

Public Service HR reforms in Ireland: Why and How

International Perspectives on HR Reforms

Santo Domingo, 25 April 2014

Irish Public Service - Overview

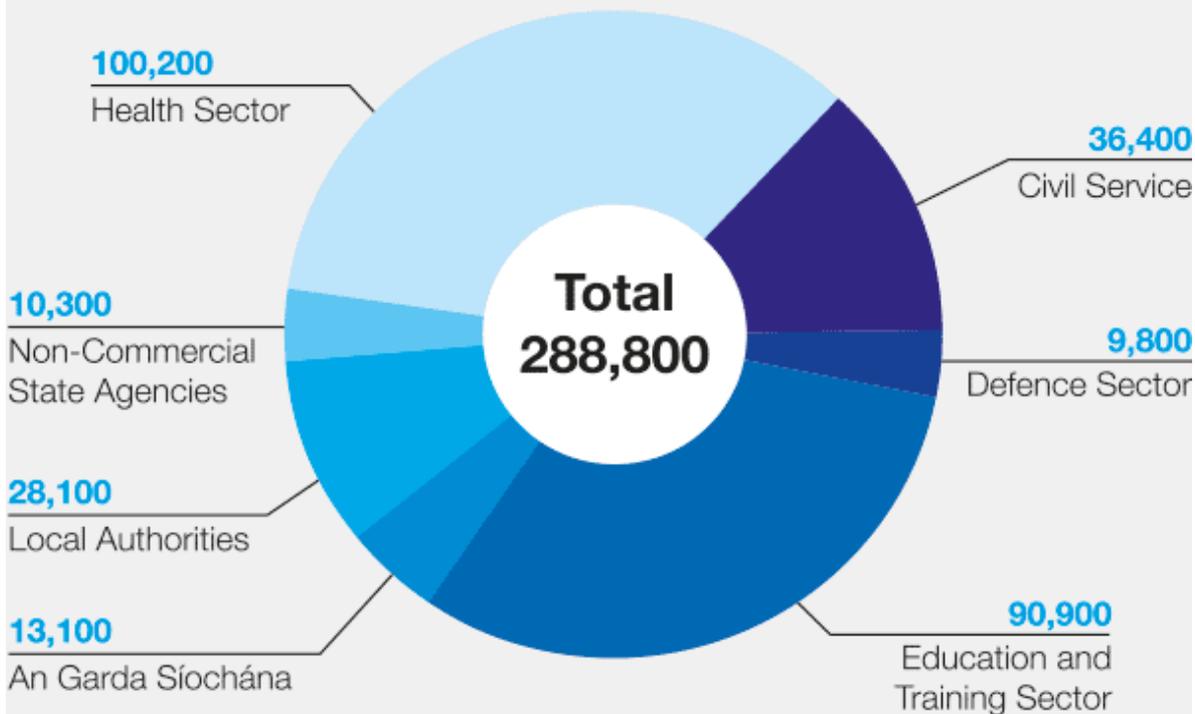
Ireland:

Population: 4.6 M
(2011)

Labour force: 2.2 M
(2013)

GDP per capita:
\$43,803 (2012)

Public Service Employees



Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, number of serving staff as at Q3 2013.

