

Appropriation Account 2022

Vote 37

Social Protection

Introduction

As Accounting Officer for Vote 37, 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 2022 for the salaries and expenses of the Office of the Minister for Social Protection, for certain services administered by that Office, for payments to the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) and for certain grants.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the sums

- granted by Dáil Éireann under the Appropriation Act 2022, including the amount that could be used as appropriations-in-aid of expenditure for the year and
- provided for capital supply services in 2022 out of unspent 2021 appropriations, under the deferred surrender arrangements established by section 91 of the Finance Act 2004.

A surplus of €150.3 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.

Provision of agency services

The Department continues to act as a paying agent of the Department of Finance for the purpose of the discharge of the approved liabilities of the Waterford Crystal pensioners' lump sum payments and Waterford Crystal ongoing pension payments, under section 48B of the Pensions Act 1990 as inserted by section 4 of the Social Welfare and Pensions (No.2) Act 2014. Funding is drawn down by the Department from the Central Fund of the Exchequer and transferred to the National Shared Services Office who have been processing the individual pension payments from October 2017. The amounts paid are reported by the Department of Finance in the Finance Accounts.

During 2022 the Department acted as a paying agent for the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) with regard to the Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP). The Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2022 provides that these payments are funded from the Vote for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and are accounted for in the appropriation account for that Vote.

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, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform in circular 22 of 2022, have been applied in the preparation of the account with the exception of the following.

Recovery of overpayments

Recovery of debt in respect of general/income-support scheme overpayments is brought to account as follows.

- Cash and deduction recoveries received are brought to account on the date they are matched against the relevant debt holder. Unmatched recovery amounts are held in suspense and are brought to account as income with corresponding reduction in debt on their identification. As Vote 37 is the dominant recipient of overpayments receipts, unmatched receipts are held in a Vote 37 suspense account pending resolution and subsequent posting to Vote 37 or SIF as appropriate.
- Cash and deduction recoveries in respect of the previous accounting years are treated as income of the current accounting year. Cash and deduction recoveries in respect of the current accounting year are netted off against the expenditure for the current accounting year.

Recognition of payments

Payments consist of those sums which come in the course of payment during the year. Sums are deemed to have come in the course of payment where the liability has been incurred, payment is due and the instruction for the payment (cheque or electronic funds transfer) has been effected on the relevant payment system. Cash welfare payments made through An Post are recognised upon disbursement. Where the normal payment due date falls on a public holiday, it may be necessary to issue payments early. At year-end, payments issued early by electronic funds transfer by banks or early encashment by customers in post offices, which refer to the subsequent year, are normally recognised as prepayments. Under new banking arrangements implemented during 2020, the Department issues funds to the bank one day in advance of customer payments. This process continued in 2022 and these funding payments are also included in scheme prepayments.

Depreciation

Depreciation calculated annually is charged in full in the year of acquisition/commission. No depreciation is charged in the year of disposal.

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, 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 this Department and the National Shared Services Office for the provision of human resources 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 the 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 and Risk 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.

Control of capital assets

A multi-year plan to address asset identification - including write offs and transfers, asset tagging and periodic inventories - which began in 2019, was continued in 2022.

The Department's review of the asset registers during 2022 resulted in the identification of IT software assets on the register that had become obsolete, several IT hardware assets which had been replaced and furniture and fittings assets which were obsolete. Approximately €96 million of assets were written off in 2022. The net book value of these assets was nil at 31 December 2022. Ongoing data cleansing of the asset register will continue to ensure assets can be traced from the asset register back to a physical inventory or equivalent.

The Department produced tags for assets acquired in 2014 and attached them to relevant assets in Quarter 2 2023. The net book value of assets remaining to be tagged is negligible.

Debt reconciliations

The Department's debt and receipts accounting system (DRAS) allows for the automatic recording and posting of debt recovered in its Debt Recovery Units, INTREO offices, receiving bank accounts and also by way of deduction from the Department's payments to customers.

Unmatched amounts

Overpaid customers sometimes make repayments with insufficient details to associate the repayments with their outstanding debt. As a result, in some cases, the Department is constrained from identifying and matching these amounts to the customer. Unmatched amounts may also include receipts that are greater than the existing debt recorded on the system or balances due for refund to customers who have overpaid their debt. In 2022 DRAS processed over €52.4 million (2021: €52.1 million) in customer overpayment cash recoveries excluding deductions. As at 31 December 2022, the total amount recorded on the Department's accounting system for unmatched overpayment cash receipts is €4.2 million (2021: €3.8 million).

New processes have commenced to bring the unmatched legacy and future overpayment receipts to account on a permanent basis.

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

Internal audit and Audit and Risk 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 and Risk Committee. I have put procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

Procurement

I confirm that the Department 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 Department has provided details of 95 non-competitive contracts in the annual return in respect of circular 40/2002 to the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform.

Non-compliance with procurement rules

The Department complied with the guidelines with the exception of 87 contracts (in excess of €25,000), totalling expenditure of €48,888,580 (ex. VAT) in 2022 as set out below

- To facilitate the continuation of employment activation services to the Department two contract extensions were entered into with a total spend of €20,065,177. A procurement exercise was completed for Intreo Partners National Employments Services and new contracts are in place since October 2022.
- Twenty-five service provider contracts were entered into, with a total spend of €14,678,016 in 2022 to deliver local employment services across the State. A procurement exercise was completed for the new Intreo Partners Local Area Employment Service. All new contracts are now in place since August 2022.
- There were 23 service provider contracts with a total spend of €8,323,325 in 2022 to deliver the EmployAbility Service across the State. The Department is reviewing how such services should be procured and delivered on an ongoing basis in line with public procurement procedures. A procurement exercise for these services is currently being scoped and it is expected that the request for tenders will issue in 2023.
- There were 32 service provider contracts with a total spend of €2,594,602 in 2022 to deliver the Jobs Clubs service across the State. A procurement exercise was completed for the new Intreo Partners Local Area Employment Service. All new contracts are now in place since August 2022.
- While waiting on the availability of an Office of Government Procurement (OGP) framework for interpretation, the Department sought a request for quotes and entered into a contract. From March 2022 there was an unprecedented demand for Ukrainian interpreters which led to expenditure of €2,687,964. The OGP framework became available in December 2022 and the Department commenced a new interpretation contract in February 2023.
- In November 2022, the Department was informed by the OGP that there was no framework for electricity supply available to the Department and the current contract had expired. Due to the urgent requirement to maintain business operations the Department was directed by the OGP to enter into a contract with the existing supplier. As a result, there was a spend of €408,403 incurred in 2022.
- To meet the demand and ensure compatibility, docking stations were purchased to match laptops purchased under a contract awarded in 2020. In 2022, expenditure of €72,370 was incurred.
- On urgency grounds, a contract was awarded in 2021 without a procurement competition to further enhance the Department's protection against cybercrime. It was deemed necessary for the service to be extended in 2022 as a contract modification while waiting for an open procurement process to be undertaken. Expenditure of €31,337 was incurred in 2022.
- One contract for ICT training was awarded in 2022 following a request for quotes. The €25,000 procurement threshold was inadvertently exceeded and expenditure of €27,386 was incurred. A new contract was awarded in Q3 2022 following an open procurement process.

The above contracts have been included in the 2022 40/2002 annual return referenced under procurement above.

In addition, expenditure of €870,217 was incurred in 2022 on three contracts that were listed on the 2020 and 2021 40/2002 annual return that were deemed to be non-compliant.

- A contract for translation listed on the 2020 40/02 return incurred expenditure of €310,596 in 2022. There was a legal challenge to a request for tender issued by the Department and in order to ensure business continuity it was necessary to roll over this contract. A new contract was awarded on 1 January 2023.
- One contract listed on the 2021 40/02 for the provision of education programmes for DSP staff by National College of Ireland was extended to July 2023 to facilitate the delivery of the current suite of accredited education programmes until expiry of the QQI awards in November 2023. Expenditure of €317,492 was incurred in 2022. A new contract was awarded in December 2022.
- The Department was informed by OGP on 26 July 2021 that a new contract for ICT consumables would come into place on 1 August 2021. The new supplier experienced difficulties sourcing some products initially and the lead in time for the new framework did not provide adequate time to facilitate setting up new operational procedures for staff ordering goods from multiple locations. It was necessary to continue with the previous supplier until the issues were resolved. As a result, expenditure of €242,129 was incurred up to Q3 2022.

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 the business area responsible for the risk actions.

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 2022 that require disclosure in the appropriation account.

Covid-19 control issues

Assessments of the impact of Covid-19 were carried out, with the following results.

Total Covid-19 support expenditure during 2022 amounted to €1 billion split between Vote 37 (€840 million) and the SIF (€198 million). Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) and Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) payments were funded by Vote 37 while Pandemic Unemployment Payment expenditure for 2022 was funded by the SIF.

Payments totalling €840 million have been charged to Vote 37 for 2022 – €839 million in relation to EWSS and €638,000 in relation to TWSS.

The Revenue Commissioners administered both the TWSS and the EWSS on behalf of the Department. I rely on letters of assurances received from the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners that the appropriate controls are exercised in relation to the administration and payments made under both schemes.

Public health restrictions in 2020 and 2021 necessitated widespread redeployment of staff within the Department and restrictions on personal movement and interactions and had an extraordinary impact on the labour market leading to an unprecedented increase in unemployment and associated demand for income supports from the Department. In this context, some of the normal control measures that would operate in a standard environment (for example, calling jobseekers to interview in Intreo Centres) had to be curtailed or suspended. The measures taken were appropriate and proportionate both to comply with the public health restrictions and to ensure the Department could deploy staff resources to the priority tasks of processing, paying and maintaining Covid-19 related claims.

Control measures continued to be reinstated or alternative methods were used to the extent possible in 2022 as the need to deploy staff resources to the priority tasks of processing, paying and maintaining Covid-19 related claims diminished. In line with the lifting of public health restrictions in January 2022, in-person engagement with customers recommenced, whether by way of desk interviews or site visits. A total of 549,000 case reviews were carried out in 2022, an increase of almost 127,000 (or 30%) on 2021.

