



People and Organisation Strategy

2022 - 2024



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Foreword, Angela Denning, Chief Executive Officer | 4 |
| Executive Summary | 6 |
| 1. Introduction | 8 |
| 1. Better Ways of Working | 9 |
| 2. Our Organisation | 10 |
| 3. Creating our People and Organisation Strategy | 12 |
| 2. Strategy Themes | 13 |
| Overview | 14 |
| 2.1 Workforce of the Future | 16 |
| Background | 16 |
| Future direction | 17 |
| 1. People and Team Development | 19 |
| 2. Career Development | 20 |
| 3. Executive and Leadership Development | 21 |
| 4. Management and Employee Capability Assessment | 23 |
| 5. Competency Models | 23 |
| 2.2 People | 25 |
| Background | 25 |
| Future direction | 26 |
| 1. Workforce (Succession) Planning | 27 |
| 2. Employee Engagement | 28 |
| 3. Performance Management | 30 |
| 4. Orientation and Onboarding | 31 |
| 5. Recruitment | 32 |
| 2.3 Organisation | 35 |
| Background | 35 |
| The Future | 36 |
| 1. Purpose and Values | 37 |
| 2. Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing | 38 |
| 3. Culture Development | 40 |
| 4. Organisation Structure | 41 |
| 5. Employee Experience | 42 |
| 2.4 Key Measures of Success | 43 |
| 3. Actions Summary | 44 |

Foreword

“In this, our first People and Organisation Strategy, our aim is to make jobs more meaningful and rewarding by streamlining and simplifying processes, reducing our reliance on paper-based operations and provide for digitally enabled operations.”



Our people will transform the Courts Service by delivering our ambitious Modernisation Programme to realise our Strategic Vision 2030. This programme is the most significant change since the establishment of the Courts Service and seeks to interpret our statutory mandate to reflect a modern, digital Ireland.

It is being undertaken whilst maintaining operations with ever increasing demands as we emerge from the pandemic, implement legislative reform and deal with more complex cases.

This strategy is the first of three People and Organisation Strategies towards our Strategic Vision 2030 and spans calendar years 2022, 2023 and 2024. It sets out our aims to support the achievement of our Strategic Vision 2030 to make access to justice easier, quicker and more cost effective by delivering on our commitment to continue to invest in our people.

In this, our first People and Organisation Strategy, our aim is to make jobs more meaningful and rewarding by streamlining and simplifying processes, reducing our reliance on paper-based operations and provide for digitally enabled operations. Our desire is to be a workplace where everyone can thrive; be a place where people want to invest their careers to realise personal and organisation goals.

We will do this by ensuring everyone has the skills and capabilities to perform at the high level required for the implementation of our Strategic Vision 2030. As an organisation we will continue to enhance our capability to drive strategic change and continuously collaborate with our stakeholders. We will work with our colleagues across the justice system to seek out opportunities for cross justice sector programmes and job rotations.

We know our people want to help shape how services are designed. My commitment and that of the Senior Management Team is for everyone working in the Courts Service to have their say and be heard as we implement this People and Organisation Strategy. This is a key part of improving our employee experience. The

results for the Courts Service in the Civil Service Staff Engagement Survey carried out in September 2020 confirm we are making progress in this regard.

This People and Organisation Strategy aligns with commitments contained in the Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy to re-imagine our workplaces to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by new and emerging technologies and to promote a culture which supports our vision. To earn public trust and promote responsiveness to change; openness, honesty and innovation are key to how we work.

In conclusion, this strategy sets our long-term commitment to our people by working together to implement the 22 actions to facilitate the organisation achieve its vision of enabling a world class courts system.



Angela Denning

Chief Executive Officer, The Courts Service



Executive Summary

This strategy sets-out how we will support our ambitious Modernisation Programme goals to realise our Strategic Vision 2030, by providing the right support, structures, skills, and environment for our people. The Modernisation Programme is about putting users first. Therefore we want to improve the employee experience for our internal users and create better ways of working which support more user centric and digitally enabled operations.

The Courts Service comprises a community of over 1,145 people providing frontline services to the public, working in courtroom environments and support offices. Before considering new ways of working under this strategy, we first sought to understand the current environment within the organisation, following a period of unprecedented change, innovation, and upheaval and to check-in with people across the organisation. In order to meet the diverse needs of our people, the development and implementation of this strategy is being informed through:

- a) a working group of representatives from each area brought together to create the strategy,
- b) consultations with our people through webinars and grade specific workshops to inform the strategic themes and
- c) the Principal Officer network to mobilise implementation across all directorates.

Improving employee engagement and creating better ways of working must include meeting the needs of all our people and ensuring that the right supports are in place for them and the organisation. To comprehensively meet these requirements, the strategy has been divided into three strategic themes 'workforce of the future', 'people' and 'organisation'. Through consultation our people have prioritised the five focus areas under each theme as outlined in chapter two 'Strategic Themes'. In order to achieve our ambitious goals, each focus area is action orientated, with chapter two comprising 22 Actions, listed together in chapter three. In summary these actions and the activity around them over the next three years will focus on; career development, workforce planning, skills development, and leadership development.

The Actions have been informed by the feedback and input from our people and by the vision for the organisation as follows:

| Feedback and organisation vision | Actions |
|--|-----------------------|
| Feedback | |
| Career development and support to progress in the Courts Service is important. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 & 15 |
| Staff turnover presents challenges to operational management | 8, 12, 13 & 14 |
| We need to be better at staff recognition and making staff feel valued | 10, 18, 19 & 21 |
| Staff want to be involved in decision making | 10, 16 & 19 |
| Some staff feel isolated and would like a greater sense of belonging and inclusion | 12 & 17 |
| Organisation vision | |
| The introduction of new and enhanced roles | 4 & 11 |
| Leadership & Management development | 5 |
| The development of skill profiles | 6 & 7 |
| Greater career opportunities | 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 & 15 |
| Succession planning | 8 & 9 |
| Recruitment, retention, and development of staff. | All actions |

This strategy has also been developed in consideration of key internal strategies and wider Government thinking, policy and approaches including Civil Service Renewal 2030 strategy, as set out in the first chapter 'Introduction'.

Measuring strategy effectiveness and the actions will form a key part of the journey of this strategy. As with the development and implementation, measurement will centre around our people. Progress will be measured through an annual Courts Service employee survey and the three yearly Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey. Meeting the envisaged benefits of the strategy, which include:

- enhanced performance of all our people;
- our people have the skills to thrive in a modernised Courts Service; and
- we can deliver easier, quicker, and more cost-effective access to justice;

and our measurement approach are outlined in chapter two section 2.4. We believe this sets us on the right path for long-term strategic growth to support the delivery of a user centric service and create better ways of working in readiness for digitally enabled operations.

1. Introduction

Introduction

Better Ways of Working

The world of work continues to change at pace creating the need to implement solutions which allow for better ways of working with the pandemic creating the greatest need and reason to work in new and different ways. Remote court sittings, increased use of technology, remote working, online appointment scheduling and staggered lists, are becoming more and more a part of our norm.

The pandemic has shown certain roles can be carried out anywhere. Indeed, we have developed several virtual teams including Judicial Secretaries, Modernisation Programme work streams and the Civil Support Team in Circuit & District Court Operations.

Our Strategic Vision 2030 commits to “**Better Ways of Working**”. We will realise this by ensuring our people have the tools, resources, skills, and capabilities to perform in a modernised Courts system and our leaders are agile and innovative in driving change.

Technology will greatly assist the development of better ways of working through the improvement of our case management systems. These new systems will facilitate the creation of enhanced roles focused on the management of case progression with court users, leading to the development of professional career paths for different roles including quasi-legal roles such as deputy masters in the High Court.

A better ways of working approach commits to the continuous engagement of our people in shaping how our services are designed including the creation and delivery of this strategy. The ultimate benefit of this approach is more meaningful and rewarding roles and the development of our people through professional career paths, which will enable us to provide easier to access and user centric services for our customers. This strategy aims to outline, across three strategic themes, how we plan to adapt and work together to progress better ways of working.

Our Organisation

The Courts Service was established in 1998. At the time of writing, it has been in operation for 22 years. Our work, some of our processes and our buildings are steeped in heritage and history. We seek to celebrate our heritage and recognise the knowledge and expertise of our people for the benefit of newer and future recruits.

The Courts Service employs 1,145 people across 42 locations and 103 venues, in over 40 offices who provide services to 176 judges, 11,500 solicitors, 2,300 barristers, An Garda Síochána, Irish Prison Service, Probation Service, government agencies, support organisations, victims, witnesses, litigants, defendants and the public.

Courts and court offices are highly operational environments, supported by a range of support offices, which collectively mean that our people require a wide range of expertise, knowledge, skills, and personal attributes to deliver our services.

The Courts Service has continued to grow in terms of people and capability. Over the last five years our workforce has increased by 10%.