Long-term investment in public service reform

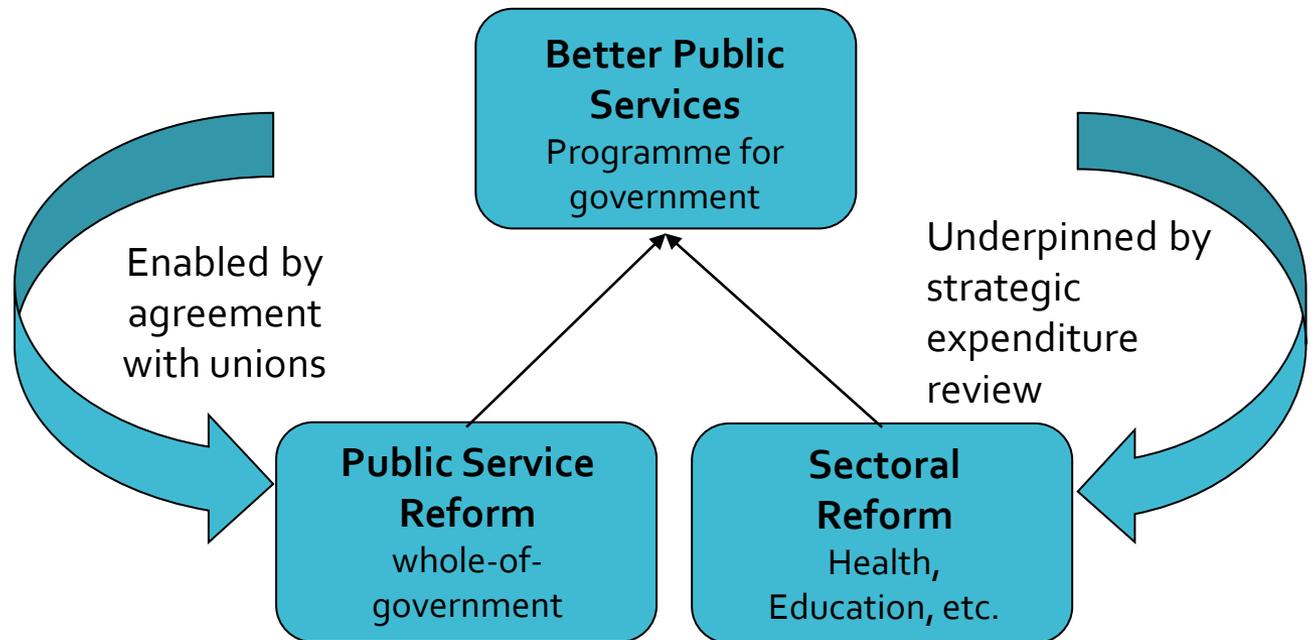
- Incremental long-term approach
- Reforms ongoing since mid-1990s – successive phases
- OECD PMR 2008 highlighted challenges:
 - Embedding new frameworks
 - Changing behaviours
 - Coherence of reforms
 - More integrated, networked public service

Strategic context of current reforms

- Need for major fiscal consolidation since 2008
- Increased expectations have to be met with a smaller public service (12% cut in public service employment 2008-2015)
- Need to rebuild public trust in government and public services following economic crisis