John McKeon

Accounting Officer

Department of Social Protection

24 July 2023

Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Vote 37 Social Protection

Opinion on the appropriation account

I have audited the appropriation account for Vote 37 Social Protection for the year ended 31 December 2022 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 37 Social Protection for the year ended 31 December 2022, and
- has been prepared in the form prescribed by the Minister for Public Expenditure National Development Plan Delivery 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 Department of Social Protection 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.

My report on the accounts of the public services for 2022 includes a number of chapters dealing with matters that relate to Vote 37 Social Protection.

Regularity of social welfare payments

Chapter 13 refers to social welfare payments in excess of entitlement under schemes operated by the Department of Social Protection. I consider the estimated level of irregular welfare payments to be material to Vote 37, as explained in the chapter.

Ex-gratia payment to branch managers

Chapter 14 examines an ex-gratia payment of €1.4 million to managers of social welfare branch offices.

Social welfare overpayments

Chapters 15 and 16 examine the Department of Social Protection's processes to identify social welfare overpayments and to collect the associated overpayment debts.

Non-compliance with procurement rules

The Accounting Officer has disclosed in the statement on internal financial control that material instances of non-compliance with procurement rules occurred in respect of a number of contracts that operated in 2022.

Seamus McCarthy

Comptroller and Auditor General

27 July 2023

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, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform's *Public Financial Procedures*, and with other directions of the Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery 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 appropriation account is 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 appropriation account 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, National Development Plan Delivery 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 audit reports on the relevant appropriation accounts refer to the relevant chapter(s) in my annual *Report on the Accounts of the Public Services*.

Vote 37 Social Protection

Appropriation Account 2022

			2022	2021
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
Programme expenditure				
Social assistance schemes, services, administration and payment to Social Insurance Fund				
Administration				
	<i>Original</i>	598,593		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	1,200		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	21,600		
			621,393	596,105
Pensions				544,707
	<i>Original</i>	1,072,683		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	66,017		
			1,138,700	1,136,457
Working age – income supports				1,083,119
	<i>Original</i>	2,519,409		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	62,989		
			2,582,398	2,526,407
Working age – employment supports				2,354,248
	<i>Original</i>	1,477,118		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(59,314)		
			1,417,804	1,438,992
Illness, disability and carers				5,171,571
	<i>Original</i>	3,401,693		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	239,346		
			3,641,039	3,603,183
Children				3,257,599
	<i>Original</i>	2,555,098		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	268,716		
			2,823,814	2,830,832
Supplementary payments, etc.				2,557,600
	<i>Original</i>	549,124		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	133,161		
			682,285	685,431
Subvention to the Social Insurance Fund			—	577,641
				2,606,030

		2022		2021
		Estimate provision		Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
Gross expenditure				
	<i>Original</i>	12,173,718		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	1,200		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	732,515		
			12,907,433	12,817,407
				18,152,515
<i>Deduct</i>				
Appropriations-in-aid				
	<i>Original</i>	280,570		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	10,515		
			291,085	352,730
				432,977
Net expenditure				
	<i>Original</i>	11,893,148		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	1,200		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	722,000		
			12,616,348	12,464,677
				17,719,538

Surplus

The surplus of the amount provided over the net amount applied is liable for surrender to the Exchequer. Under section 91 of the Finance Act 2004, all or part of any unspent appropriations for capital supply services may be carried over for spending in the following year. €1.39 million of unspent allocations in respect of the capital elements of administration subheads (v) and (vi) was carried forward to 2023.

	2022	2021
	€	€
Surplus	151,670,632	144,880,093
Deferred surrender	(1,390,000)	(1,200,000)
Surplus to be surrendered	150,280,632	143,680,093

John McKeon

Accounting Officer

Department of Social Protection

24 July 2023

Notes to the Appropriation Account

Note 1 Operating Cost Statement 2022

		2022	2021
	€000	€000	€000
Programme cost		12,221,302	17,607,808
Pay		329,354	310,417
Non pay		266,751	234,290
Gross expenditure		12,817,407	18,152,515
<i>Deduct</i>			
Appropriations-in-aid		352,730	432,977
Net expenditure		12,464,677	17,719,538
Changes in capital assets			
Purchases cash	(20,791)		
Depreciation	29,005	8,214	10,787
Changes in net current assets			
Increase in closing accruals	804		
Decrease in inventories	191	995	(783)
Direct expenditure		12,473,886	17,729,542
Expenditure borne elsewhere			
Net allied services expenditure (note 1.1)		110,378	98,351
Notional rents ^a		14,198	14,386
Net programme cost		12,598,462	17,842,279

Note ^a Notional rents relates to Vote 37 and the Social Insurance Fund.

1.1 Net allied services expenditure

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following amounts in relation to Vote 37 borne elsewhere ^a

		2022	2021
		€000	€000
Vote 9	Office of the Revenue Commissioners ^b	580	287
Vote 12	Superannuation and Retired Allowances	95,519	83,572
Vote 13	Office of Public Works	12,479	12,714
Vote 18	National Shared Services Office	693	697
Vote 20	Garda Síochána	9	—
Vote 43	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer	1,031	1,014
Central Fund – ministerial pensions		67	67
		110,378	98,351

Note ^a Excluding Office of Public Works, relates to Vote 37 and Social Insurance Fund.

^b Does not include the costs incurred by Revenue on the administration of Covid-19 schemes on behalf of the Department. The operation of these schemes was fully integrated within Revenue systems.

Note 2 Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2022

	Note	2022 €000	2021 €000
Capital assets	2.1	130,388	138,653
Current assets			
Inventories	2.3	—	191
Prepayments	2.4	64,134	60,580
Social Insurance Fund suspense account ^a		—	229,970
Other debit balances	2.5	208,002	218,388
Total current assets		272,136	509,129
Less current liabilities			
Bank and cash	2.2	171,536	385,384
Accrued expenses	2.6	61,084	56,726
Other credit balances	2.7	35,391	27,656
Net Exchequer funding	2.8	1,075	35,318
Total current liabilities		269,086	505,084
Net current assets		3,050	4,045
Net assets		133,438	142,698
Represented by:			
State funding account	2.9	133,438	142,698

Note ^a Represents advances from Vote 37 to the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) subvention suspense account which were not expended by year end.

2.1 Capital assets

	Furniture and fittings €000	Office equipment €000	Assets under development €000	Total €000
Gross assets				
Cost or valuation at 1 January 2022 ^a	7,317	275,951	22,634	305,902
Adjustment ^b	—	—	(51)	(51)
Additions	—	1,964	18,827	20,791
Write-off ^c	(1,471)	(94,539)	—	(96,010)
Transfers	—	22,799	(22,799)	—
Cost or valuation at 31 December 2022 ^a	5,846	206,175	18,611	230,632
Accumulated depreciation				
Opening balance at 1 January 2022	5,704	161,545	—	167,249
Depreciation for the year	544	28,461	—	29,005
Depreciation on disposals/write off	(1,471)	(94,539)	—	(96,010)
Cumulative depreciation at 31 December 2022	4,777	95,467	—	100,244
Net assets at 31 December 2022	1,069	110,708	18,611	130,388
Net assets at 31 December 2021	1,613	114,406	22,634	138,653

- Notes
- ^a Includes certain assets acquired prior to 1 January 2021 for less than €10,000.
 - ^b Adjustments totalling €51,000 were made to Capital Assets Under Development (CAUD) because expenditure incurred in previous years in respect of CAUD projects had been over-stated.
 - ^c An asset identification exercise carried out in 2022 resulted in the removal of retired and obsolete assets from the register. The exercise also resulted in the removal of individual items with values of under €10,000 as per circular 21/2020.

2.2 Bank and cash

at 31 December	2022	2021
	€000	€000
An Post advance balances ^a	140,390	134,064
PMG balances (overdraft)	(312,648)	(525,026)
Commercial bank account balance	722	5,578
	(171,536)	(385,384)

Note ^a As scheme paying agent, An Post is pre-funded by Vote 37 and the SIF to meet the Department's expenditure liabilities as they fall due. At the end of 2022, the combined balance held by An Post in respect of Vote 37 and the SIF was €246.4 million. The combined corresponding balance at the end of 2021 was €231.2 million.

2.3 Inventories

at 31 December	2022 ^a	2021
	€000	€000
Stationery	—	160
IT consumables	—	31
	—	191

Note ^a Commencing in 2022, high-volume, low-value items are fully expensed in the year and are no longer classified as stock items.

2.4 Prepayments

at 31 December	2022	2021
	€000	€000
Specific programme prepayments ^a	59,277	55,886
Software support	3,590	2,514
Administration	983	2,180
Other prepayments	284	—
	64,134	60,580

Note ^a The Department provides advance funding to some organisations delivering schemes. Advances are provided to Community Employment and Job Initiative schemes prior to commencement to cover initial expenses and are generally recouped within 12 months of issue. Floats for cash flow are provided to Local Employment Services, Jobs Clubs and Contracted Public Employment Services (PES) to cover ongoing expenses and are reconciled on an ongoing basis with each payment made. This money relates to organisations as opposed to individual claimants.

2.5 Other debit balances

at 31 December	2022	2021
	€000	€000
Advances to An Post for postage expenditure	1,007	1,007
Advances to OPW for office furniture, building and electrical work	—	244
Advances to Pobal	6,145	5,350
Advance to Revenue Commissioners ^a	9,752	7,411
Scheme prepayments ^b	164,220	161,354
Other debit suspense	2,096	2,454
<i>Due from SIF in respect of ^c</i>		
• Vote related receipts recovered through SIF	18,121	18,809
• payments by Vote on behalf of SIF	6,638	21,758
• imprest payments receivable from SIF	23	1
	208,002	218,388

Notes ^a Advances to the Revenue Commissioners is in respect of both the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme

^b Scheme prepayments are scheme payments made in the year not charged in the current year.

^c Scheme payments only. Administration costs are not included here.

2.6 Accrued expenses

at 31 December	2022	2021
	€000	€000
Specific programme accruals ^a	47,071	49,658
Other accruals	8,249	5,556
IT services and support	4,014	808
Administration expenses	1,750	704
	61,084	56,726

Note ^a Moneys owed to organisations providing Community Employment, Job Initiative, Local Employment Services and Contracted Public Employment Services (PES) on behalf of the Department. This money relates to organisations as opposed to individual claimants.

