; outturn €4.81 million*

The original estimate provision for office premises expenses included a capital allocation of €1.7 million for the upgrade of Chapter House. Delays in the commencement of planned upgrade works during 2020, with associated underspend against the 2020 capital allocation, led to an accelerated programme of works and costs during 2021. The supplementary estimate for 2021 increased the capital allocation for this project by €2.865 million to cover the outstanding contract costs in full in the year.



## Note 4 Receipts

### 4.1 Appropriations-in-aid

		2021		2020
		Estimated	Realised	Realised
		€000	€000	€000
1	Miscellaneous	25	178	153
2	Receipts from additional superannuation contributions on public service remuneration	129	183	159
<b>Total</b>		<b>154</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>312</b>

### Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in appropriations-in-aid (+/- 5% and €100,000). Overall, appropriations-in-aid were €207,000 more than the estimate. Explanations for significant variances are set out below.

#### 1 Miscellaneous

*Estimate €25,000; realised €178,000*

The increase was primarily due to reimbursement by clients of payments made on their behalf by the Public Appointments Service in 2020 falling into 2021. Also included in this amount was refund from a supplier for incorrect VAT charges in previous years.

## Note 5 Staffing and Remuneration

### 5.1 Employee numbers

Full time equivalents	2021	2020
Number of staff at year end	<u>220</u>	<u>207</u>

### 5.2 Pay

	2021	2020
	€000	€000
Pay	9,052	8,047
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	98	107
Overtime	12	20
Employer's PRSI	849	738
<b>Total pay</b>	<u><b>10,011</b></u>	<u><b>8,912</b></u>

### 5.3 Allowances and overtime payments

	Number of recipients	Recipients of €10,000 or more	Highest individual payment	
			2021	2020
			€	€
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	33	1	11,050	10,504
Overtime	24	—	1,733	2,424
Extra remuneration in more than one category	7	1	12,740	12,148

#### 5.4 Other remuneration arrangements

A total of €35,055 was paid as fees to four members of the Board of the Public Appointments Service in 2021 (2020: €35,055).

Member	Status	Sector	Annual fees	
			2021 €	2020 €
Ms Shirley Comerford	Member (Chief Executive)	Civil servant	—	—
Mr Tom Moran	Chairman	Former civil servant	11,970	11,970
Ms Mary Hurley	Member	Civil servant	—	—
Dr Eddie Molloy	Member	Private sector	7,695	7,695
Ms Anne Marie Taylor	Member	Private sector	7,695	7,695
Ms Mary Connaughton	Member	Private sector	7,695	7,695
Mr John O'Callaghan	Member	Civil servant	—	—
Mr David Cagney	Member	Civil servant	—	—
Ms Anne O'Connor	Member	Public servant	—	—
<b>Total</b>			<b>35,055</b>	<b>35,055</b>

#### 5.5 Payroll overpayments

	Number of recipients	2021 €	2020 €
Overpayments	5	4,966	6,393
Recovery plans in place	3	1,774	2,921

#### 5.6 Salary of Accounting Officer

At 31 December 2021, the Accounting Officer's salary is at the equivalent grade of Assistant Secretary, with an annual gross salary of €164,549. (31 December 2020: €155,908).