Staff Numbers

Staff Numers for 2017 to 2021

| | Dec-21 | Dec-20 | Dec-19 | Dec-18 | Dec-17 |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Senior Management Team | 6 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Principal Officer | 32 | 29 | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| Assistant Principal Officer | 135 | 133 | 134 | 119 | 115 |
| Higher Executive Officer | 160 | 153 | 136 | 137 | 141 |
| Executive Officer | 280 | 284 | 277 | 161 | 259 |
| Clerical Officer | 304 | 304 | 302 | 294 | 299 |
| Court Messenger | 16 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 18 |
| Subtotal | 933 | 927 | 903 | 868 | 871 |
| Service Officer | 30 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 27 |
| Cleaner | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Subtotal | 33 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 30 |
| Administrative Officer | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Executive Legal Officer | 7 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Judicial Assistant | 87 | 78 | 77 | 74 | 46 |
| Tipstaff | 39 | 42 | 44 | 49 | 52 |
| Subtotal | 135 | 129 | 125 | 128 | 103 |
| Office Holders | 19 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| Total | 1,120 | 1,106 | 1,080 | 1,049 | 1,026 |

Creating our People and Organisation Strategy

This strategy has been created by consulting with our people which took place over several months during 2021 via webinars and virtual workshops. Everyone had an opportunity to give feedback and almost a third of the workforce contributed. This feedback directly informed the priorities and actions as detailed in Chapter 3.

Feedback from our colleagues

- Career development support to progress in the Courts Service is important.
- Staff turnover presents challenges to operational management.
- We need to be better at recognising and valuing one another.
- Feeling part of and involved in decision making is important.
- Some people feel isolated and are seeking a greater sense of belonging and inclusion.

Much of this feedback relates to the “Invest in People” pillar of reform under the Modernisation Programme particularly around career development, succession planning and people retention.

As mentioned above, the strategy was developed by a People and Organisation working group with representation from Human Resources, Learning and Development, Communications & Media Unit, Health, Safety and Well-being, and Operations.

The design of this strategy has been completed in alignment with other Courts Service, Justice and Public Sector strategies including:

- Civil Service Renewal 2030, the aims concerning workforce, workplace and organisation of the future are reflected in this strategy.
- Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan (2021-2023)
- Courts Service Learning and Development Strategy (2020-2023)
- Courts Service Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (2021 – 2025)
- ICT Strategy (2021-2024) particularly in relation to actions under the strategic themes of Desktop and Infrastructure Modernisation, Unified Case Management Platform and Capacity, Capability and Governance.
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2021-2024)

The Estate Strategy recently issued seeks to support the objectives of the People and Organisation Strategy by having buildings that are fit for purpose to ensure better ways of working in meeting the challenges faced by our people.

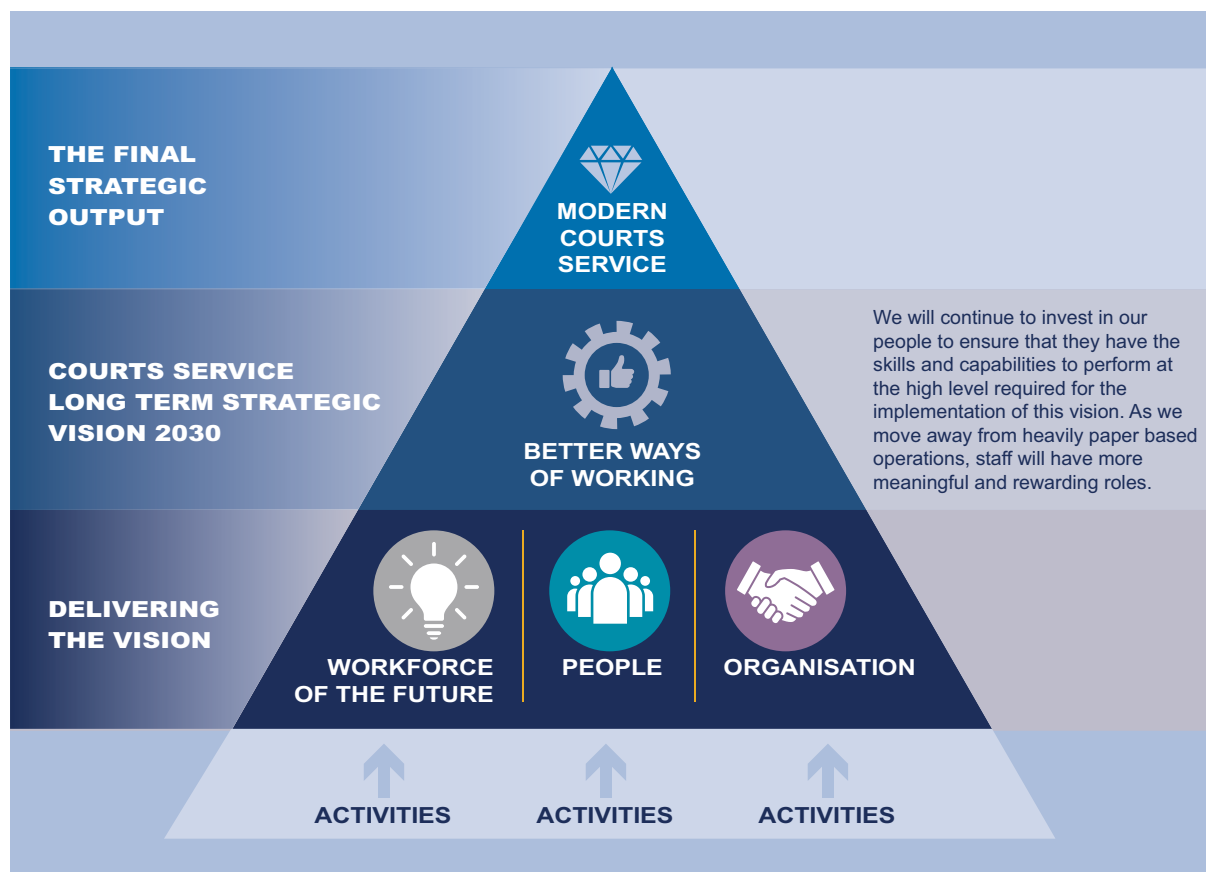
2. Strategic Themes

Strategic Themes

Three strategic themes were identified as the means to structure our People and Organisation Strategy and to ensure that we are best positioned to meet the wide range of opportunities presented by the Modernisation Programme and to operate effectively in the modern, digital world. They are:

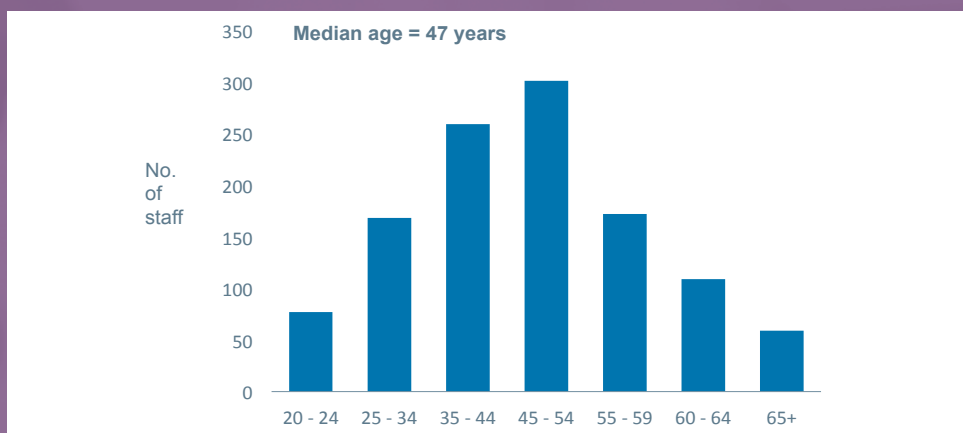
1. **Workforce of the Future** – support our people to develop the skills needed to perform in a modernised Courts Service.
2. **People** – be a place where people can thrive and reach their potential.
3. **Organisation** – create renewed sense of shared purpose and values, a healthy culture, and a fit-for-purpose structure to support equality, diversity, and agile working as part of a modernised Courts Service.

Figure 1: Strategy Overview



The Age and Gender profile of our People

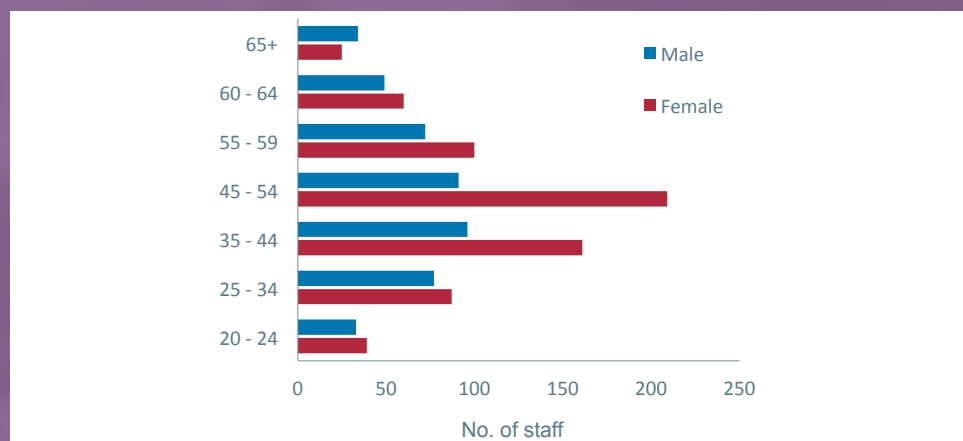
Age Profile at 31 Dec 2021



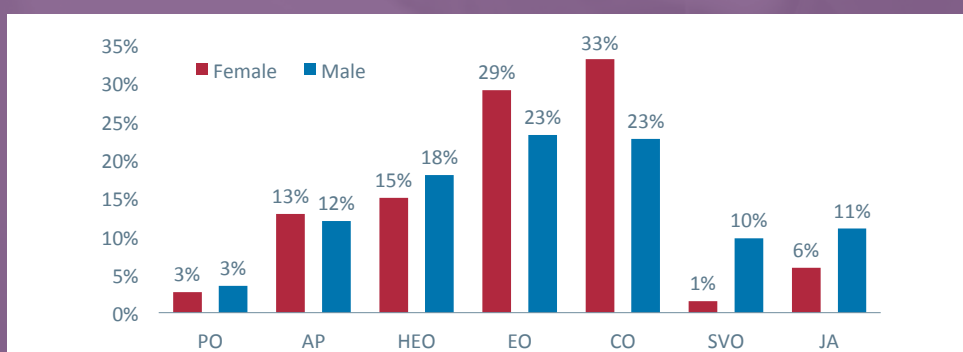
Age Profile of Principal Officers to Clerical Officers at 31 Dec 2021