2.7 Other credit balances

at 31 December	2022	2021
	€000	€000
Amounts due to the State		
Income tax	3,675	3,740
Pay related social insurance	3,029	3,001
Universal social charge	761	702
Professional services withholding tax	4,399	3,974
Value added tax	17	16
Pension contributions	1,827	2,446
Local property tax	37	51
Extra Exchequer receipts	—	1
	13,745	13,931
Payroll deductions	2,131	2,235
Due to SIF in respect of ^a		
• payments by SIF on behalf of Vote	4,273	4,035
• imprest payments received from SIF	4,937	2,167
Unmatched overpayment recoveries	4,165	3,846
Debt recovery on behalf of other EU countries	927	877
Due to OPW in respect of office furniture, building and electrical work	1,080	—
Due to DCEDIY in respect of Accommodation Recognition Payment Scheme	3,660	—
Other credit suspense items	473	565
	35,391	27,656

Note ^a Scheme payments only. Administration costs are not included here.

2.8 Net Exchequer funding

at 31 December	2022	2021
	€000	€000
Surplus to be surrendered	150,281	143,680
Deferred surrender	1,390	1,200
Exchequer grant undrawn	(150,596)	(109,562)
Net Exchequer funding	1,075	35,318
Represented by:		
Debtors		
Debit balances: suspense	208,002	218,388
SIF: suspense	—	229,970
Creditors		
Bank and cash	(171,536)	(385,384)
Due to the State	(13,745)	(13,931)
Credit balances: suspense	(21,646)	(13,725)
	(206,927)	(413,040)
	1,075	35,318

2.9 State funding account

	Note	2022	2021
		€000	€000
Balance at 1 January		142,698	148,598
Disbursements from the Vote			
Estimate provision	Account	12,616,348	
Deferred surrender	Account	(1,390)	
Surplus to be surrendered	Account	(150,281)	
Net vote		12,464,677	17,719,538
Expenditure (cash) borne elsewhere	1.1	110,378	98,351
Non cash expenditure – notional rent	1	14,198	14,386
Capital assets under development and fixed asset adjustment	2.1	(51)	4,104
Net programme cost	1	(12,598,462)	(17,842,279)
Balance at 31 December		133,438	142,698

2.10 Commitments

a) Global commitments	2022	2021
at 31 December	€000	€000
Procurement of goods and services ^a	24,853	34,359
Non-capital grant expenditure ^a	56,106	38,473
Capital projects	18,515	9,957
Total of legally enforceable commitments	99,474	82,789
b) Non-capital grant programmes		
Opening balance	38,473	31,905
Grants paid in year	(72,610)	(52,922)
New grant commitments	90,375	59,669
Grants cancelled	(132)	(179)
Closing balance	56,106	38,473

Note ^a 2021 procurement of goods and services have been re-analysed to show non-capital grant expenditure separately, in line with 2022 classifications.

2.11 Matured liabilities

at 31 December	2022	2021
	€000	€000
Estimate of matured liabilities not discharged at year end	209	114

2.12 Contingent liabilities

The Department is involved in 92 legal cases which may generate liabilities depending on the outcome of the litigation. Any actual amount or the timing of potential liabilities is uncertain.

Note 3 Vote Expenditure

Analysis of administration expenditure

		2022		2021
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
i	Salaries, wages and allowances			
	<i>Original</i>	325,434		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	11,500		
			336,934	329,354
				310,417
ii	Travel and subsistence			
	<i>Original</i>	4,227		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(1,936)		
			2,291	1,931
				562
iii	Training and development and incidental expenses			
	<i>Original</i>	14,636		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	854		
			15,490	13,698
				10,978
iv	Postal and telecommunications services			
	<i>Original</i>	13,977		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	500		
			14,477	15,327
				13,793
v	Office equipment and external IT services			
	<i>Original</i>	74,295		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	820		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(9,690)		
			65,425	61,478
				59,282
vi	Office premises expenses			
	<i>Original</i>	21,825		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	380		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(815)		
			21,390	18,539
				17,619
vii	Consultancy		1,100	1,120
				487
viii	Payments for agency services			
	<i>Original</i>	126,599		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	18,387		
			144,986	136,262
				117,276

		2022		2021
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
ix	eGovernment related projects			
	<i>Original</i>	16,500		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	2,800		
		19,300	18,396	14,293
		621,393	596,105	544,707

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations (+/- 25% and €100,000).

ii Travel and subsistence

Estimate provision €4.2 million; outturn €1.9 million

The underspend of €2.3 million relative to the estimate provision was because travel estimates were based on the assumption of a resumption of pre-pandemic travel levels. This did not materialise as anticipated.

Programme A Social assistance schemes, services, payments to Social Insurance Fund

				2022	2021
		Estimate provision		Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000	€000
A.1	Administration – pay				
	<i>Original</i>	325,434			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>11,500</u>			
			336,934	329,354	310,417
A.2	Administration – non pay				
	<i>Original</i>	273,159			
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	1,200			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>10,100</u>			
			284,459	266,751	234,290
Pensions					
A.3	State Pension (Non-Contributory)				
	<i>Original</i>	1,072,683			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>66,017</u>			
			1,138,700	1,136,457	1,083,119
Working Age - Income Supports					
A.4	Jobseeker's Allowance				
	<i>Original</i>	1,701,948			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>(10,010)</u>			
			1,691,938	1,641,486	1,567,383
A.5	One Parent Family Payment				
	<i>Original</i>	566,079			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>42,581</u>			
			608,660	613,976	561,233
A.6	Widow(er)s', Surviving Civil Partner's (Non Contributory) Pension		12,084	12,252	12,691
A.7	Deserted Wife's Allowance		605	498	635
A.8	Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payments		123,723	121,595	94,865
A.9	Farm Assist				
	<i>Original</i>	53,870			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>1,608</u>			
			55,478	55,665	59,030
A.10	Exceptional and Urgent Needs Payments				
	<i>Original</i>	45,750			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>17,940</u>			
			63,690	57,668	43,089

		2022		2021
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
A.11	Other Working Age – Income Supports			
	<i>Original</i>	15,350		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	10,870		
		26,220	23,267	15,322
Working Age – Employment Supports				
A.12	Community Employment Programme			
	<i>Original</i>	375,366		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(48,876)		
		326,490	329,015	320,213
A.13	Rural Social Scheme			
	<i>Original</i>	51,903		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(3,303)		
		48,600	48,870	49,476
A.14	Tús			
	<i>Original</i>	112,561		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(22,061)		
		90,500	90,177	78,557
A.15	Job Initiative			
	<i>Original</i>	11,822		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	968		
		12,790	11,865	13,116
A.16	Back to Work Enterprise Allowance			
	<i>Original</i>	56,484		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(24,084)		
		32,400	31,943	28,881
A.17	Youth Employment Support Scheme		—	563
A.18	Back to Education Allowance			
	<i>Original</i>	105,396		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(63,896)		
		41,500	40,272	54,322
A.19	JobsPlus			
	<i>Original</i>	28,400		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(24,050)		
		4,350	4,198	3,315
A.20	Local Employment Service			
	<i>Original</i>	9,810		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	5,660		
		15,470	14,678	18,623

		Estimate provision		2022	2021
		€000	€000	Outturn	Outturn
				€000	€000
A.21	Jobs Clubs				
	<i>Original</i>	1,960			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	840			
			2,800	2,595	4,198
A.22	Work Placement Experience Programme				
	<i>Original</i>	62,612			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(59,942)			
			2,670	2,589	596
A.23	Other Working Age – Employment Supports				
	<i>Original</i>	24,648			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(13,679)			
			10,969	10,566	13,111
A.24	Contracted Public Employment Service (PES) Schemes				
	<i>Original</i>	31,156			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(3,701)			
			27,455	13,007	—
A.yy	Covid-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS)				
	<i>Original</i>	5,000			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(2,490)			
			2,510	638	16,071
A.zz	Covid-19 Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS)				
	<i>Original</i>	600,000			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	199,300			
			799,300	838,579	4,570,529
Illness, Disability and Carers					
A.25	Disability Allowance				
	<i>Original</i>	1,891,647			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	135,358			
			2,027,005	2,015,919	1,828,845
A.26	Blind Pension				
	<i>Original</i>	12,378			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	235			
			12,613	12,802	12,255

				2022	2021
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn	
		€000	€000	€000	€000
A.27	Carer's Allowance				
	<i>Original</i>	990,228			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	12,623			
			1,002,851	993,159	930,556
A.28	Domiciliary Care Allowance				
	<i>Original</i>	203,300			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	24,140			
			227,440	224,476	202,445
A.29	Carer's Support Grant				
	<i>Original</i>	262,400			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	78,683			
			341,083	327,534	257,223
A.30	Disability Activation Supports				
	<i>Original</i>	12,160			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(2,773)			
			9,387	8,827	10,375
A.31	Wage Subsidy Scheme				
	<i>Original</i>	29,580			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(8,920)			
			20,660	20,466	15,900
Children					
A.32	Child Benefit				
	<i>Original</i>	2,061,480			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	223,100			
			2,284,580	2,286,444	2,090,446
A.33	Working Family Payment				
	<i>Original</i>	348,550			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	11,290			
			359,840	361,090	338,407
A.34	Back to Work Family Dividend				
	<i>Original</i>	10,370			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	1,076			
			11,446	11,228	10,248
A.35	Back to School Clothing And Footwear Allowance				
	<i>Original</i>	58,170			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	28,350			
			86,520	85,867	51,651
A.36	School Meals Schemes				
	<i>Original</i>	68,100			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	4,900			
			73,000	77,511	58,386

		2022		2021
		Estimate provision		Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
A.37	Child Related Payments		8,428	8,692
				8,462
Supplementary Payments, Agencies and Miscellaneous Services				
A.38	Rent Supplement			
	<i>Original</i>	79,700		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(5,100)		
			74,600	75,149
A.39	Telephone Support Allowance		8,400	8,513
A.40	Household Benefits Package			
	<i>Original</i>	78,885		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	4,862		
			83,747	87,766
A.41	Free Travel		95,000	89,569
A.42	Fuel Allowance			
	<i>Original</i>	211,570		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	136,927		
			348,497	353,813
A.43	Grant to the Citizens Information Board			
	<i>Original</i>	60,258		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(3,528)		
			56,730	56,309
A.44	Miscellaneous Services		15,311	14,312
A.45	Payment to the Social Insurance Fund under Section 9(9)(a) of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005		—	—
				2,606,030
Total			12,907,433	12,817,407
				18,152,515

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in programme expenditures (+/- 5% and €100,000). Overall, the expenditure in relation to Programme A was €90.3 million less than Further Revised Estimates provided. This was made up as follows.