= innovation, streamlining, performance improvement

An Integrated Approach to Reform

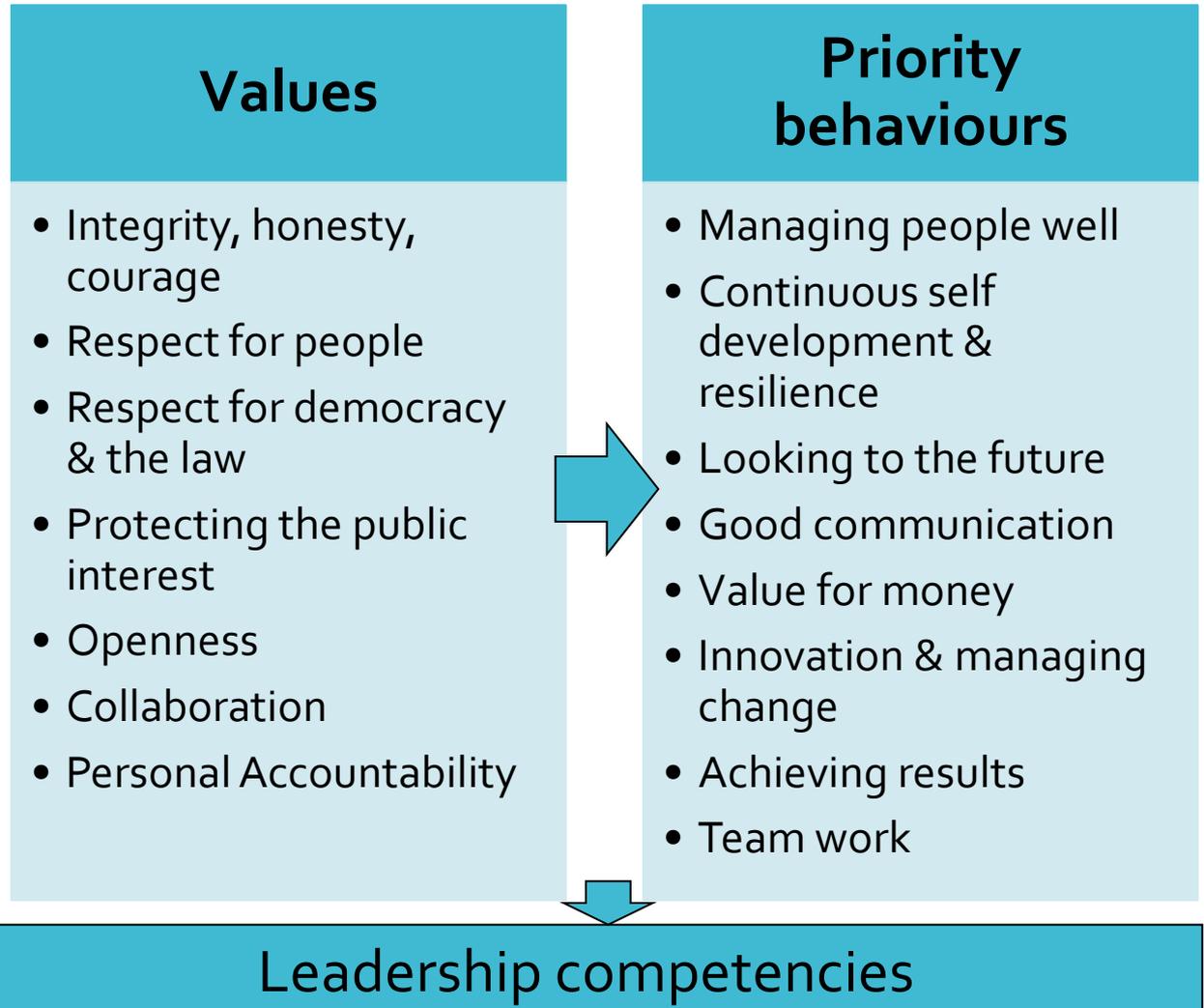


Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Key reform themes

- **Improved outcomes for service users**
 - innovation
 - new service delivery models
- **Efficiency – savings to meet new service demands**
 - delegated HRM
 - strategic workforce planning to more closely align skills & competencies with emerging business needs
- **Leadership, capability & delivery**
 - creation of Senior Public Service (SPS)
 - focus on leadership development
 - new competency model
- **Openness, transparency & accountability**
 - strengthen trust in government

Focus on leadership: values, behaviours & competencies



Recruitment: ensuring merit and capacity

All recruitment to the public service governed by 5 Core Principles

- Merit
- Probity
- Consistency
- Best practice
- Accountability

Recruitment must adhere to a **code of practice**
based on these core principles

Recruitment: protecting the core principles

Two bodies oversee recruitment:

1. Commission for Public Service Appointments

<http://www.cpsa.ie/>

- an independent body
- sets and safeguards standards for recruitment
- bound by law to ensure that recruitment and selection carried out by fair, open and merit-based means

2. Public Appointments Service (PAS)

www.publicjobs.ie

- a centralised recruitment, assessment and selection body for the Civil Service and other public service bodies

Recruitment methods

- Open competition – jobs advertised in the press and on the website of the PAS
www.publicjobs.ie
- Competency-based recruitment using best practice selection methods
- Open competitions, organised centrally, for recruitment to entry level grades
- Since 2003, open recruitment at mid-career and senior levels of the civil service aims to ensure a broader set of talents and skills
- Current focus on attracting more specialised skills compared to past focus on generalists

Senior appointments

- Selection by Top Level Appointments Commission (TLAC)
- Ensure objectivity in filling senior posts, improve quality of top management, open up posts at the highest level to competition, encourage interdepartmental competition and mobility
- The most senior appointments (Secretary General) are made by government from a short-list provided by TLAC and are for a fixed term of seven years maximum
- TLAC comprises a majority of members appointed from outside the public sector with specific skills in management and HR areas

Lessons learned

- Need for an integrated rather than piecemeal approach
- Focus on results for users of public services
- High-level political ownership to drive and sustain reforms
- Changing behaviours and culture is the most difficult element
- Senior managers have to lead the reform
- Integrate reforms with budgeting and financial management
- Possible to reform while cutting back