| Grade/Age Group | 20-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| Principal Officer | 0 | 1 | 6 | 16 | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| Assistant Principal Officer | 0 | 3 | 32 | 50 | 31 | 13 | 6 |
| Higher Executive Officer | 0 | 25 | 51 | 59 | 22 | 11 | 4 |
| Executive Officer | 3 | 46 | 88 | 85 | 35 | 22 | 10 |
| Clerical Officer | 23 | 60 | 72 | 69 | 51 | 36 | 7 |
| Subtotal | 27 | 135 | 249 | 279 | 146 | 84 | 27 |

Age Profile by Gender at 31 Dec 2021



Gender Profile by Grade at 31 Dec 2021



Each theme has five focus areas as set out below:

Figure 2: Strategy and Focus Areas Table

| THEMES | FOCUS AREAS | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|
|  Workforce of the future |  People and Team Development |  Career Development |  Executive and Leadership Development |  Manager and Employee Capability |  Competency Models |
|  People |  Workforce Planning |  Employee Engagement |  Performance Management |  Orientation and On-boarding |  Recruitment |
|  Organisation |  Purpose and Values |  Diversity Inclusion and Wellbeing |  Culture |  Organisational Structure |  Employee Experience |

2.1. Workforce of the Future

Background

The Courts Service is staffed by skilled and expert people. This strategy aims to consolidate what we have achieved, build on good practices, and anticipate changes to ways of working, thinking, and behaving. This will ensure support for individual, team and organisational learning, to play our part in the development of a modernised Courts system.

Through the implementation of recent learning and development strategies, strong foundations have been laid including a move towards a coaching management model; a suite of grade development programmes; new to grade programmes; an accredited Management Development Academy (FETAC Level 6) and a more structured approach to technical training. More recent programmes such as JAM (just a minute) card and Trauma Informed practice training are providing tools to enable our people to adopt a more user centric approach in the delivery of our services.

The pandemic accelerated the adoption of a blended delivery approach to our learning programmes, with eLearning modules, as our primary learning tool, supported by short virtual classroom sessions used to discuss and embed learning. There are a number of advantages to this delivery model. It negates the need for

our geographically dispersed learners to travel to access learning, whilst offering a flexible approach with learners being able to access content at a time that suits the needs of their offices, an important consideration when time is at a premium.

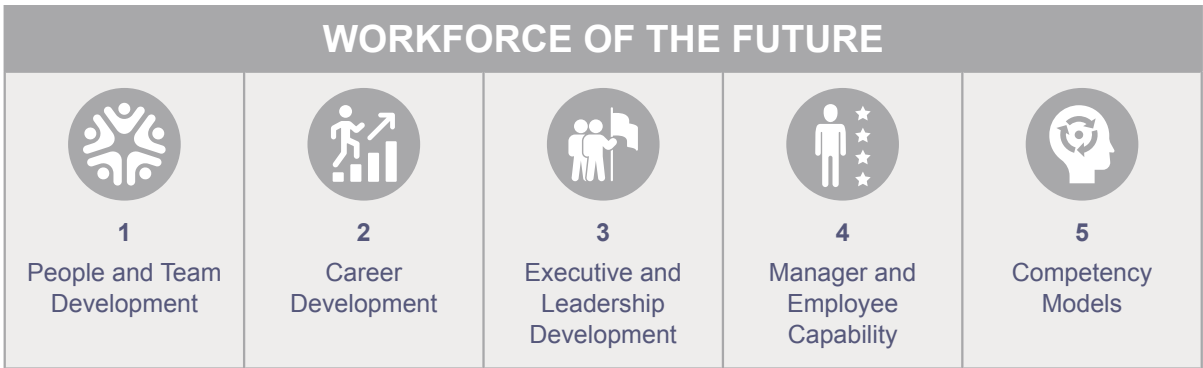
Future direction

Significant work has been undertaken to modernise our approach to the provision of learning activities. This has brought us to the position where we can now work in an agile way to develop the capabilities required to deliver our Strategic Vision 2030, including enhancing our digital capabilities, ability to deliver, drive and lead change, and to provide the tools and support needed to progress in our careers in the future Courts Service. We are committed to lifelong learning and supportive of continuous education and professional development.

We are committed to partnering with colleagues across the justice sector to leverage opportunities to work together to build capability across the sector, such as inputting into the Criminal Justice Learning & Development Working Group.

The focus areas under this theme, are prioritised in terms of importance as ranked by colleagues during our consultation processes as follows:

Figure 3: Focus areas by order of importance



District and Combined Offices

Headcount

76
41
6

Central Dublin Offices

Phoenix House 336
Four Courts Complex 237
CCJ 64
Dolphin House 20

0 100 200 300 400

Powered by Bing
© Microsoft, London

District and Combined Offices

Central Dublin Offices

| Office | Count |
|---------------------|-------|
| Phoenix House | 77 |
| Four Courts Complex | 46 |
| CCJ | 12 |

Total

0 4

0 25 50 75 100

Source: District and Combined Offices

District and Combined Offices

Dublin Offices

| Office | Total |
|---------------------|-------|
| Phoenix House | 182 |
| Four Courts Complex | 108 |
| CCJ | 49 |
| Dolphin House | 20 |



1. People and Team Development

People and team development was ranked as the number one priority by our people. This reflects the need for us all to continuously develop new skills over the lifetime of our careers.

New initiatives

We recognise the need to develop our people as individuals and collectively as members of a team. Research has shown that how a team works together is a critical enabler of performance, not solely individual performance. To support us to build a high performing teams' culture, we will develop a new 'high performing teams' programme.

The knowledge required to deliver our operational services is substantial. This is particularly true of our court registrars who build this knowledge primarily through on the job training over time. The long-term future direction for the continued development of this knowledge and associated skills is to partner with a third level institution to provide an accredited co-delivered programme. This will recognise the expertise of our staff and formalise their knowledge with an appropriate qualification. Significant work will be required to reach this point. The foundations for this work will be laid by expanding the technical training offered through modular programmes based on court operations. This will be achieved by the learning and development team collaborating with operational subject matter experts including the Legal Research and Library Services.

Existing initiatives

We will continue to build on and expand our current suite of programmes and will continuously review and progress the offering provided through the learning pathways on our learning management system.

We have a strong history of supporting our staff to develop through the financial supports we provide for courses leading to academic qualifications. We will continue to invest in this scheme, align it to our strategic goals and make it as widespread as possible.



ACTIONS

1. Develop and roll out a 'high performing team' programme.
2. Develop an accredited co-delivered programme which expands our technical skills programme starting with Court Registrar training.
3. Expand our current programme through our learning pathways on the learning management system and continue to offer financial support for development via the Refund of Fees scheme.



2. Career Development

The Civil Service Engagement Survey 2020 revealed that 60% of us would be happy to spend the rest of our careers in the Courts Service. We want to support everyone to have the opportunity for career progression in the modern Courts Service (vertically or horizontally) and to be able to benefit from different jobs and experiences.

Existing initiatives

To support career progression and encourage long term careers within the Courts Service, we will continue to roll out our career development programmes.

In 2021 the 'Developing your Career Pathway' programme was launched for Clerical Officers. The aim of this programme is to support participants to develop a career plan and provide focus for their development and career goals. This programme has been well received by participants, and the roll out of this will be expanded to include Executive Officers from 2022. This programme relies on mentoring by managers called "Career Champions". Becoming a Career Champion involves participating on a tailor-made programme. The greater the number of participants, the more Career Champions are required and over time the programme will reach all grades across the organisation.

The provision of other successful programmes including grade development, new to grade and our accredited Management Development Academy will also continue. The transition of these programmes to a blended learning delivery model increases their accessibility for learners, maximising the numbers who can participate and benefit from the programmes.

New initiatives

Opportunities to acquire experience and perspectives beyond our organisation increases individual effectiveness and our ability as an organisation to collaborate to deliver better services. To facilitate this, we will take part in the planned pilot Criminal Justice sector cross-sectoral job-shadowing programme and pilot secondment scheme.