- An net underspend of €25.3 million of this related to administration expenditure. The significant variances in individual subheads (+/-25% and €100,000) have already been explained.
- An net underspend of €65 million relates to scheme and service subheads. The main variances are described below.

A.3 State Pension (Non-Contributory)

Estimate provision €1,072.7 million; outturn €1,136.5 million

There was an overspend of €63.8 million primarily due to:

- Actual average weekly payment values for core payments (€246.20) were €9.03 more than estimated (€237.17). This cost €44.5 million and was due to a range of cost of living measures not provided for in the original estimate, including €22.2 million to pay a once-off cost of living payment, a further €22.2 million to pay the Christmas bonus and €6.4 million to pay a once-off living alone lump sum of €200. There was an offsetting saving of €6.3 million due to lower underlying average payment values.
- Actual average number of recipients for people fleeing war in Ukraine (1,066) with an average weekly payment value of €307.65. This cost €17.1 million.
- Actual adjustments (€94.6 million) were €4.9 million less than estimated (€99.5 million). This was due to lower reimbursements to the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) scheme following decisions on pension claims in respect of people fleeing war in Ukraine and who had been receiving SWA payments while awaiting decisions on their claims.

Offset by

- Actual average number of recipients (94,704) were 223 less than estimated (94,927). This saved €2.8 million.

A.5 One Parent Family Payment

Estimate provision €566.1 million; outturn €614 million

There was an overspend of €47.9 million due to

- Actual average number of core recipients (40,391) were 801 higher than estimated (39,590). This cost €11.4 million.
- Actual average weekly payment values for core recipients (€281.85) were €8.72 more than estimated (€273.13). This cost €18.3 million. This was primarily due to a number of once-off cost of living payments not provided for in the original estimate, including an autumn cost of living payment costing €10.9 million, with the Christmas bonus costing a further €10.9 million, offset by a saving of €3.9 million on underlying average payment values.
- Actual average recipients for people fleeing war in Ukraine (969), averaged over 52 weeks with an average weekly payment value of €313.02. This cost €15.8 million and was not envisaged when the original estimate was finalised. Average payment values were higher than for core payments due to significant arrears paid at start of claims.
- Actual adjustments (€6 million) were €2.4 million more than estimated (€3.6 million).

A.7 Deserted Wife's Allowance

Estimate provision €605,000; outturn €498,000

There was an underspend of €107,000 because the number of recipients (46) was 13 less than estimated (59). The scheme is closed to new recipients, and the number of claims in payment is declining faster than expected.

A.10 Exceptional and Urgent Needs Payments (ENP)

Estimate provision €45.8 million; outturn €57.7 million

There was an overspend of €11.9 million primarily due to

- Actual number of core payments (57,923) were 2,454 more than estimated (55,469). This cost €2.1 million and was due to more people seeking assistance with household bills and heating.
- Actual average payment values for core payments (€918.48) were €71.70 more than estimated (€846.78). This cost €4.2 million and was due to higher cost of household bills, heating, funerals and new accommodation kits.
- Actual number of payments to people fleeing war in Ukraine were 32,387 with an average payment value of €166.37, mainly clothing, which would have a lower average payment values than other payment categories. This cost €5.4 million.

A.11 Other Working Age – Income Supports

Estimate provision €15.4 million; outturn €23.3 million

There was an overspend of €7.9 million due to

- Actual average recipients of Daily Expenses Allowance (5,070) were 1,753 higher than provided for in the estimate (3,317). This cost €5.7 million and was due to more people seeking refuge in Ireland other than people fleeing war in Ukraine.
- Actual average weekly payment values for Daily Expenses Allowance (€73.26) were €10.55 higher than estimated (€62.71) and was due to proportionately more families than individuals making claims. This cost €2.8 million.

Offset by

- Actual average recipients on Other Supplements (1,810) were 361 lower than estimated (2,171) due mainly to more exits from closed supplements (Diet and Mortgage Interest Supplement) than expected. This saved €600,000.

A.12 Community Employment Programme

Estimate provision €375.4 million; outturn €329 million

There was an underspend of €46.4 million primarily due to

- Actual average participants (18,890) were 3,660 lower than estimated (22,550). This saved €49.4 million and was due to large numbers of former Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) recipients securing full-time employment in line with a rapid recovery of the labour market post Covid-19 and not becoming unemployed meaning that participant places were not filled as envisaged in the original estimate.
- Actual average supervisors (1,230) were 127 less than estimated (1,357). This saved €5 million.
- Lower course consumables and materials as a result of less participants. This saved €2 million.
- Higher recoupments from CE projects. This saved €1.8 million.

Offset by

- Actual average weekly participant payroll costs (€266.79) were €7.08 higher than estimated (€259.71). This cost €6.9 million. The autumn cost of living payment cost €4.8 million, with the Christmas bonus costing a further €4.8 million, both of which were not provided for in the original estimate offset by saving of €2.7 million on underlying average payment values.
- Actual ex-gratia pension payments to supervisors cost €5.1 million.

A.13 Rural Social Scheme

Estimate provision €51.9 million; outturn €48.9 million

There was an underspend of €3 million primarily due to

- Actual participants (2,880) were 240 less than estimated (3,120). This saved €3.3 million, with the uptake of places being impacted by public health restrictions and a reduction in numbers of recipients on Farm Assist.

Offset by

- Actual participant average weekly payroll costs (€269.61) were €2.78 more than estimated (€266.83). This cost €400,000. The autumn cost of living payment cost €700,000, with the Christmas bonus costing a further €700,000, both of which were not provided for in the original estimate. These costs were offset by lower underlying average payment values which saved €1 million.

A.14 Tús

Estimate provision €112.5 million; outturn €90.2 million

The underspend of €22.3 million was due to:

- Actual average participant numbers (5,142) were 1,618 less than estimated (6,760). This saved €22.1 million. The anticipated spike in former Pandemic Unemployment Payment recipients taking up Tús places did not materialise due to the stronger than expected recovery of the labour market post Covid-19.
- Actual average supervisors (271) were 17 less than estimated (288). This saved €700,000.
- Lower implementation body costs saved €800,000.

Offset by

- Actual participant average weekly payroll costs (€268.10) were €4.97 higher than estimated (€263.13). This cost €1.3 million. The cost of the autumn cost of living payment was €1.3 million, with the Christmas bonus costing a further €1.3 million, both of which were not provided for in the original estimate. These additional costs were offset by a saving of €1.3 million on underlying average payment values.

A.16 Back to Work Enterprise Allowance

Estimate provision €56.5 million; outturn €31.9 million

There was an underspend of €24.6 million due to

- Actual participant numbers (2,681) were 2,259 less than estimated (4,940). This saved €25.9 million. This is due to a faster recovery in the labour market and lower jobseekers post Covid-19 than estimated.

Offset by

- Actual average weekly payment values (€229.82) were €9.54 more than estimated (€220.28). This cost €1.3 million, mainly due to the cost of the autumn cost of living payment cost €550,000, with the Christmas bonus costing a further €550,000, both of which were not provided for in the original estimate.

A.18 Back to Education Allowance

Estimate provision €105.4 million; outturn €40.3 million

There was an underspend of €65.1 million due to

- Actual average recipients (4,282) during the academic year were 7,218 less than estimated (11,500). This saved €59.1 million and was due to a faster recovery in the labour market post Covid-19 resulting in lower numbers of jobseekers availing of the scheme. The estimate was informed by commitments made in the Pathways to Work when the scale of the long-term impact from the pandemic was still unclear.
- Actual average recipients (1,243) during the summer were 1,657 lower than estimated (2,900). This saved €6.4 million and was due to less underlying recipients on the scheme.

Offset by

- Actual average weekly payment values during the academic year (€241.86) were €2.51 more than estimated (€239.35). This cost €400,000. The cost of the autumn cost of living payment was €350,000, while the cost of the Christmas bonus was a further €350,000. There was an offsetting saving of €300,000 due to a range of other factors, including less cost of education allowance payments due to less participants on the scheme.

A.19 JobsPlus

Estimate provision €28.4 million; outturn €4.2 million

There was an underspend of €24.2 million due to

- Actual average participants (950) were 4,768 less than provided for in the estimate (5,718). This saved €23.7 million. This is due to less recourse to JobsPlus due to a lower Live Register arising from a faster recovery in the labour market than envisaged when the estimate was finalised.
- Actual average monthly payment values (€368.25) were €45.62 less than estimated (€413.87) due to a decline in the proportion of participants on the higher rate in 2022 compared to 2021 which informed the 2022 estimate. This saved €500,000.

A.20 Local Employment Service*Estimate provision €9.8 million; outturn €14.7 million*

There was an overspend of €4.9 million due to

- Actual expenditure on Local Employment Service (LES) staff costs (€10.8 million) were €3.3 million more than estimated (€7.5 million). This was due to LES contracts being extended from end June 2022 (as planned in the estimate) to end August 2022 as a result of the delay in the procurement for the new Public Service Employment replacement contract.
- Actual expenditure on LES operational costs (€3 million) were €1.2 million more than estimated (€1.8 million). This was due to the extension of LES contracts by 2 months.
- Actual expenditure on Mediator fund provided by the LES (€800,000) was €400,000 more than estimated (€400,000). This was due to the underlying extension of LES contracts by 2 months.

