



An tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí  
Public Appointments Service

# Annual Report 2014



“

*providing the **best**  
**candidates** for  
appointment*

”



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# Chairman's Statement

I am pleased, on my own behalf and on behalf of my fellow Board Members, to present the 2014 Annual Report of the Public Appointments Service (PAS).

As is clear from this report, PAS has successfully filled a wide range of very diverse and complex posts for public service clients in 2014 while also commencing a programme of large volume campaigns. The aim of achieving sustainable growth in volume of business handled was achieved in 2014 with a 47% increase in campaigns handled over the previous year. In all recruitment campaigns, PAS continued to maintain the distinctive culture of public service recruitment based on the values of fairness and impartiality; attempting at all times to provide excellent customer service, in an innovative way that ensures value for money.

A main strategic priority for PAS is to provide the best candidates to clients for appointment. PAS has continued to work with the Top Level Appointments Committee, to assist it in carrying out its functions around recruitment at the most senior levels in the Civil Service. Every effort has been made by PAS to attract and select the highest quality candidates for such posts, and feedback would suggest that PAS has been successful in this area.

PAS has also had an increased focus in 2014 on attracting high quality candidates for other posts, including those at graduate level. This led to the launch of a new graduate-focused website [www.gradpublicjobs.ie](http://www.gradpublicjobs.ie) to attract and engage top quality candidates for graduate level roles; this has proven to be a vital resource in reinvigorating the PAS brand and repositioning PAS within the new graduate market.

In 2014, PAS had a significant focus on the assessment part of the process, rolling out a wide range of new on-line assessments at the initial stages of large volume campaigns. Significant advances were made in the area of online testing (with over 99% of candidates tested online). In the past year, PAS has also improved the sophistication of the measures used when people come through to later stages in a campaign, with assessment centres now standard for all large volume campaigns; these approaches are proven to greatly increase the likelihood of selecting the best person for the role.

In September 2014, the Government decided that, in future, appointments to State Boards would be made through an open and transparent process and that PAS would play a central role in this process. In a very limited window of only a few weeks PAS successfully put the required processes in place and launched a dedicated website, [stateboards.ie](http://stateboards.ie). I am pleased to see that engagement with, and feedback on, this new approach has been very positive in what has been a new and challenging role for PAS.

Throughout 2014 PAS continued to act on feedback from all customer groups in order to increase the quality and efficiency of the services provided by PAS, and I am pleased to see this focus on the customer is apparent in all of the work that PAS is involved in.

The workforce in PAS has continued to be committed, dedicated and flexible, with a focus on providing the best possible service to customers.

I would like, on behalf of the Board, to acknowledge the excellent work of the Chief Executive, Ms. Fiona Tierney, and all the staff of the office in continuing to provide a top quality service to all of the customers of the Public Appointments Service.

**Ms. Judith Eve**  
Chairman

# CEO's Statement

Following a number of challenging years for the economy and the country as a whole, 2014 was the year when the conversations around recruitment and resourcing changed. Our clients and colleagues in the public service HR community experienced a shift in the dynamic, moving from being very focused on managing and delivering with a reduced workforce, to the opportunities to address skills gaps and resourcing needs; bringing in talent, in a measured and efficient manner. The focus on resourcing and the commitment to open recruitment in the Civil Service Renewal Plan published in October 2014 set the agenda for the latter part of the year.

The beginning of the turn in the market, and the increasing demand for recruitment related services coincided with the publication early in the year of our Statement of Strategy 2014 - 2016. The new Strategy was timely in that it set out a clear framework for a leaner PAS to achieve new standards of excellence in the sourcing, assessment, delivery and movement of people and quality candidates to an increasingly complex array of roles across our diverse range of clients.

We put significant effort into communicating and embedding our strategy and ensuring a shared understanding with all our stakeholders of our key priorities, our performance goals and how we might best deliver on our immediate and medium term targets.