ACTIONS

4. Expansion of Developing your career pathway programme to Executive Officers.
5. Take part in pilot Criminal Justice Sector, cross-sectoral job-shadowing programme and pilot cross-sectoral secondment scheme



3. Executive and Leadership Development

The Courts Service operates in a complex, challenging environment and this will continue to be the case.

Existing initiatives

To ensure our leaders and managers have the support they need we will continue to participate in the Criminal Justice Leadership programme, the Senior Public Service Leadership programme, and other such initiatives.

We will also continue to invest in leadership development by continuing to provide

- Executive Coaching and Team coaching
- QQI accredited Management Development Academy to Higher Executive Officers and Assistant Principal Officers
- New to Grade Programmes to support newly promoted managers and leaders in the first year in their new roles and
- We will continue to upskill those in management and leadership roles via our Coaching for Performance Programme and support those who wish to enhance these skills via an Executive Coaching qualification.

New initiatives

We recognise the crucial role our Principal Officer leaders play in driving and delivering our Strategic Vision 2030. To support them do this we will develop and deliver a 'Leadership in Action' two-year programme. This programme will be based on latest leadership development research and will support Principal Officers with masterclasses, expert speakers, and coaching. To apply the learning within the workplace Principal Officers will develop personal action plans to meet challenges, in collaboration with their peers, as they work collectively towards designing and implementing solutions to build our organisation of the future, with the Senior Management Team.

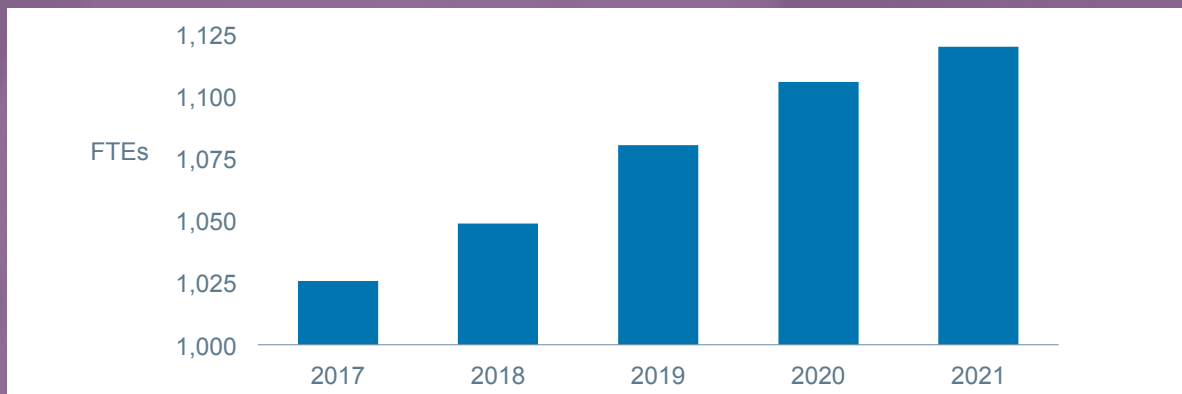


ACTION

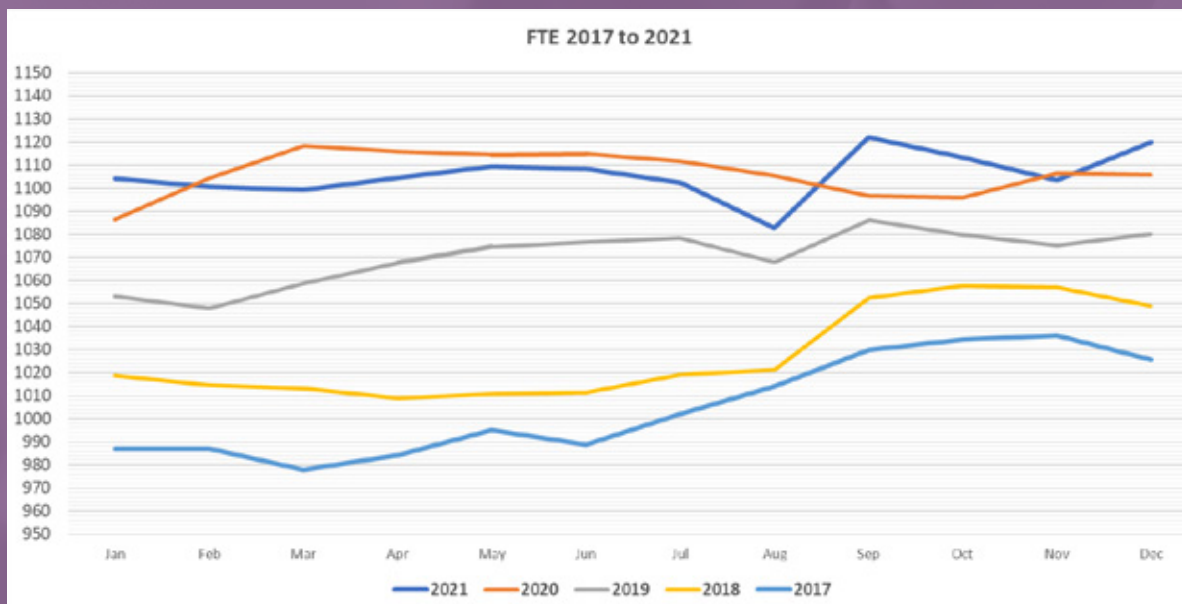
6. Roll out Leadership in Action programme to Principal Officers

Increase in number of staff from 2017 to 2021

FTE Increase from 31 Dec 2017 to 31 Dec 2021



FTE Progression from 2017 to 2021





4. Management and Employee Capability Assessment

The modernised Courts Service requires new skills and capabilities. We need to provide learning and development opportunities required to thrive and progress in a modern digital organisation. To do this, we need to establish our current level of skills and use this to inform our learning and development planning.

We will use the information received in the Capability Assessment carried out in 2021 to identify skills gaps. This information together with training needs identified via our performance management process will inform our learning and development initiatives.



ACTION

7. Develop an organisation training plan using data from organisation Capability Assessment and Performance Management Process.



5. Competency Models

Competencies detail the behaviours and skills needed to perform a job successfully. The Courts Service uses the Civil Service Personal Competency Framework primarily in recruitment and selection both internally and externally. These competencies do not always reflect the specialised nature of our roles and can present some challenges in their application. We need competency frameworks to meet our needs such as for operational roles for example court registrars and customer service roles. This will support the streamlining of roles, recruitment processes and will facilitate training and development and support our people transferring between offices.

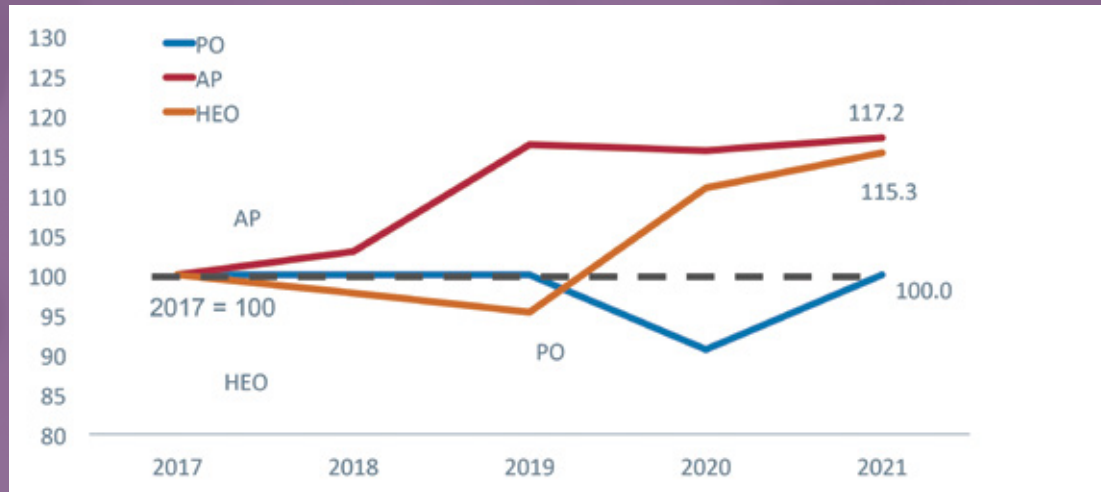


ACTION

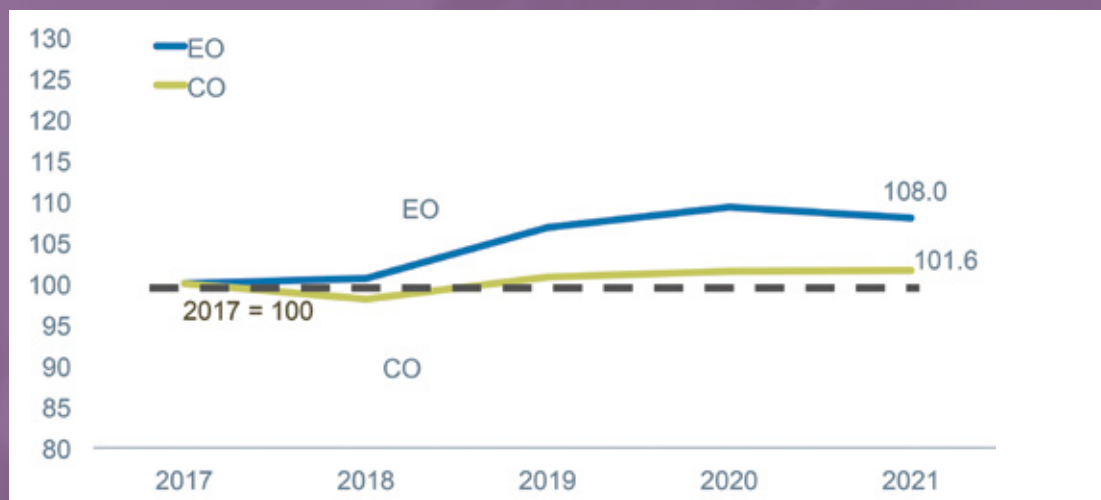
8. Explore the different competency models to identify a competency framework that will better reflect the competencies and capabilities needed for our organisation now and in the future.