A.21 Jobs Clubs*Estimate provision €2 million; outturn €2.6 million*

There was an overspend of €600,000 due to the extension of Jobs Clubs contracts from end June 2022 (as envisaged in the original estimate) to end August 2022 due to delays in the procurement process for the new replacement Public Employment Service contracts. The additional expenditure was made up as follows.

- Actual Jobs Clubs staff costs (€2 million) were €400,000 more than estimated (€1.6 million). This was due to the extension of contracts and payments for outstanding claims as part of the wind down of the Job Club contracts.
- Actual Jobs Clubs Operation Costs (€600,000) were €200,000 more than estimated (€400,000) and was due to the extension of contracts.

A.22 Work Placement Experience Programme*Estimate provision €62.6 million; outturn €2.6 million*

There was an underspend of €60 million due to

- Actual participants (145) were 3,344 less than provided for in the estimate (3,489). This saved €60 million and is due to the stronger than expected recovery in the labour market post-pandemic than envisaged when Work Placement Experience Programme was announced in the July 2020 Jobs Stimulus and the subsequent Recovery and Resilience Plan in 2021.

A.23 Other Working Age – Employment Supports

Estimate provision €24.6 million; outturn €10.6 million

There was an underspend of €14 million due to

- Actual expenditure on Training Support Grant (€2.3 million) was €8.7 million less than estimated (€11 million). This was due to a lower average Live Register in 2022 meaning lower recourse to Training Support Grants than expected.
- Actual expenditure on Enterprise Support Grant (ESG) (€2.4 million) was €6.5 million less than estimated (€8.9 million) due to lower recipients on Back To Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) (€1.6m) and less demand for Covid-19 ESG grants from Self-Employed people formerly on Pandemic Unemployment Payment (€4.9 million) due to more former PUP recipients finding work and not transferring to jobseekers than expected when the estimate was prepared.
- Actual average participants on Part Time Job Incentive (PTJI) (166) were 64 less than estimated (230) due to a Lower Average Live Register than estimated meaning less demand for PTJI. This saved €400,000 and was due to the stronger labour market post Covid-19 than expected when the estimate was prepared.
- Actual expenditure on Activation and Family Support (€200,000) was €400,000 less than estimated (€600,000). Co-funding was provided to ten organisations to support the provision of programmes used to support the development of social welfare recipients.

Offset by

- Actual expenditure on PTJI for the Self-Employed (SE) (€3.8 million) was €2 million more than estimated (€1.8 million). This was due to the extension of PTJI for SE up to end May 2022 and higher participants as a result of the Omicron variant in early 2022.

A.24 Contracted Public Employment Services (PES) Schemes

Estimate provision €31.2 million; outturn €13 million

There was an underspend of €18.2 million due to a delay in the procurement process and subsequent mobilisation of services.

To encourage engagement and to allow the not-for-profit sector time to co-ordinate their bids the decision was taken to extend the cessation timeline for the Local Employment Service and Jobs Clubs contracts from the end of 2021 originally to June 2022, through a 6-month contract (which formed the basis of 2022 estimates) and then to extend this by a further 2 months to 31 August 2022 for those who wished to accept that additional extension. Full mobilisation of Phase 1 Intreo Partner Local Area Employment Service contracts completed mobilisation in the majority of contracts by early December 2022 and Intreo Partner National Employment Service in the first quarter of 2023.

A.yy Covid-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS)*Estimate provision €5 million; outturn €638,000*

There was an underspend of €4.4 million due to

- Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) has been closed and was replaced by the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) from September 2020.
- As part of the wind-down of TWSS, Revenue has been recovering outstanding overpayments and settling outstanding arrears with employers. The provision for arrears for 2022 was based on the emerging position in August 2021 which informed the 2022 estimate (€5 million). There was a saving of €4.4 million due to lower arrears (€600,000) than provided for in the estimate (€5 million).

A.zz Covid-19 Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS)*Estimate provision €600 million; outturn €838.6 million*

The overspend of €238.6 million was due to

- €242.8 million due to higher payments to employers as a result of the Covid-19 Omicron variant which meant that Covid-19 restrictions were re-imposed in December 2021 and January 2022 for certain sectors resulting in a surge of expenditure in January 2022 and extension of EWSS to end May 2022 rather than April 2022 as envisaged in the original estimate.

Offset by

- Saving of €4.2 million due to recoveries of overpayments by Revenue from employers in respect of 2022 overpayments.

A.25 Disability Allowance*Estimate provision €1,891.6 million; outturn €2,015.9 million*

There was an overspend of €124.3 million due to

- Actual average weekly payment values (€247.67) for core recipients were €17.68 more than estimated (€229.99). This cost €143.1 million. This was made up with the autumn cost of living payment costing €34 million, once-off Disability Payment/Living Alone costing €81.2 million, the Christmas bonus costing €34 million offset by savings of €6.1 million on a range of factors.
- Actual average number of recipients for people fleeing war in Ukraine (106) averaged over 52 weeks, with an average weekly payment value of €315.44, when averaged over the full year in 2022. This cost €1.7 million. Average payment values were higher than for core recipients due to arrears at the start of claims.

As this is a demand led scheme, it can be difficult to predict future volumes. While the number of claims registered was marginally higher than the historical trend, the overall lower number of recipients implies that the length of time spent on the scheme is decreasing or that there are more exits overall from the scheme for other reasons, such as an ageing cohort leaving to other schemes.

Offset by

- Actual average recipient numbers (155,532) were 1,622 lower than estimated (157,154). This saved €19.4 million.
- Actual lower adjustments (€10.6 million) were €1.1 million less than estimated (€11.7 million).

A.28 Domiciliary Care Allowance

Estimate provision €203.3 million; outturn €224.5 million

There was an overspend of €21.2 million due to

- Actual average core recipients (48,072) were 1,423 higher than estimated (46,649). This cost €6.2 million and is due to a range of factors including prevalence rates of disability, resulting in higher numbers of recipients whose condition falls into the category of Mental & Behavioural Diseases (ICD-10 code F). This category of recipients is increasing year on year, with a significant increase in the diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Actual average monthly payment values (€388.71) were €25.54 higher than estimated (€363.17). This cost €14.7 million. This was made up by €4.5 million on cost of living payment and a further €4.5 million on the Christmas bonus, both of which were not included in the original estimate. There was a further €5.7 million arising from longer processing times during the final quarter of 2021 which resulted in a spike in arrears during 2022.
- Actual average recipients for people fleeing war in Ukraine (41) at an average monthly payment value of €512.34 averaged over the year in 2022. This cost €300,000. Average payment values are higher than for core recipients due to payment of arrears at start of claims.

A.29 Carer's Support Grant

Estimate provision €262.4 million; outturn €327.5 million

There was an overspend of €65.1 million due to

- Actual number of recipients for core Carer's Support Grants (129,952) were 1,505 more than estimated (128,447). This cost €3.1 million. This was due to ongoing increases in Carer's Allowance (CA) and Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) recipients, as well as people with a caring need not receiving CA, DCA or Carer's Benefit.
- Actual average payment values for core grants (€2,070.53) were €27.66 more than estimated (€2,042.87). This cost €3.5 million.
- Actual number of once-off cost of living payments (116,496) of €500 each cost €58.2 million.
- Actual number of payments to people fleeing war in Ukraine was 332, with an average payment value of €837.78. This cost €300,000.

A.30 Disability Activation Supports

Estimate provision €12.2 million; outturn €8.8 million

There was an underspend of €3.4 million primarily due to

- Actual expenditure on the Employability Service (€8.3 million) was €3.3 million lower than estimated (€11.6 million) and was due to actual costs submitted by the Employability Service contractors being less than estimated due to staff vacancies and overheads claimed being less than estimated.

A.31 Wage Subsidy Scheme*Estimate provision €29.6 million; outturn €20.5 million*

There was an underspend of €9.1 million due to

- Actual Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) participants (1,413) were 340 less than estimated (1,753). This saved €5.6 million and was due to less former WSS supported employees who availed of PUP and EWSS returning to WSS once emergency Covid-19 supports were closed than estimated.
- Actual Wage Subsidy Scheme average weekly payment value (€269.79) was €48.02 less than estimated (€317.81). This saved €3.5 million. This was due to WSS employees returning to work with their WSS employer once PUP was closed for less hours than originally contracted before the Covid-19 pandemic.

A.32 Child Benefit*Estimate provision €2,061.5 million; outturn €2,286.4 million*

There was an overspend of €224.9 million due to

- Actual average monthly payment values for core recipients (€299.14) were €24.26 more than estimated (€274.88). This cost €183.9 million. The cost of the double payment in November 2022 was €175 million, with the balance of €9 million due to underlying average weekly payment values being higher than estimated.
- The remaining increase in spending was due to an increase in the average number of beneficiaries of the scheme related to Ukraine refugees (6,722) and other migration (6,568). These added an estimated €19.7 million and €21.7 million, respectively.

Offset by

- Actual adjustments (€500,000) were €400,000 more than estimated (€100,000). This is due to higher overpayment recoveries in 2022 netted off against the Child Benefit than informed the estimate.

A.34 Back to Work Family Dividend*Estimate provision €10.4 million; outturn €11.2 million*

There was an overspend of €800,000 due to

- Actual average weekly payment values (€80.69) were €6.45 more than estimated (€74.24). This cost €800,000 and was due to a greater proportion of people on the scheme for less than a year and therefore on a higher rate of payment than envisaged when the estimate was finalised. Back to Work Family Dividend is a time-limited scheme with a maximum of two years duration. Covid-19 would have impacted inflows during 2020 and 2021 which meant that there would have been less people on the scheme for more than a year in 2022.

A.35 Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance*Estimate provision €58.2 million; outturn €85.9 million*

There was an overspend of €27.7 million primarily due to:

- Actual average payment values for core recipients (€565.67) were €172.72 more than estimated (€392.95). This cost €25.1 million and was due to an additional €100 for each child announced by Government as a cost of living measure in July 2022.
- Additional recipients (8,020) fleeing war in Ukraine receiving an average payment of €439.10 per recipient. This cost €3.5 million.

Offset by

- Actual number of core recipients (145,571) were 2,467 less than provided for in the estimate (148,038) due to lower numbers of jobseekers making claims arising from a lower live register. This saved €1 million.