Our core values remain a central part of our strategy and everything we do here in PAS. They are important to us and we strive to ensure they are meaningful to all our staff and that we uphold them in everything we do.

The year, and this report, was marked by many highlights / achievements under our five strategic priority areas, and all of which are outlined in this report. I am particularly pleased with:

- returning to the Graduate recruitment market with a well informed offering, a new graduate dedicated website and excellent collaboration with our key stakeholders resulting in genuine engagement with the importance of structured learning and development for new entrants;
- our response to the Government decision that PAS would operate the new application process for State Board appointments. PAS responded successfully to the challenging timescale of six weeks, providing a dedicated website at [Stateboards.ie](http://Stateboards.ie) equipped with a robust process for application and processing, all of which involved significant consultation and agreement with our key stakeholders, with our staff rising to the challenge;
- the professional manner in which large volume recruitment campaigns such as Garda Síochána trainee and Clerical Officer in the civil service, involving tens of thousands of applications, were successfully delivered by the PAS team;
- continued excellence in dealing with a myriad of professional, technical and specialist appointments across our key client groups, in particular civil service, local authorities and the HSE, with an increasing expertise developing in servicing significant resourcing demands in new shared service facilities such as the Office of Government Procurement and PeoplePoint;
- the continued roll-out of e-solutions across our recruitment process, including the roll-out of on-line testing, use of tablets for selection board members to assist in shortlisting, and the deployment of dedicated websites / portals for specific areas e.g. [stateboards.ie](http://stateboards.ie) and [gradpublicjobs.ie](http://gradpublicjobs.ie).

I would like to say a particular word of recognition to the Board members of PAS, who gave excellent support and guidance to our efforts during the year. My sincere thanks and appreciation goes to our team here in PAS, and to the many people who have assisted us during the year, including selection board members. I am continuously struck by the commitment and flexibility demonstrated by our staff in ensuring that candidates are treated in a fair, professional, objective and merit based manner. I am proud of our staff for remaining professional, quality focused and cheerful when faced with significant challenges in the delivery of an increasing volume and mix of recruitment assignments.

**Fiona Tierney**  
Chief Executive Officer

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## About the Public Appointments Service

# Introduction

*The Public Appointments Service (PAS) is the Shared Service Recruitment Centre for the civil and public service, and is responsible for resourcing via recruitment, redeployment and some promotion competitions.*

Against the background of a stabilising economy and anticipated increased demands for talent across skill areas and sectors, the Public Appointments Service provides a range of recruitment related services to a very diverse group of clients. The activities of PAS are primarily focused on the sourcing of candidates for roles in the civil service, the most senior roles in Local Authorities, leadership positions and Hospital Consultant roles for the HSE, trainees for An Garda Síochána, and a range of Head of Office and specialist roles across the civil and public service.

Recruitment to the civil service and a range of other public bodies is handled under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Acts 2004 to 2013 which established PAS as a central recruitment agency for this purpose. PAS operates under licence from the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) and is independent in its operations. PAS complies with the CPSA Codes of Practice in ensuring a fair and open process for all applicants, and also complies with relevant Equality, Employment, Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation in its recruitment and selection processes.

## Public Appointments Service's Mission and Values

*The vision is to be the recruitment and resourcing shared service provider of choice in the public service.*

The Public Appointments Service is committed to:

- › Fairness and Impartiality
- › Independence
- › Value for Money
- › Innovation and Continuous Improvement
- › Collaboration and Consultation
- › Excellent Customer Service



# Governance and Management



## The Board of PAS

The Board of PAS has contributed greatly to the strategic development and to the area of corporate governance since the first Board was established in 2004. The Code of Practice for the Board was drawn up in accordance with “The Combined Code of Corporate Governance” and “The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies”, published by the Department of Finance. It reflects the legislation governing the Office of the Public Appointments Service (i.e. the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004). The Code of Practice was revised in 2014. The Board is provided with reports at each meeting covering operational activity levels, finances and risk. The CEO also provides an update on the main strategic issues arising in the period.