Increase in number of staff per grade

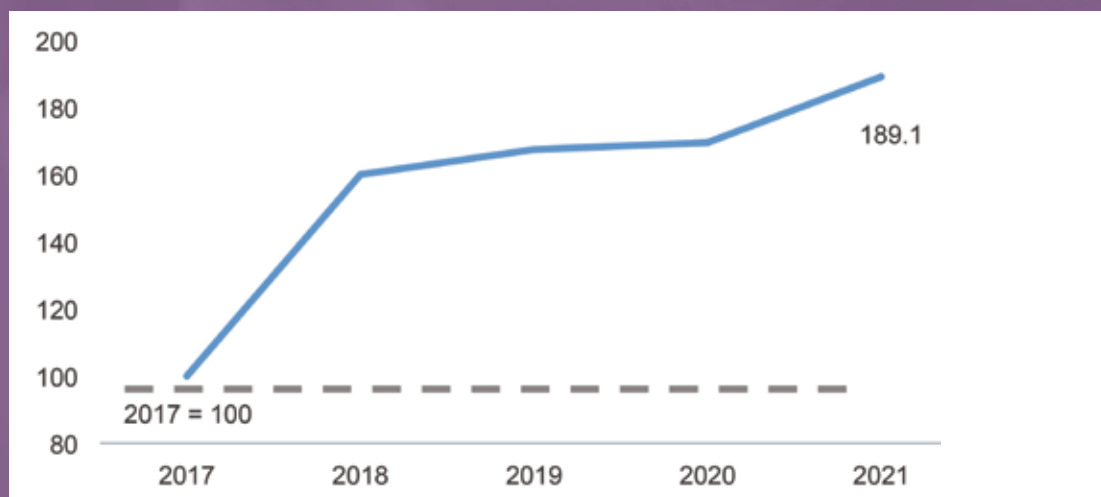
Change in PO, AP and HEO Grades from 2017 to 2021



Change in EO and CO Grades from 2017 to 2021



Change in the number of Judicial Assistants from 2017 to 2021



2.2. People

Background

The People strategic theme can be defined as “the set of practices that determines how the Courts Service attracts, retains, and grows its employees in order to best deliver our services and accomplish our Strategic Vision 2030.” To engage, develop, and retain our people we will implement practices to support our colleagues to reach their fullest potential.

Expectations of work and the workplace have evolved to “having a sense of purpose and doing meaningful work.” Our colleagues and those new to the Courts Service seek a sense of purpose and rewarding work. Through this strategy and our modernisation programme we will build an organisation which provides such work, effectively and efficiently delivering access to justice.

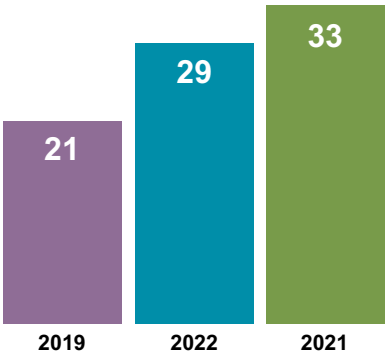
We have made very significant progress in adding coaching skillsets to our management style. We know trust-based relationships better satisfy the needs of all our people and support a better working environment. Therefore, we will build on the work already in progress and continue to develop practices and ways of working that enhance trust-based relationships

We also recognise the need to satisfy the domestic and family needs of our colleagues as well as well-being in the workplace, feeling valued and engaged. Through this strategy we will build on the traditional Human Resource activities of recruitment and selection, onboarding, managing of HR systems and reporting, performance management and employee relations to further support the needs of our colleagues.

Given our FTE has increased by 15% over last 6 years and turnover was 14% pre pandemic, recruitment was and continues to be a significant HR activity. In the last 3 years 83 competitions including external and internal ones have been carried out with best practice recruitment and selection to ensure the best selection decisions are made.

The chart shows the breakdown of competitions for 2021, 2020 and 2019.

Working with the Communications & Media Unit, we are developing the Courts Service brand and using social media to market ourselves as an employer of choice. This has led to successful recruitment campaigns particularly amongst judicial assistants who today number over 100.



Significant progress has been achieved in the management of under-performance in probation and tackling legacy longer term employee issues.

Future direction

Our overall People goal is to make the Courts Service a place where people can reach their potential. Our key outcome will be to “**have the right people, in the right place with the right capabilities at the right time**”.

Our consultation process ranked the urgency and importance of the five areas of focus which underpin the People strategic theme as follows:

Figure 4: Pillar Activities in order of Priority





1. Workforce (Succession) Planning

Planning is the key to having “the right people, in the right place with the right capabilities at the right time”. Our planning will be supported by an in-depth understanding of our current workforce to include demographics such as length of service, length in grade, location, age, as well as understanding the depth and breadth of potential and performance available at each grade. This will be carried out annually using a standard framework. The findings of which will inform the numbers of colleagues required, where and when. This in turn will inform planning for competitions and recruitment and allow the development of personalised career and development interventions.



ACTIONS

9. Develop a workforce plan by using a standard framework to evaluate the performance and potential of each grade.
10. Support the Senior Management Team and managers to create and implement local workforce plans and personalised career and development plans for their team.





2. Employee Engagement

To be best able to deliver efficient and effective services to our users and stakeholders, colleagues need to feel engaged, and valued in their work. Through this strategy we will develop a framework of activities which will support this engagement.

It is the combined impact of the following that will create sustainable engagement:

- recognition
- local manager engagement
- empowerment
- diversity and inclusion
- involvement in decision making

To first understand our current level of engagement we will deploy an annual employee engagement survey. The first of which, will be our baseline and the outputs of this will allow us to create a framework of activities and interventions to create a positive working environment, which will ultimately contribute to organisational effectiveness. It will also allow us to set future targets against which we can benchmark.

This annual survey will be in addition to the three yearly Civil Service Staff Engagement Survey.



ACTION

11. Deploy an annual employee engagement survey to inform activities and interventions to increase engagement and organisational effectiveness