A.36 School Meals Schemes*Estimate provision €68.1 million; outturn €77.5 million*

There was an overspend of €9.4 million due to the extension of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in School (DEIS) to an additional 322 schools from September 2022. Arising from this decision the provision of the hot school meal option was extended to all new DEIS primary schools and the cold lunch option to all new DEIS secondary schools benefitting some 60,000 children for the 2022/23 school year.

A.38 Rent Supplement*Estimate provision €79.7 million; outturn €75.1 million*

There was an underspend of €4.6 million due to:

- Actual average core recipients (12,079) were 812 less than estimated (12,891). This saved €5 million and was due to lower numbers of claims following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in early 2022.
- Actual average weekly payment values (€118.74) were €0.27 less than estimated (€119.01). This saved €200,000.

Offset by

- Actual average recipients for people fleeing war in Ukraine (41) with average weekly payment values (€291.39). This cost €600,000. Average payment values were higher than for core payments due to virtually all payments being in excess of rent limits and were deemed necessary under Article 38 (part 6) of SI 412 of 2007.

A.40 Household Benefits Package

Estimate provision €78.9 million; outturn €87.8 million

Household Benefits may be funded from either Vote 37 or the Social Insurance Fund depending on the primary scheme being claimed by the recipient. This subhead funds that element of the Household Benefit schemes funded from Vote 37.

A detailed analysis of recipients by primary scheme for each of the constituent schemes was carried out to inform the 2021 outturn. This analysis was carried out after the 2022 REV estimate was finalised and because of this most of the variances can be attributed to the redistribution of expenditure between Vote and Fund following this analysis.

There was an overspend of €8.9 million due to

- Actual expenditure on Electricity Allowance funded from Vote 37 (€61.6 million) was €7.3 million more than estimated (€54.3 million).
- Actual expenditure on Gas Allowance funded from Vote 37 (€5.8 million) was €400,000 more than estimated (€5.4 million).
- Actual expenditure on Free TV license funded from Vote 37 (€20.4 million) was €1.2 million more than estimated (€19.2 million).

A.41 Free Travel

Estimate provision €95 million; outturn €89.6 million

There was an underspend of €5.4 million due to

- Actual expenditure on National Transport Authority funded opening up of bus routes (€2.4 million) was €1.2 million less than estimated (€3.6 million). These payments are based on usage, and the Department has been informed by transport operators across the sector that although Covid-19 public transport restrictions were lifted in Q1 of 2022, transport operators did not experience a return to pre-pandemic usage levels.
- Actual expenditure on private bus operators (€15.7 million) was €1.5 million less than estimated (€17.2 million). This was due to suspension of surveys during Covid-19, in addition to which three operators exited the scheme during the year.
- Actual expenditure for cross border travel for CIE Group (€1.6 million) was €2.7 million less than estimated (€4.3 million). This was due to delay in submission of invoices by the service provider.

A.42 Fuel Allowance

Estimate provision €211.6 million; outturn €353.8 million

There was an overspend of €142.2 million due to

- Actual average weekly payment value over the fuel season of 28 weeks (€55.32) was €22.32 more than estimated (€33.00). This cost €142.7 million and was due to the payment of three once-off lump sum payments made in March 2022 (€125), May 2022 (€100) and November (€400).

Offset by

- Actual average number of recipients (228,414) funded from Vote 37 were 558 less than estimated (228,972). This saved €500,000.

A.43 Grant to the Citizens Information Board

Estimate provision €60.3 million; outturn €56.3 million

There was an underspend of €4 million primarily due to

- Actual expenditure on Citizen's Information Service grants (€15.2 million) was €2.2 million less than estimated (€17.4 million).
- Actual expenditure on Abhaile and Dedicated Mortgage Arrears (DMA) Money Advice and Budgeting (€3.6 million) was €900,000 less than estimated (€4.5 million). This was due to less demand for these services due to the rise in the cost of living with people prioritising household debt over mortgage arrears.
- Actual expenditure on financial compliance (€400,000) was €700,000 less than estimated (€1.1 million) due to contingency funding not becoming necessary.
- Actual expenditure on information and communications technology (€3.5 million) being €600,000 less than estimated (€4.1 million) due to timing of project expenditure and lower expenditure on telecom services.
- Actual expenditure on Money Advice and Budgeting Service grants (€17.7 million) was €500,000 less than estimated (€18.2 million).
- Actual expenditure on operational compliance (€1.9 million) was €400,000 less than estimated (€2.3 million) due to delayed progression of premises projects.
- Actual expenditure on Citizen's Information Board pay and pensions (€7.6 million) was €300,000 lower than estimated (€7.9 million).
- Actual expenditure on National Service Delivery Company grants (€3.6 million) was €300,000 less than estimated (€3.9 million).

Offset by

- End of year surplus (€2.3 million) drawn down from Vote 37. This was made up of €400,000 relating to unspent CIB board expenses and €1.9 million relating to reconciliation of expenditure across Service Delivery Companies for 2022 after end of year. These amounts were surrendered to the Exchequer during 2023 Q1.

A.44 Miscellaneous Services

Estimate provision €15.3 million; outturn €14.3 million

There was an underspend of €1 million due to

- Actual expenditure on Promoting Social Inclusion for Family Carers and People with Disabilities (€4 million) was €1 million less than estimated (€5 million). This was due to the anticipated demand from bidders following a procurement process organised by Pobal, being less than expected for a new measure relating to family carers access to employment, education and training while caring.
- Actual expenditure on food and basic material funded from ESF+ (€5 million) was €700,000 less than estimated (€5.7 million). This was due to surplus stock at end of 2021 which was distributed in 2022.

Offset by

- Actual expenditure on Digital Activation Project for Lone Parents funded from EaSI programme which was funded from EU (€400,000) was not envisaged when the estimates were finalised. These costs relate to staff and other administration expenses incurred by staff working on the project.
- Actual expenditure on ex-gratia payments to survivors of the Magdalen laundries and other institutions (€3.4 million) was €300,000 more than estimated (€3.1 million) due to autumn cost of living payment and Christmas bonus which was not provided for in the original estimate.

Note 4 Receipts

4.1 Appropriations-in-aid

		2022		2021
		Estimate provision	Realised	Realised
		€000	€000	€000
Social Insurance Fund transfer to Vote 37				
1	Recovery of administration expenses from the Social Insurance Fund			
	<i>Original</i>	160,410		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	12,285		
			172,695	164,185
				145,930
Appropriations-in-aid: other				
2	Recoveries of social assistance overpaid			
	<i>Original</i>	47,300		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(1,500)		
			45,800	46,924
				47,504
3	Repayment from the Social Insurance Fund of amounts paid initially as social assistance in previous years			
	<i>Original</i>	3,500		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(100)		
			3,400	4,944
			390	3,323
4	Receipts under 'liability to maintain family' provisions in Part XII of the Social Welfare (Consolidation) Act 2005			
5	Receipts from the General Register Office			
	<i>Original</i>	450		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	150		
			600	599
				462
6	Receipts from additional superannuation contributions on public service remuneration			
	<i>Original</i>	7,100		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	450		
			7,550	7,826
				7,103

		2022		2021
		Estimate provision	Realised	Realised
		€000	€000	€000
7	Receipts from European Social Fund			
	<i>Original</i>	620		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(620)		
			—	5,000
8	Receipts from National Training Fund			
	<i>Original</i>	27,200		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(21,490)		
			5,710	5,061
9	Receipts from Pensions Authority – staff superannuation			
	<i>Original</i>	700		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(30)		
			670	686
10	Receipts from Dormant Accounts Fund			
	<i>Original</i>	10,000		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(5,000)		
			5,000	5,000
11	Recovery of assistance from insurance claims			
	<i>Original</i>	2,100		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	1,070		
			3,170	2,220
12	Receipts from Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived			
	<i>Original</i>	4,800		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(1,500)		
			3,300	3,928
13	Miscellaneous			
	<i>Original</i>	1,000		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(300)		
			700	11,370

		2022		2021
		Estimate provision	Realised	Realised
		€000	€000	€000
14	Recovery of overpayments for Covid-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme for earlier years			
	Original	5,000		
	Supplementary	24,400		
			29,400	174,705
15	Recovery from Employment Wage Subsidy for earlier years			
	Original	10,000		
	Supplementary	2,700		
			12,700	20,291
Total		291,085	352,730	432,977

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in appropriations-in-aid (+/- 5% and €100,000). Overall, appropriations-in-aid were €72.1 million more than Further Revised Estimate. Explanations for variances are set out below:

3 Repayment from the Social Insurance Fund of amounts paid initially as social assistance.

Estimate €3.5 million; realised €4.9 million

This subhead is used to record the recovery of social assistance from the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) where inter-scheme adjustment is effected after the close of the financial year. Receipts can vary significantly from month to month. For example, it includes customers paid Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) Basic payment (funded from Vote 37) while awaiting a decision on their claim for Illness Benefit (IB), Invalidity Pension (IP) or State Pension Contributory (SPC). The amount of SWA Basic paid is subsequently recovered from the SIF when their IB, IP or SPC claim is decided. When the decision is made in a later year to when the SWA Basic payment occurred, the recovery from the SIF is recorded as income under this subhead.

5 Receipts from the General Register Office

Estimate €450,000; realised €599,000

Receipts were €149,000 more than expected due to increased demand for certificates to support applications for new and renewal of passports and increased demand for certificates to support claims for Irish citizenship post Brexit and post Covid-19.

6 Receipts from additional superannuation contributions on public service remuneration*Estimate €7.1 million; realised €7.8 million*

Receipts were €700,000 higher due to the knock on effect of payment increases under Building Momentum Public Service Agreement and as a result of increased pay costs associated with the use of overtime to meet additional demands of the Community Welfare Service arising from the cost of living crisis, supporting SAFE registrations, PPSN allocations and Public Service Cards for people fleeing war in Ukraine.

7 Receipts from European Social Fund*Estimate €620,000; realised €nil*

The shortfall of €620,000 relates to retention moneys in respect of Back To Work Enterprise Allowance (€250,000) and JobsPlus (€370,000) schemes which are withheld by the EU pending final audits of these schemes. It is now expected these audits will be undertaken in 2024, with potential payment of retention moneys into the Department later in 2024 or 2025.