## Management Advisory Committee

The Corporate Senior Executive team known as the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) meet formally on a monthly basis to discuss matters with a strategic focus. The meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive. In addition to these monthly meetings, the MAC team, and all senior managers, meet on a weekly basis to consider operational recruitment matters and a range of other day-to-day corporate aspects of the business.

Members of the Board	Members of the Management Advisory Committee
<p><b>Chairman</b></p> <p>Ms Judith Eve, former Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners</p>	<p>Ms Fiona Tierney, Chief Executive, Public Appointments Service</p>
<p><b>Board Members</b></p> <p>Ms Fiona Tierney, Chief Executive, Public Appointments Service</p> <p>Mr William Beausang, Assistant Secretary, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform</p> <p>Dr Deirdre O’Keeffe, Assistant Secretary, Department of Justice and Equality</p> <p>Mr Paul Lemass, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government</p> <p>Mr Barry O’Brien, National Director of HR, Health Service Executive</p> <p>Dr Eddie Molloy, HR Consultant</p> <p>Ms Anne-Marie Taylor, HR Consultant</p> <p>Ms Eimear Kenny, Senior HR Executive</p>	<p>Mr Pdraig Love, Head of Corporate Affairs</p> <p>Mr Niall Leavy, Head of Strategic Projects</p> <p>Ms Áine Gray, Head of Assessment Services</p> <p>Ms Margaret McCabe, Head of Senior Executive Recruitment</p> <p>Ms Mary Flynn, Head of Large Volume Recruitment</p> <p>Ms Michelle Noone, Head of Executive Search</p>

## Organisation Structure

The Recruitment and Selection Services Unit (RSSU) carries out the core business functions of the Public Appointments Service. RSSU consists of seven recruitment teams, each headed up by a Recruitment Manager. Each team has a niche speciality but the structure is flexible enough to focus resources where demand is greatest at any given time. A specialist team has also been established with responsibility for the State Boards process.

RSSU is assisted by the Office's key support units: Assessment Services, Executive Search, Information Technology, Finance Unit, Recruitment Support, Human Resources Unit, and Business Support Unit.

## The Audit Committee

The members of the Audit Committee are:

- Chairperson:** Ms Sylva Langford, former Director General, Office of the Minister for Children
- Members:** Mr Michael Culhane, Executive Director of Finance and Service, Garda Headquarters
- Dr Deirdre O'Keeffe, Assistant Secretary, Department of Justice and Equality (Board Nominee)
- Mr Brian Murphy, Assistant Principal, PAS

The Audit Committee Charter and Terms of Reference, outlining the responsibility and role of the Audit Committee, were amended in line with audit committee guidance published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in September 2014.

The Audit Committee carries out functions in relation to the following areas:

- › Internal Control
- › Governance and Risk Management
- › Internal Audit
- › External Audit
- › Financial Management
- › Reporting Functions

During 2014, the Committee continued to focus on developing its role in providing an enhanced level of support to the Accounting Officer in all aspects of the internal audit function. Relevant areas of the Strategic Audit Plan 2013 -2015 were implemented.

An audit was carried out on the Accounting and Reporting System, and a report presented to the Committee. A revised Risk Management Policy and a revised Corporate Risk Register was also presented, on foot of an exercise carried out by the Internal Auditors with the senior management team. The reviews were conducted by a firm of Internal Auditors who have been retained (following a procurement exercise) for such audit services by PAS.

## Risk Management

The Public Appointments Service has developed a Risk Management Framework and Risk Management Policy appropriate to the office. An internal Risk Management Group was formed to oversee the implementation and monitoring of this process. This group operates under an approved Terms of Reference. The Group reports to the Internal Audit Committee at each meeting. Updates on current risks facing the organisation are given to the Board at each meeting.

The Corporate Risk Register was completely reviewed in 2014.

Risk management workshops were held for all staff in 2014. Each risk identified was discussed and reviewed at the next Risk Management Group meeting to ensure it was on a Risk Register within the organisation. A small number of additional risks were identified and actions were agreed in relation to those risks.