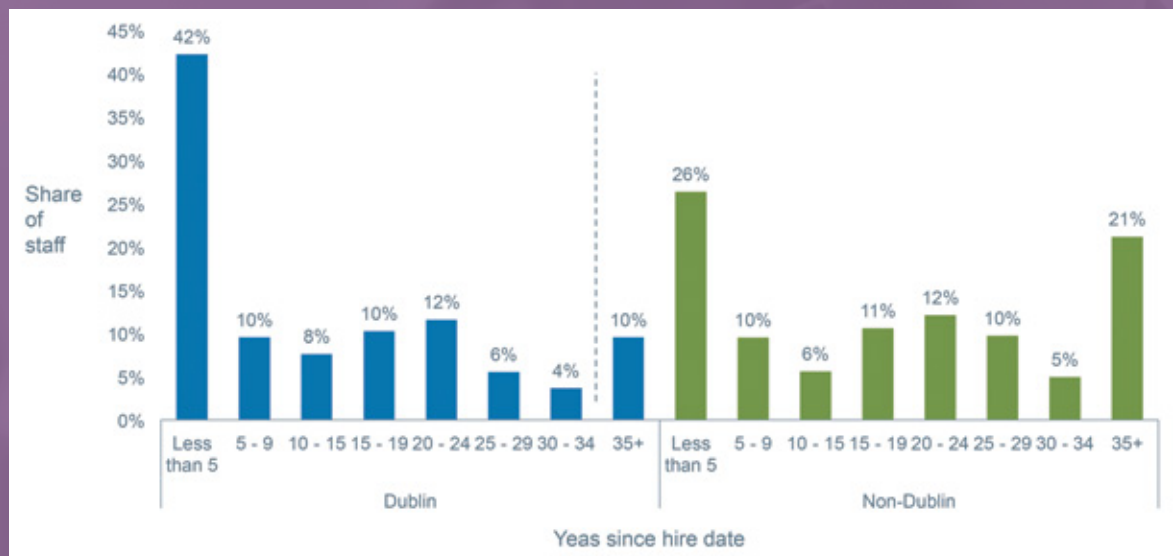


Length of Service of our People

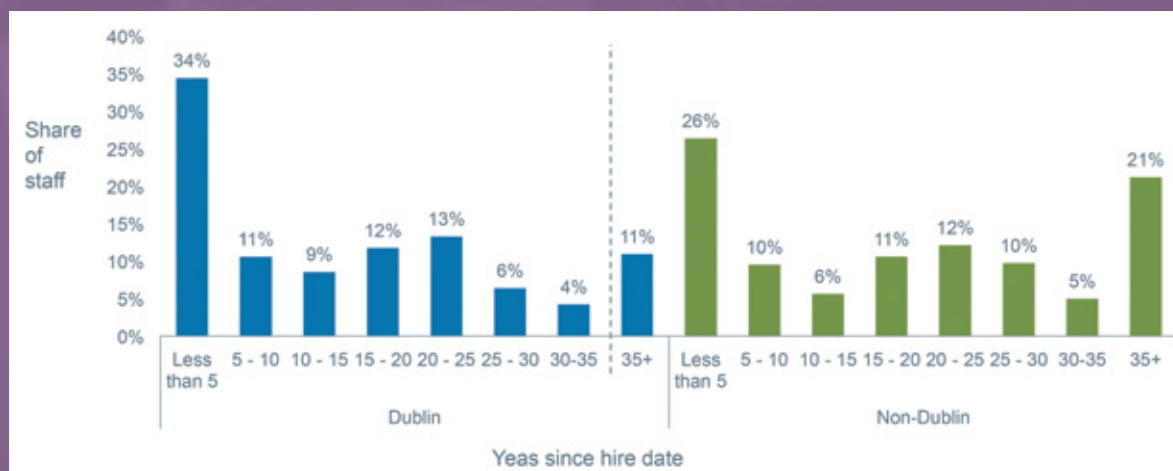
Length of Service for all Staff at 31 Dec 2021



Length of Service in Dublin and Outside Dublin at 31 Dec 2021



Length of Service by Region excluding Judicial Assistants at 31 Dec 2021





3. Performance Management

We recognise the need to develop how we measure the performance of our organisation. The aim is for all staff to have a clear line of sight of how their performance contributes to the overall performance and the delivery of our services.

We will do this by improving our annual performance management process whereby the management team will cascade strategic and operational goals to offices and ensure accountability.

Significant progress has been achieved in the management of under-performance, probation and tackling legacy longer term employee issues. We will build on this approach and continue to invest in performance management training, so managers are confident and competent to have regular performance coaching conversations with their teams.

Managers will be supported to know what good performance is through the development of competencies for the jobs our people do such as customer service, managing operations, court going and so forth. This directly relates the competency development work mentioned under our Workforce of the Future theme.



ACTION

12. Begin to formalise the process by which strategic, operational and annual corporate goals are systematically cascaded by the Senior Management Team to Heads of Offices, local managers and onwards to all colleagues.





4. Orientation and Onboarding

First impressions count. This applies to starting a new job from job acceptance through to completion of probation. We know that effective orientation and onboarding support new colleagues to integrate better into the organisation and improve their ability to reach the required levels of performance for their role as quickly as possible.

We have made progress through the provision of our multi-modular corporate induction, new to grade programmes and our Clerical Officer academy and these will be reviewed and improved where necessary.

To further support our new entrants, our Human Resources and Learning and Development units will work in partnership with local managers to streamline local onboarding processes.



ACTION

13. Improve our onboarding and orientations processes to be as effective as possible; in facilitating new joiners to have a positive probation experience; so, they feel they belong and understand the career opportunities available to them.





5. Recruitment

Recruitment is a significant HR activity. Our FTE has increased by 10% over the last five years with turnover at 14% pre pandemic. Turnover reduced to 6% for the first six months of 2021 and increased to 10% for the second half of 2021 due to the easing of Public Health restrictions. The overall turnover for 2021 was 16%. This represents the labour market playing catch up for the lack of staff movement during the pandemic. This changing labour market dynamic presents a challenge to be addressed as part of this Strategy.

In the last 3 years 83 competitions including external and internal have been carried out with almost 300 appointed and the remaining 200 coming from the Public Appointments Service.

Existing initiatives

The Courts Service relies on the services of the Public Appointments Service (PAS) for a significant amount of our recruitment. Delays in filling vacancies can result in operational challenges; compromising our ability to select the people best suited to our needs and to have joiners available for a handover period. To mitigate these challenges, we will continue to explore all avenues to attract and select those most suited to work in the Courts Service. This will include developing close working relationships with local schools, colleges, Institutes of Technology and Universities.



New initiatives

Most vacancies are advertised internally first, enabling internal mobility. However, to avoid operational challenges and support career development, a more planned approach to internal mobility is required. To progress this, under this strategy we plan to examine the possibility of an internal job rotation scheme.

School leaver and intern programmes at Clerical Officer grade will be developed with a view to interns returning to the Courts Service upon graduating and availing of our career development programmes. We will also explore direct hiring from Executive Officer and above.

We will build our brand as an employer of choice and create “A Day in the Life” videos to inform candidates and colleagues of different roles.

We are committed to exploring avenues to attract those who may be marginalised from accessing the workforce. We are also committed to employing more persons with disabilities to comply with the Civil Service targets of 6% by 2024 in this regard.



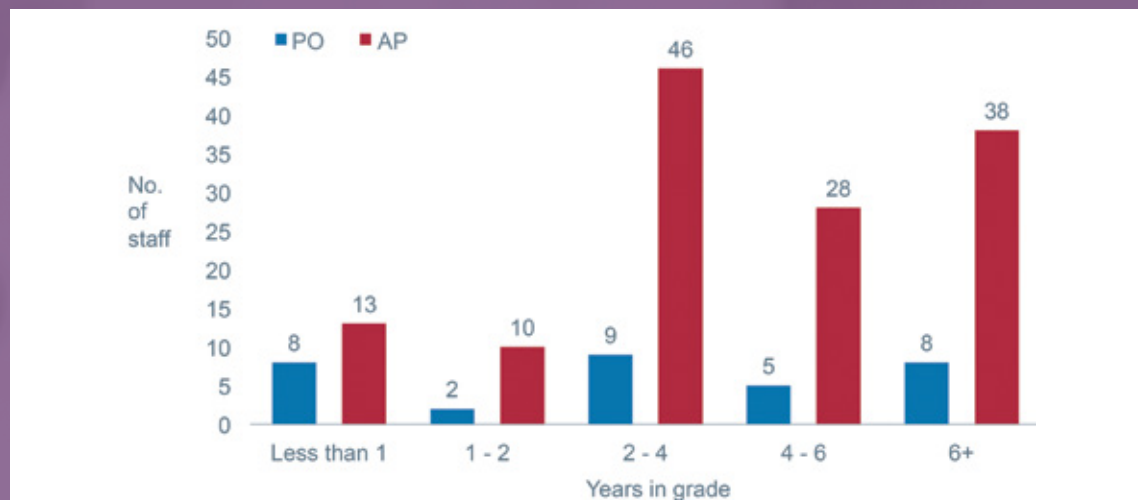
ACTION

14. Develop new and innovative ways to attract new people to reduce delays in the hiring process and to select those most suitable for our roles.
15. Continue to work with the Communications & Media Unit to develop our employer brand particularly amongst local schools, colleges and universities and optimise social media for recruiting.
16. Explore the use of an internal job rotation scheme to facilitate internal mobility and look at cross justice job rotations possibilities.