8 Receipts from National Training Fund*Estimate €27.2 million; realised €6.9 million*

Receipts were €20.3 million lower due to

- Actual receipts for Community Employment training (€3.68 million) were €500,000 less than estimated (€4.2 million). This was due to lower participants on Community Employment as a result of a strong recovery in the labour market post Covid-19.
- Actual receipts in respect of Training Support Grants (€2.35 million) were €3.6 million less than estimated (€6 million). This was due to a lower live register meaning less jobseekers availing of Training Support Grants.
- Actual receipts in respect of Work Placement Experience Programme (WPEP) participant training (€820,000) were €16.2 million less than estimated (€17 million). This was due to less participants on WPEP and less demand for training.

10 Receipts from Dormant Accounts Fund*Estimate €10 million; realised €4 million*

Receipts were €6 million lower than expected due to

- €5 million less due to an error in the published estimate which was €10 million rather than €5 million.
- Actual receipts (€1 million) were €1 million less than estimated (€2 million) in respect of the reimbursement of expenditure on a new measure relating to family carers access to employment, education and training being less than expected due to the commencement timing of the programmes or a lack of participants on the scheme.

11 Recovery of assistance from insurance claims*Estimate €2.1 million; realised €3.1 million*

Receipts were €1 million higher due to delays to cases being heard in the court in 2021 and early 2022 being resolved in 2022 and new guidance released to the courts in 2021, having an impact in 2022.

12 Receipts from Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived*Estimate €4.8 million; realised €3.3 million*

Receipts were €1.5 million less due to a new system being implemented by the EU Commission for claiming reimbursements from ESF+. Claims for outstanding reimbursements will be submitted in 2023 when the new system is in place.

13 Miscellaneous*Estimate €1 million; realised €11.9 million*

This subhead is used to record receipts which were not envisaged when the estimates were finalised and also small receipts such as the return of cancelled cheques.

Receipts were €10.9 million more than expected primarily due to

- €4 million as a result of an unspent Citizen's Information Board grant from 2021 being returned to the Exchequer as a receipt in 2022.
- €6.7 million relating to outstanding working balances recouped following the cessation of contracts relating to the wind-down of the Local Employment Service, Jobs Clubs and JobPath.
- €700,000 refunds on salary overpayments relating to overpayments which occurred prior to 2022.

Offset by

- €500,000 less due to rounding and offsetting factors due to the nature of the subhead where every element of the estimate is not quantified.

14 Recovery of overpayments for Covid-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme for earlier years*Estimate €5 million; realised €30.2 million*

Receipts realised were €25.2 million more than provided for in the original estimate.

This subhead records the recovery of overpayments from employers by Revenue on the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) relating to claims between March and August 2020 when the scheme was operational. Actual average receipts realised per month (€2.5 million) were €2.1 million higher than provided for in the estimate (€400,000). Revenue conducted a series of compliance checks with employers who had availed of the scheme. As a result, 1,936, or 2.8% of these participating employers had to repay subsidies either partially or fully. Receipts averaged over €2.5 million a month in 2022 but ranged from a low of €400,000 to €6.5 million a month.

15 Recovery from Employment Wage Subsidy for earlier years*Estimate €10 million; realised €67.8 million*

Receipts were €57.8 million more than provided for in the original estimate.

This subhead records the recovery of overpayments relating to the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) collected by Revenue from employers in respect of claims made in 2020 and 2021. Revenue carried out a series of compliance checks among employers to ensure that the integrity of the scheme had been maintained. When the scheme ceased in July 2022, Revenue invited around 42,500 employers who hadn't previously submitted eligibility documentation and who received subsidy payments, to perform a final self-review to assess their scheme eligibility for all periods of its implementation. This allowed employers to identify overclaims before 30 September 2022 and avoid penalties or interest on the payments.

4.2 Extra receipts payable to the Exchequer

	2022	2021
	€000	€000
Balance at 1 January	1	1
Conscience money	11	2
Witness expenses	—	1
Transferred to the Exchequer	(12)	(3)
Balance at 31 December	—	1

4.3 Recovery of welfare assistance overpayments

The Central Debt Unit (CDU) is responsible for the management of recorded individual customer overpayments and debt recovery. ^a

The summary position on recorded welfare assistance overpayments and debt managed by CDU at 31 December 2022 was as follows:

	2022		2021	
	Outturn		Outturn	
	€000	€000	€000	€000
Overpayments outstanding at 1 January 2022		379,174		390,922 ^b
Net overpayments recorded				
Suspected fraud	14,403		15,464	
Customer error	36,775		33,652	
Official error	983		1,058	
Estate cases	16,149		22,016	
		68,310		72,190
		447,484		463,112
Less:				
Debt recovered ^c	(51,799)		(51,179)	
Recoveries adjustment ^d	233		237	
		(51,566)		(50,942)
Prior year debts cancelled ^e		(5,373)		(5,118)
Debt written off as irrecoverable ^f		(7,637)		(27,878)
Overpayments outstanding at 31 December 2022		382,908		379,174

Notes ^a The management of overpayments and debt recoveries that arise from contractual relationship or service level agreements with corporate entities delivering group schemes such as Community Employment are administered by the respective scheme area and are not stated here. Total 2022 recoveries for these schemes were €394,000 (2021: €660,000).

In 2022 the Revenue Commissioners administered debt recoveries for the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) and Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) which are not reported here. Recoveries of €3.8 million for 2022 overpayments are netted off 2022 TWSS and EWSS scheme expenditure (2021: €79.9 million). Recoveries of €98 million for prior years overpayments are included in Appropriations-in-aid, Note 4.1 (2021 €195 million).

^b The opening balance for 2021 was adjusted to bring the reported balance into line with the opening debtor listing at 1 January 2021.

- ° The amount of debt recovered in 2022 is analysed as follows:
 - (a) €47.1 million posted to income in respect of previous years debt
 - (b) €4.7 million posted against expenditure in respect of the current years debt.
- d The adjustment is in respect of recorded recoveries in prior years which were cancelled during the year.
- e The prior year debts cancelled relates to overpayments raised in prior years. Subsequent new debts may be created under certain circumstances such as a revised decision or upon completion of the appeals process.
- f During 2022 debts totalling €7.6 million were written off. €4.7 million represented write offs performed under the Department's annual policy of reviewing existing debts in terms of whether they are economical to pursue or are irrecoverable. The remainder of the write offs were performed in the normal course of business. The 2022 debt write off figure includes 228 customers who had individual debts greater than €10,000 written off with a total value of €7.5 million (Vote: €5.9 million; SIF: €1.6 million).

Note 5 Staffing and Remuneration

5.1 Employee numbers

Full time equivalents at year end	2022	2021
Department	6,628	6,435
Agencies ^a	159	153
	6,787	6,588

Note ^a The Citizen Information Board and the Pensions Authority.

5.2 Pay

	2022 €000	2021 €000
Pay	323,198	307,723
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	1,011	1,096
Other allowances	1,670	1,587
Overtime	6,130	3,080
Employer's PRSI	25,041	22,499
Total pay	357,050	335,985

Remuneration of Department staff

The following remuneration arrangements refer to pay elements of administration subheads (i), (viii) and (ix).

	2022 €000	2021 €000
Pay	313,032	297,989
Higher, special or additional duties allowance	895	1,015
Other allowances	1,670	1,587
Overtime	6,130	3,078
Employer's PRSI	24,005	21,507
Total pay	345,732	325,176

Agency remuneration

	2022 €000	2021 €000
Pay	10,166	9,734
Higher, special or additional duties allowance	116	81
Other allowances	—	—
Overtime	—	2
Employer's PRSI	1,036	992
Total pay	11,318	10,809

5.3 Allowances and overtime payments

	Number of recipients	Recipients of €10,000 or more	Highest individual payment	
			2022	2021
			€	€
Department staff				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	348	15	22,755	26,456
Overtime	2,261	134	44,559	18,534
Shift and roster allowances ^a	30	16	13,546	12,948
Miscellaneous ^a	337	10	88,200	59,158
Extra remuneration in more than one category	308	90	40,831	28,129
Agency staff				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	15	2	18,658	17,488
Overtime	—	—	—	1,228

Note ^a Commencing in 2022, allowances previously classified as 'other' are now categorised under shift and roster allowances and miscellaneous. Figures for 2021 have been reclassified on the same basis.

5.4 Department staffing by pay band

The number of Department employees whose total employee benefits (including basic pay, allowances, overtime; excluding employer PRSI, employer pension costs) for the financial year fell between €20,000 and €59,999 and within each band of €10,000 from €60,000 upwards are as follows.

Pay band		Number of employees	
From (€)	To (€)	2022	2021
20,000	59,999	5,303	5,385
60,000	69,999	743	564
70,000	79,999	186	154
80,000	89,999	130	104
90,000	99,999	63	43
100,000	109,999	44	25
110,000	119,999	15	10
120,000	129,999	3	2
130,000	139,999	1	2
140,000	149,999	1	2
150,000	159,999	1	7
160,000	169,999	4	1
170,000	179,999	3	1
180,000	189,999	1	—
190,000	199,999	—	—
200,000	209,999	—	1
210,000	219,999	1	—

Note The above remuneration arrangements refer to pay elements of administration subhead (i).
An amount of €15.3 million is excluded from the above table.

5.5 Other remuneration arrangements

The cost of staff serving outside the Department in 2022 was €823,592 in respect of 13 staff. These costs are recouped by the Department from the relevant organisations.

5.6 Payroll overpayments

at 31 December	Number of recipients	2022 €000	2021 €000
Overpayments	573	1,571	1,946
Recovery plans in place	258	834	934

Sixteen individuals with recovery plans to the value of €14,907 transferred to other departments in the year.

5.7 Severance/redundancy

During 2022, four staff members whose employment was terminated, were paid redundancy payments totalling €13,256 and severance payments totalling €nil.