## Data Protection

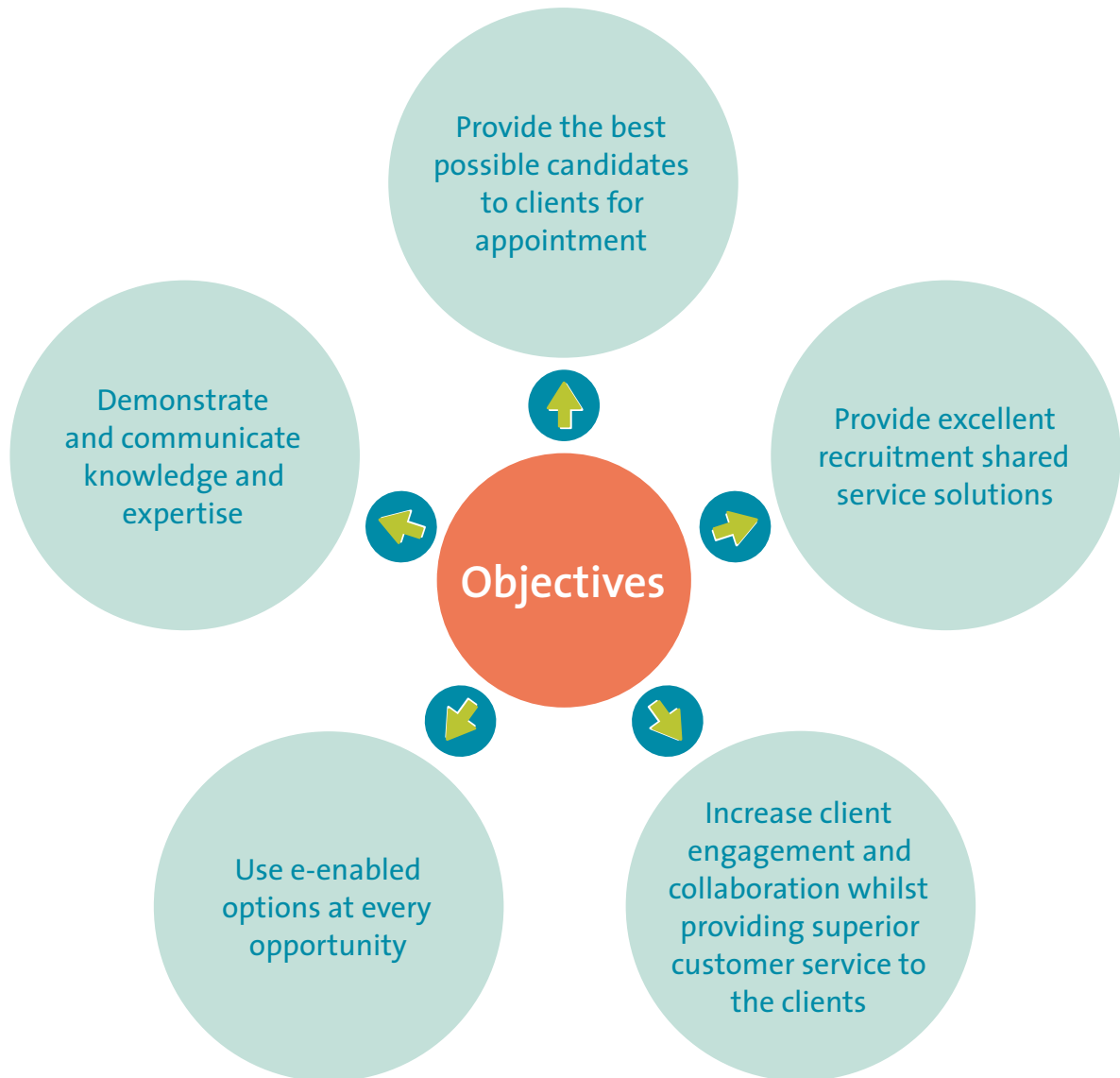
The Code on the Protection of Personal Data was reviewed in 2014, and was presented to staff at a Business Awareness Session; a representative of the Data Protection Commissioner was in attendance at the session to reinforce the importance of data protection to the staff in PAS.