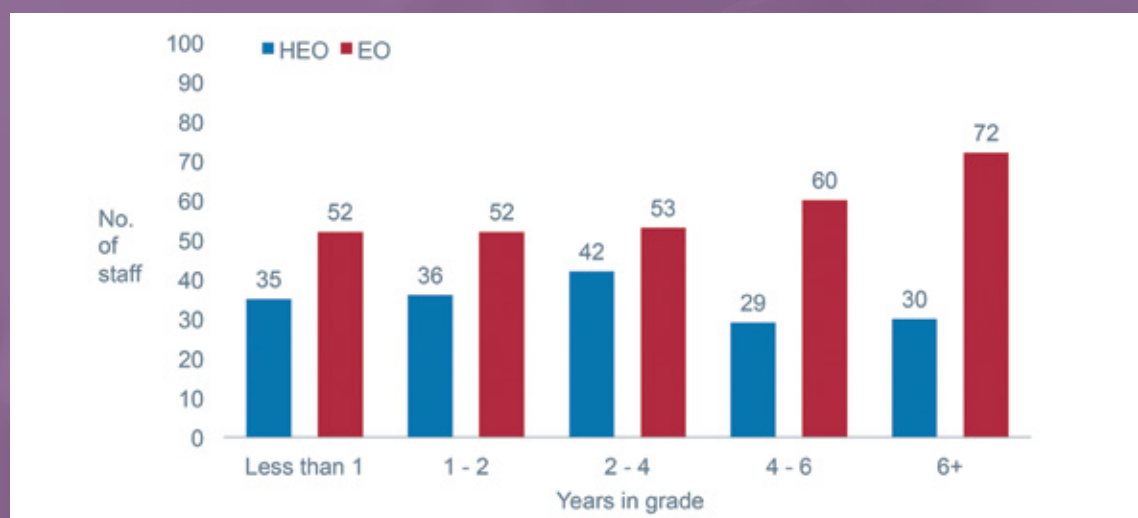


Length in Grade

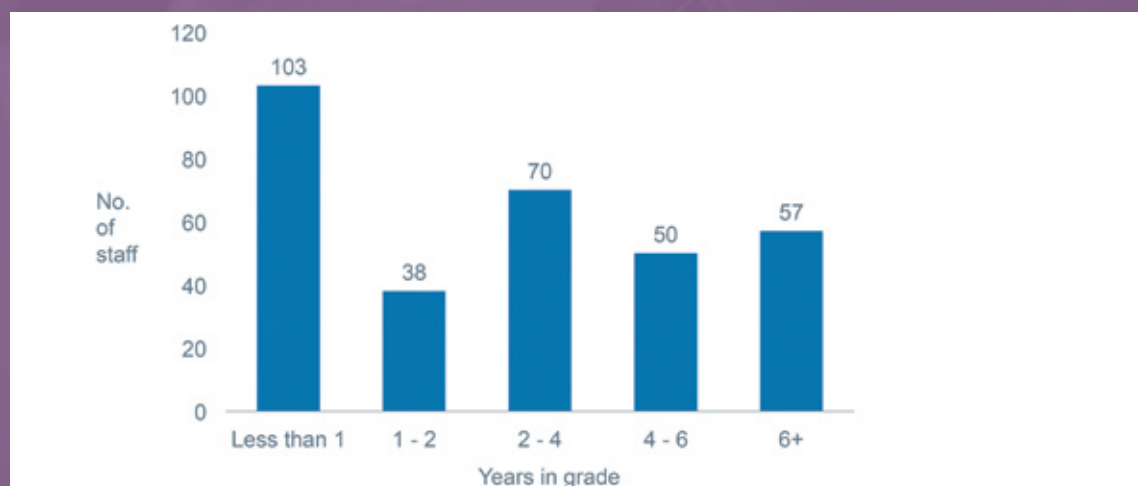
Length in Grade at Senior Grades at 31 Dec 2021 (Principal Officer and Assistant Principal Officer)



Length in Grade for Middle and Junior Managers (HEO and EO) at 31 Dec 2021



Length in Grade for Clerical Officers (Entry Level) at 31 Dec 2021



2.3. Organisation

Background

Our organisation is structured to deliver our mandate to manage the Courts, provide support services to Judges, provide information on the court system to the public, provide, manage, and maintain court buildings and facilities for court users. A culture of absolute dedication to those responsibilities has developed across the organisation over the past 22 years, with the singular purpose of continuing to provide access to justice no matter how challenging the circumstances.

This dedication was most obvious during the pandemic. Almost without realising, our people responded in an agile way by adapting quickly to new ways of working, innovatively developing work arounds to surmount the obstacles presented by systems and processes which were not built with a pandemic in mind.

Challenged to bring the best of the new ways of working established during the pandemic into the future and at the same time proceeding with the Modernisation Programme, we must examine whether the existing structures and practices still support us now and into the future. As part of the consultation on this strategy our people were clear - 'Purpose and Value' is the most important of the five areas of focus under the Organisation theme. We need to explore the collective understanding of our culture, our purpose, and values and how they align with the needs of our people coming out of significant change and into further modernisation.

Realising our Strategic Vision 2030 and delivering on our Modernisation Programme ambitions has started with a shift to digitally enabled operations whilst also maintaining a focus on the user. We need to ensure we have the right mindset, culture and practices to support the change required.

Like many organisations, we are becoming a more diverse organisation. We have begun our journey to be a more inclusive place to work through the establishment of a Human Rights and Equality group in 2020 who have developed a Courts Service Public Sector Duty Action Plan. This plan commits to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of our staff, users and everyone affected our services.

The Future

The goal of our Organisation Strategic theme is to create the conditions for us to change and transform by developing a better organisation together. This is a long-term goal and requires us to develop our thinking about how we manage our organisation for the future. We also need to collectively reflect and examine our purpose, our values and culture which we know from our strategy consultation is a priority.

Key to large scale change and transformation is an engaged leadership and empowered people with a shared sense of purpose and values; a positive culture whose practices embed and support those values to ensure meaningful work and a sense of believing in and belonging to the organisation. The Organisation Strategic theme will be led by Principal Officers who will develop and lead interventions to achieve our goal. The framework through which this will be achieved is the 'leadership in action' programme detailed in action 6. The programme aims to support leaders to see opportunities in the challenges and constantly seek to improve, essentially developing a growth mindset which goes hand-in-hand with the coaching approach already in place across the organisation.

In addition, the transformation to digitally enabled operations and a human focused approach is requiring us to review our organisation structure to ensure we can deliver our services effectively and efficiently in the future. Work carried out previously in relation to reconfiguring operations (Target Operating Model) identified areas for improvement and showed there is a strong appetite for changing our structure to create a more collaborative and flexible organisation that enables a more user centric service. Determining how three areas of law, across five jurisdictions and 42 locations optimally work together for our people and for court and service users will lead to successful modernisation.

Our consultation process ranked the importance of the five focus areas of this pillar as follows Purpose and Value, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Culture Development, Organisation Structure and Employee Experience.

Figure 5: Activities in order of Priority / Urgency





1. Purpose and Values

We recognise that the Courts Service has a strong sense of purpose in terms of our responsibilities under our mandate, as demonstrated over the past 22 years and more acutely in the last 18 months. Our purpose together with our values shape the way we work within the Courts Service, how we behave towards one another and how we deliver for the public. We must consider that the importance placed on purpose and values by our people could mean that the alignment of our purpose to our values and how we support one another as well as the user might need more work.

Organisations who truly live and have their purpose and values embedded in their practices perform better and are perceived to do well by those for whom they provide services.

New initiative

Building a shared sense of purpose and ensuring our values are embedded in our practices is the goal of any organisation. Starting at the top with the Senior Management Team and Principal Officers, in consultation with their teams through the leadership in action programme, will consider our purpose and values and ways to embed them into our practices and model behaviours.

Our commitment is to consider our shared purpose and values with staff to create a Courts Service which works for all our people and delivers effectively for the members of the public.



ACTION

17. Principal Officers through the leadership in action programme, will lead a review with everyone across the organisation of our purpose and values and ways to embed them into how we do our work and behave.





2. Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing

All public bodies in Ireland have responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans.

We aspire for the Courts Service to be a place where everyone feels able to come to work as their authentic self. We would like people of all backgrounds to work with us so we can better reflect society and provide the best service possible. Different perspectives will facilitate us to deliver in better ways. Healthy workplaces support people to flourish and reach their potential.

In 2018 we launched our Well-being policy and during the pandemic we ran several well-being initiatives. We increased our well-being rating to 75% in the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey 2020 and believe these initiatives are having a positive impact. Through this strategy, we are committed to creating an environment that actively promotes inclusion and well-being.

We know we are going in the right direction however, the content of our jobs can be challenging or distressing, therefore it is vital we invest in well-being as part of this strategy.



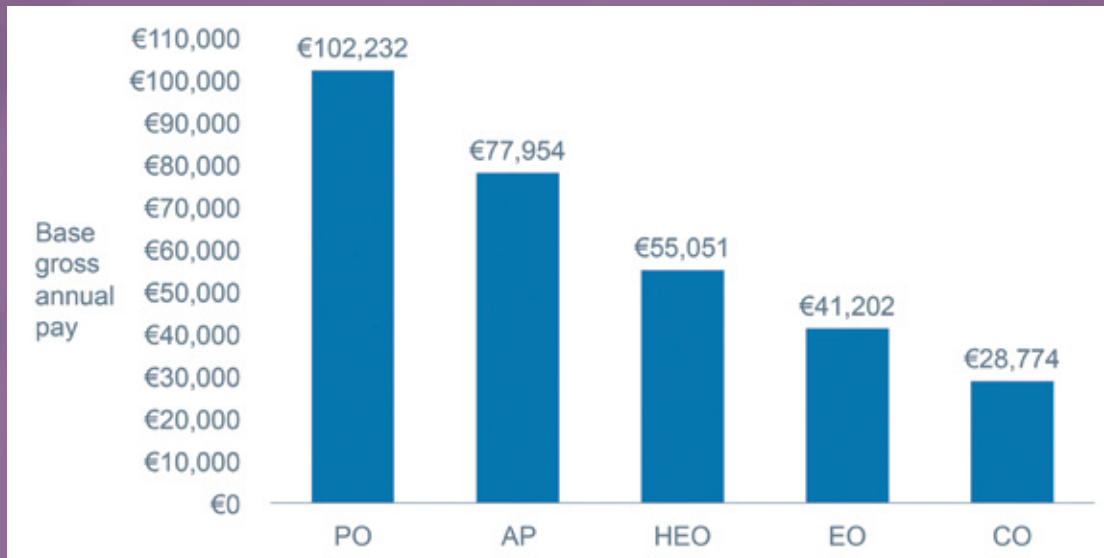
ACTIONS

18. Continue progress made to date by the Human Rights and Equality group and look at ways to create an inclusive culture.
19. Develop a Well-being plan to support the development of a healthy workplace.



Average Pay across Grades

31 Dec 2021





3. Culture Development

Culture development is closely linked to purpose and values. The goal is to develop a culture, which supports the modernisation of our organisation towards a more digital, user centric, healthy and positive place to work. This means we need to embed positive practices which support our people to deliver services in new and different ways, to lead to better outcomes for all.