5.8 Remuneration and benefits of Accounting Officer

The Accounting Officer's remuneration and taxable benefits for the financial year was as follows:

	2022 €000	2021 €000
Basic pay	213	201

The value of retirement benefits earned in the period is not included above. The Accounting Officer is a member of the pre-1995 Superannuation Scheme for Established Civil Servants, and the retirement benefits earned do not exceed the standard terms of that scheme.

Note 6 Miscellaneous

6.1 Committees, commissions and special inquiries ^a

			2022 €000	2021 €000
Permanent/open-ended				
Labour Market Advisory Council			17	15
Audit and Risk Committee			4	4
			21	19
Fixed purpose commission	Year of appointment	Cumulative expenditure to end of 2022 €000	2022 €000	2021 €000
Child Maintenance Review Group	2021	124	111	13
Commission on Pensions	2020	53	—	53
			111	66

Note ^a Previous year expenditure on committees, commissions and special inquiries were included in note 5 payroll and allowances.

6.2 Ex-gratia payments

Ex-gratia payments to Community Employment (CE) supervisors amounting to €5.1 million was paid in respect of 583 ex-CE supervisors and CE assistant supervisors in 2022.

Ex-gratia payments amounting to €3.44 million (€3.539 million in 2021) were paid to survivors of the Magdalen laundries and other institutions in 2022.

Ex-gratia payments were made to 56 branch managers in 2022. The cost to the Department was €1.425 million. This was as a result of the impact of the Ukrainian crisis and cost of living increases.

6.3 Compensation and legal costs

Payments/costs paid by the Department in the year

	Claims by					Total	Total
	employees		members of the public			2022	2021
	Personal injuries ^a	Breach HR/ employment policies	Personal injuries ^b	Department schemes	Other ^c		
Number of cases	16	1	3	1	11	32	51
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
Department's own legal costs	238	—	1	—	—	239	365
Payments by/on behalf of Department							
Compensation	253	10	14	—	—	277	319
Legal costs	203	—	—	96	563	862	547
Other costs	12	—	1	—	3	16	7
2022 Total	706	10	16	96	566	1,394	1,238
2021 Total	636	89	66	196	251	1,238	

Notes ^a Total cases 16. Amounts paid in respect of individuals ranged from €10 to €132,049.

^b Total cases 3. Amounts paid in respect of individuals ranged from €397 to €15,350.

^c Total cases 11. Total individual costs ranged from €2,500 to €239,594. Ten cases relate to legal costs to other parties. The other cost relates to services provided to the Department.

Cumulative costs of cases completed in 2022

	Claims by					Total
	employees		members of the public			
	Personal injuries	Breach HR/ employment policies	Personal injuries	Department schemes	Other	
Number of cases	10	1	1	1	11	24
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
Department's own legal costs	276	—	78	—	—	354
Payments by/on behalf of Department						
Compensation	448	10	—	—	—	458
Legal costs	264	—	—	96	563	923
Other costs	20	—	9	—	3	32
2022 Total	1,008	10	87	96	566	1,767

6.4 EU funding

The outturn shown in subheads A.1 to A.44 includes payments in respect of activities which are co-financed by the EU. Estimates and actual receipts are recorded in note 4.1, subheads 7, 12 and 13.

Subhead description:	2022		2021
	Estimate	Realised	Realised
	€000	€000	€000
European Social Fund, programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning/European Employment Services	—	—	5,000
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)	3,300	3,307	3,928
Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme	—	—	374

European Social Fund+ (ESF+), programme for Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training programme (EIST)

EIST is Ireland's ESF+ programme for the 2021 to 2027 period. It was formally approved by the European Commission in October 2022 and approved by the Government of Ireland in November 2022. The programme involves a total investment of over €1.08 billion; €508 million from the EU and €573 million from the Government of Ireland. The programme has two different rates of co-financing. As 'more developed' regions, the Southern and the Eastern and Midlands regions will receive 40% in EU co-financing, while as a 'transition' region the North-Western region will receive 60% in EU co-financing. The Department's portion within the national €508 million allocation is approx. €60 million, with €5 million, €10 million and €15 million being allocated respectively to the JobsPlus, BTWEA and the new Disability schemes (commencing in 2024). The balancing €30 million allocation is in respect of the FEAD programme over the 2021 to 2027 period.

Funds for European Aid to the Most Deprived

The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) programme ended in Ireland on 31 January 2022 with support for the most deprived now funded by the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). The total value of EFT+ funding allocated to support the most deprived until 2027 is €34 million. Reimbursement from the European Commission is provided at 90% with the remaining 10% coming from the Exchequer.

Employment and Social Innovation programme

The Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme is a financing instrument at EU level to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions. In 2020, Ireland, as lead partner with One Family (in Ireland), Finland and Greece submitted a project proposal focussed on lone parents under a funding call entitled: 'Establishing and testing integrated interventions aimed at supporting people in (the most) vulnerable situations' financed by EaSI 2014-2020 (VP/2020/003). The bid for the project called "Lone Parents Digital Activation" was successful and the agreement was signed in November 2021. The maximum EU grant amount for the project is €1,245,926.97 (80% of the overall project budget) and this covers a 30-month project implementation period from November 2021 to April 2024. DSP is co-funding €105,000, with similar co-funding amounts from Finland and Greece. The initial tranche of funding (€373,778) was received from EaSI in December 2021 and this covers the first 12 months of the project. Of this initial tranche, €350,876.37 was expended during 2022. Further tranches will follow at the 12 month, 24 month and 30 month points (final balancing payment).

6.5 Late interest payments

	2022	2021
	€000	€000
Interest payments	4	8

6.6 Deferred surrender

Deferred surrender comprises savings in 2022 of €1.39 million in capital expenditures in the following subheads that were carried over to 2023.

	€000
Description of administration subhead:	
(v) Office equipment and external IT services	390
(vi) Office premises expenses	1,000
	1,390

Appendix A Summary of Social Protection Scheme Expenditure

	2022 €million	2021 €million
Vote 37		
Gross expenditure	12,817	18,152
Less non-scheme expenditure		
Administration	(596)	(545)
SIF subvention	—	(2,606)
Grant to Citizens Information Board	(56)	(59)
Miscellaneous services	(6)	(6)
Vote 37 scheme expenditure (A)	12,159	14,936
Social Insurance Fund		
Gross expenditure	12,927	15,668
Less non-scheme expenditure		
Administration	(264)	(244)
National Training Levy	(951)	(797)
Social Insurance Fund scheme expenditure (B)	11,712	14,627
Total Department scheme expenditure (A+B)	23,871	29,563
<i>Of which</i>		
<i>Mainstream schemes</i>	<i>22,646</i>	<i>20,851</i>
<i>Covid-19 schemes</i>	<i>1,225</i>	<i>8,712</i>
Total Department scheme expenditure	23,871	29,563

Scheme expenditure breakdown

Payments by scheme and category	2022 €million	2021 €million
Pensions		
State Pensions (Contributory)	6,565	6,186
State Pensions (Non-Contributory)	1,137	1,083
Widows'/Widowers'/Surviving Civil Partners' Pension	1,725	1,651
Bereavement Grant	—	—
Total	9,427	8,920
Working Age Income Supports		
Jobseeker's Allowance	1,641	1,567
One Parent Family Payment	614	561
Jobseeker's Benefit	486	336
Redundancy and Insolvency Benefit	21	25
Maternity Benefit	263	267
Paternity Benefit, Parents Benefit and Adoptive Benefit	79	50
Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance	121	95
Farm Assist	56	59
Deserted Wife's Benefit	64	64
Other Working Age - Income Supports	23	15
Exceptional and Urgent Needs Payments	58	43
Treatment Benefits and Health and Safety Benefit	129	116
Widows'/Widowers'/Surviving Civil Partners' Pension (Non-Contributory)	12	13
Deserted Wife's Allowance	1	1
Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment	198	4,019
Total	3,766	7,231
Supplementary Payments		
Rent Allowance	1	—
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)	5	6
Magdalen Laundries and other Institutions Payments	3	4
Rent Supplement	75	123
Household Benefits Package	282	274
Telephone Support Allowance	18	18
Fuel Allowance	576	316
Free Travel	89	91
Total	1,049	832

	2022 €million	2021 €million
Working Age Employment Supports		
Community Employment Programme	329	320
Back to Education Allowance	40	54
Back to Work Enterprise Allowance	32	29
TÚS Community Work Placement Scheme	90	79
JobsPlus	4	3
Other Working Age – Employment Supports	11	13
Youth Employment Support Scheme/Work Placement	—	1
Rural Social Scheme	49	50
Job Initiative	12	13
Local Employment Scheme	15	19
Jobs Club	2	4
Work Placement and Experience Programme	2	—
Partial Capacity Benefit	26	25
Contracted Public Employment Services (PES) Schemes	13	—
Covid-19 Wage Subsidy	1	16
Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme	839	4,571
Total	1,465	5,197
Illness, Disability and Carers		
Disability Allowance	2,016	1,829
Illness Benefit	801	677
Invalidity Pension	766	730
Carer's Payment	1,042	978
Carer's Support Grant	328	257
Domiciliary Care Allowance	224	202
Wage Subsidy Scheme	20	16
Disablement Benefit	70	70
Blind Pension	13	12
Death Benefit	11	10
Injury Benefit and Medical Care	9	11
Disability Activation Supports	9	10
Total	5,309	4,802
Children		
Child Benefit	2,286	2,090
Working Family Payment	361	338
Back to Work Family Dividend	11	10
Back to School Clothing and Footwear	86	52
School Meals	78	58
Child Related Payments	33	33
Total	2,855	2,581
Net expenditure on all schemes	23,871	29,563

Appendix B Accounts of bodies and funds under the aegis of the Department of Social Protection

The following table lists the bodies and funds under the aegis of the Department where the Department has an obligation to present financial statements. It indicates, at the account signing date, the period to which the last audited financial statements relate and the date on which they were presented to the Oireachtas.

Body/Departmental fund	Last accounting period	Date of audit report	Date received by Minister/Department	Date presented to the Oireachtas
Social Insurance Fund	2021	28 Sep 2022	28 Sep 2022	28 Oct 2022
Pensions Authority	2022	20 Jun 2023	21 Jun 2023	—
Citizens Information Board	2021	30 Sep 2022	6 Oct 2022	14 Nov 2022