# 03



## The Strategic Objectives and Achievements of The Public Appointments Service

## Strategic Objectives

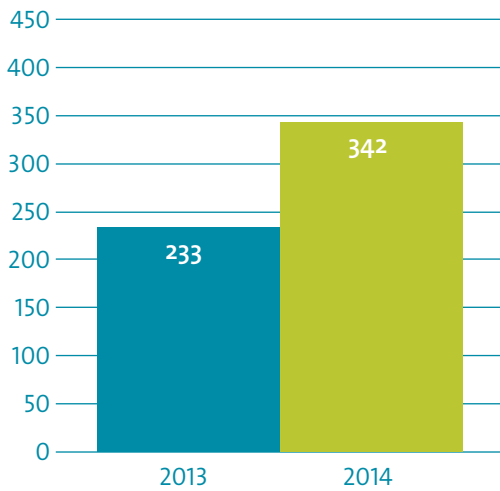


## Operational Review Highlights 2014

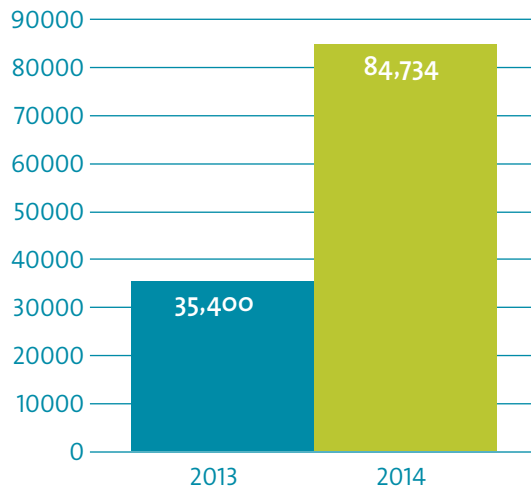
The moratorium on public service recruitment was ended in mid-2014, and a planned programme of large volume campaigns commenced.

The aim of achieving sustainable growth in volume of business handled was achieved in 2014 with a 47% increase in campaigns handled over the previous year. There was 141% increase in number of applications received and 40% increase in the number of assignments made.

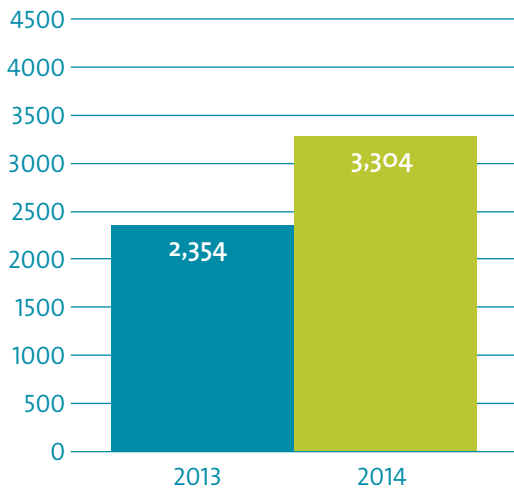
No. of Campaigns Advertised



No. of Applications



No. of Assignments



*The strategy of moving to on-line testing has continued and over 50,000 people went through on-line tests in 2014.*

## Achievements in 2014

The moratorium (in place since 2008) had severely curtailed recruitment into permanent positions, other than with critical replacements and key skills shortages. In 2014, a number of large volume campaigns were carried out, some of which had not been conducted since the start of the moratorium, and there was a significant increase in the number of one-off senior executive and 'skill-gap' campaigns. PAS also took on an enhanced role in relation to State Boards.