Similar, to our purpose and values theme, this focus area will be led by the Principal Officers group as part of the leadership in action framework. A key principle will be to engage with the whole organisation to build on the purpose and value work to develop practices and behaviours which support our values – so that our people feel that they are being given the opportunity to live our values during the working day.



ACTIONS

20. Principal Officers will lead a review of our culture to ensure it supports transformation and becoming a healthy and positive place to work.





4. Organisation Structure

We are structuring the organisation to be fit-for-purpose in a modern and digital Ireland and to support easy delivery of services both to our people and external users.

Determining the best way to structure the operations across three areas of law (Criminal, Civil and Family) and five jurisdictions located across 42 offices to support the efficient delivery of our services, will be key to a modern Courts Service. As we progress with our Modernisation Programme, some services may become centralised. This is already the case with issuing of jury summonses, service of foreign documents and processing of Free Legal Aid panels.

Internally we are building networks across the organisation, for example with Health, Safety and Well-being, Career Champions, Innovation Advocates and Sustainability's Green Team as well as the Communications officer programme commencing in 2022. This network approach will be extended to Human Resources as we explore collaborative ways of working and build networks of expertise and practice country wide.

Consideration of our structure needs to be closely aligned to criminal, family and civil law reform programmes. We will also consider establishing Centres of Excellence and a customer service function. Decisions made under operational reform will directly influence how we should be structured so it is likely this focus area will occur in the third year of this strategy.



ACTION

21. The Senior Management Team in conjunction with Principal Officers will develop principles for how our organisation is structured and aligned with the wider reform programme.





5. Employee Experience

The need to provide a more personal and holistic experience for our people has been detailed in previous sections of this strategy. When our people feel valued and good about their purpose in work, they are more likely to be engaged and stay with the Courts Service. Employee experience seeks to determine these positive experiences and embed them into how we work.

When our people's personal sense of purpose and values align with the organisation's purpose and values, they are likely to enjoy a positive experience. High trust relationships help to create a positive and healthy work environment where high performance can flourish. Work life balance is also part of the employee experience so having a degree of flexibility to manage family and personal commitments is an important aspect.

Employee experience is part of the mindset shift from a traditional top-down approach of leadership, to one which seeks to understand and respond in as far as possible and practical to the needs and expectations of our people. Providing our people with meaningful and rewarding work; having modern technology, resources and skills in a comfortable workspace and being supported by empowering leadership are all part of creating a positive employee experience.



ACTION

22. Supported by the Senior Management Team, Principal Officers will lead an exploration, across the organisation, of the elements of a positive employee experience so we can embed them into our practices.



2.4. Key Measures of Success

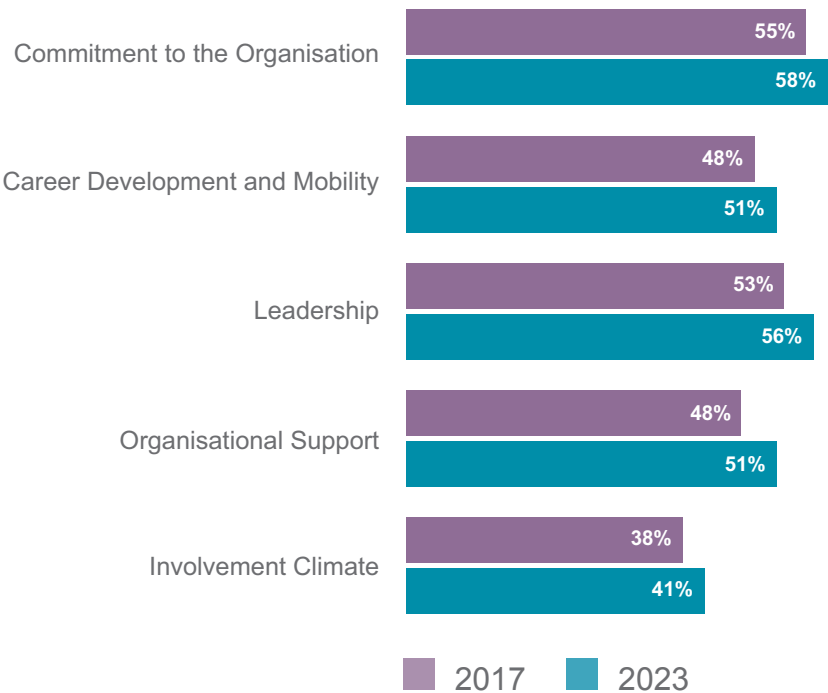
The three indicators that will measure the extent we have delivered this strategy include:

- Significant staff involvement in the design and delivery of interventions
- Evidence based decision making
- Regular internal updates using a variety of communication channels.

Robust planning over the course of the first quarter of 2022 will enable us to deliver these goals and share this approach through further engagement sessions.

Following that we plan to measure the success of this strategy based the feedback from our people through two mechanisms: the Civil Services Employee Engagement Surveys and an annual Courts Service employee engagement survey.

Based on previous performance, we aim to continue to improve our Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey 2020 results across the most five relevant elements as detailed below:



The scale of our modernisation is significant and requires changes in mindset, practices and behaviours. This takes time so our progress will be one of evolution not revolution hence the increase of 3% over three years.

Our annual employee engagement survey which we plan to implement over the course of this strategy, following a procurement procedure, will also measure our progress and inform actions to be taken.

3. ACTIONS SUMMARY

Actions Summary

Our actions are based on feedback from our people and commitments made in the Strategic Vision 2030 and are summarised below:







Workforce of the Future

| | | |
|--|---|-----------|
| | 1. Develop and roll out a 'high performing team' programme. | 2022 |
| | 2. Develop an accredited co-delivered programme which expands our technical skills programme starting with Court Registrar training. | 2024 |
| | 3. Expand our current programme through our learning pathways on the learning management system and continue to offer financial support for development via the Refund of Fees scheme. | 2022-2024 |
| | 4. Expansion of Developing your career pathway programme to Executive Officers. | 2022-2023 |
| | 5. Take part in pilot Criminal Justice Sector, cross-sectoral job-shadowing programme and pilot cross-sectoral secondment scheme. | 2022-2023 |
| | 6. Roll out Leadership in Action programme to Principal Officers. | 2022-2024 |
| | 7. Develop an organisation training plan using data from organisation Capability Assessment and Performance Management Process. | 2024 |
| | 8. Explore the different competency models to identify a competency framework that will better reflect the competencies and capabilities needed for our organisation now and in the future. | 2022-2024 |

People

| | | |
|---|--|-------------|
|  | 9. Develop a work force plan using a standard framework to evaluate the performance and potential of staff at each grade | 2022 & 2023 |
|  | 10. Support the Senior Management Team and managers to create and implement local, workforce plans and personalised career and development plans. | 2023 |
|  | 11. Bring in an annual employee engagement survey to inform what we need to do to improve staff engagement. | 2022 |
|  | 12. Begin to formalise the process by which strategic, operational, and annual corporate goals are systematically cascaded from the Senior Management Team to Heads of Offices, local managers and onwards to all staff. | 2023 & 2024 |
|  | 13. Improve our onboarding and orientation programmes to be as effective as possible in facilitating new joiners to successfully pass probation, feel they belong and know the career opportunities available to them. | 2022 |
|  | 14. Develop new and innovative ways attract new people to reduce delays in the hiring process and to select the most suitable people for our roles. | 2022 |
|  | 15. Continue to work with the Communications & Media Unit to develop our employer brand particularly amongst local schools, colleges and universities and optimise social media for recruiting. | 2022 |
|  | 16. Develop an internal job rotation scheme to facilitate staff moves and career opportunities and look at cross justice job rotations possibilities. | 2023 |

Organisation

| | | |
|---|--|-------------|
|  | 17. Principal Officers through the leadership in action programme will lead a review with our staff of our purpose and values and ways to embed them into how we behave and do our work. | 2022 & 2023 |
|  | 18. Continue progress made to date by the Human Rights and Equality group and look at ways to create an inclusive culture. | 2023 |
|  | 19. Develop a Well-being plan to support the development of a healthy workplace. | 2023 |
|  | 20. Principal Officers will lead a review of our culture to ensure it supports transformation and becoming a healthy and positive place to work. | 2023 |
|  | 21. The Senior Management Team in conjunction with Principal Officers will develop principles for how our organisation is structured and aligned to support the modernisation programme. | 2024 |
|  | 22. Principal Officers will lead with our staff an exploration of the elements of a positive employee experience so we can embed these elements into our practices. | 2023 |

How the Actions link to staff feedback and Strategic Vision 2030 commitments

Feedback from our colleagues

- Career development and support to progress in the Courts Service is important
Actions 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 & 15
- Staff turnover presents challenges to operational management
Actions 8, 12, 13 & 14
- We need to be better recognising and valuing our colleagues
Actions 10, 18, 19 & 21
- Staff want to be involved in decision making
Actions 10, 16 & 19
- Some colleagues feel isolated and seek a greater sense of belonging and inclusion
Actions 12 & 17

Vision Commitments

- The introduction of new and enhanced roles;
Actions 4 & 11
- Leadership & Management development;
Action 5
- The development of skill profiles;
Actions 6 & 7
- Greater career opportunities;
Actions 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 & 15
- Succession planning; and
Actions 8 & 9
- Recruitment, retention and development of staff.
All actions

Notes

Notes