The main strategic priority of PAS is to provide the best candidates to our clients for appointment. To that end, PAS introduced and rolled out a wide range of new on-line assessments at the initial stages of our large volume campaigns. These included measures of verbal, numerical and inductive reasoning and situational judgement exercises.

In a significant development by PAS in its approach to assessment, on-line skills assessment questionnaires were introduced to a range of new campaigns. These questionnaires have been perceived as very face valid by candidates and they help ensure that a diverse range of candidates get through to the next stage. PAS also has a range of self assessment questionnaires that are seen as innovative internationally and which help candidates to find out earlier in the process if the role is attractive to them.

In addition to the advances that have been made in on-line testing to manage the large volume of applicants, PAS has improved the sophistication of the measures used when people come through to later stages in a campaign. Assessment centres are now standard for all large volume campaigns and they are proven to greatly increase the likelihood of getting good job performers into roles.

### Senior Executive Recruitment

In line with Government policy in recent years, there has been an increased focus on open recruitment to all of the most senior positions in the civil and public service. The overall objective is to ensure there is the widest possible pool of appointable candidates available for selection and appointment to these roles. This objective must be achieved in a timely manner with an efficient use of a limited budget available for executive search. Seeking to fulfil this policy agenda requires the PAS to attract suitable candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds, including the private sector, into the application process. In 2014, we recruited a Head of Executive Search to develop and enhance the already well established executive search function in PAS, within the requirements for fair and open recruitment.

Many of the most senior roles in the Civil Service are filled by the Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC), a standing interview Board appointed by Government and comprising an independent Chairman, four private sector nominees and four secretaries general from the civil service. Over the past number of years PAS have been playing an increasing role in supporting the TLAC in carrying out its functions around open recruitment to positions at Secretary General and Assistant Secretary Levels.



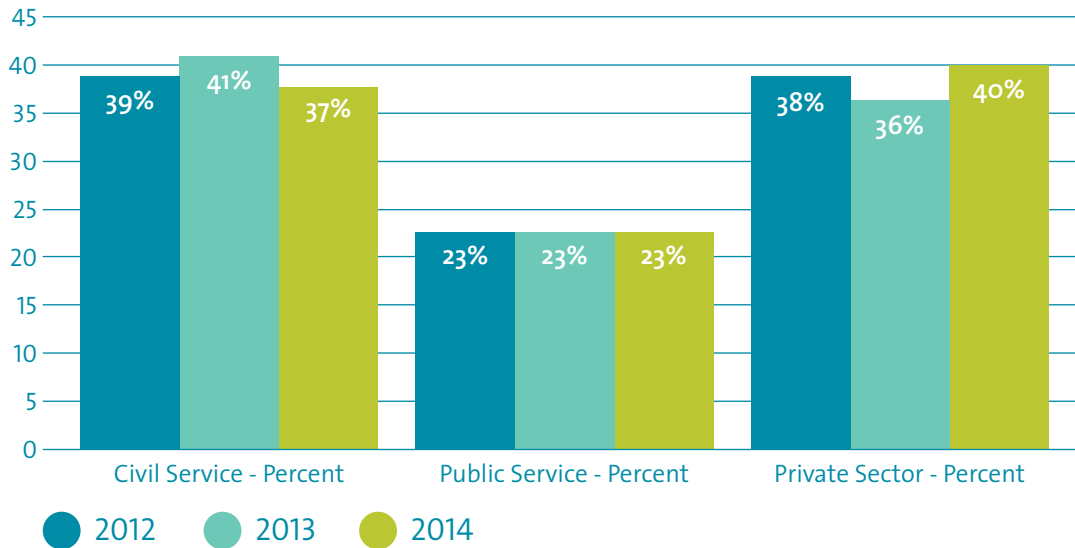
*PAS was also successful in the annual NSAI assessment for Excellence Through People accreditation*

PAS conducts the shortlisting and preliminary stages of the selection process for the TLAC. The diagram below shows the percentages of applications received from different sectors. The number of campaigns completed over the last three years is as follows:

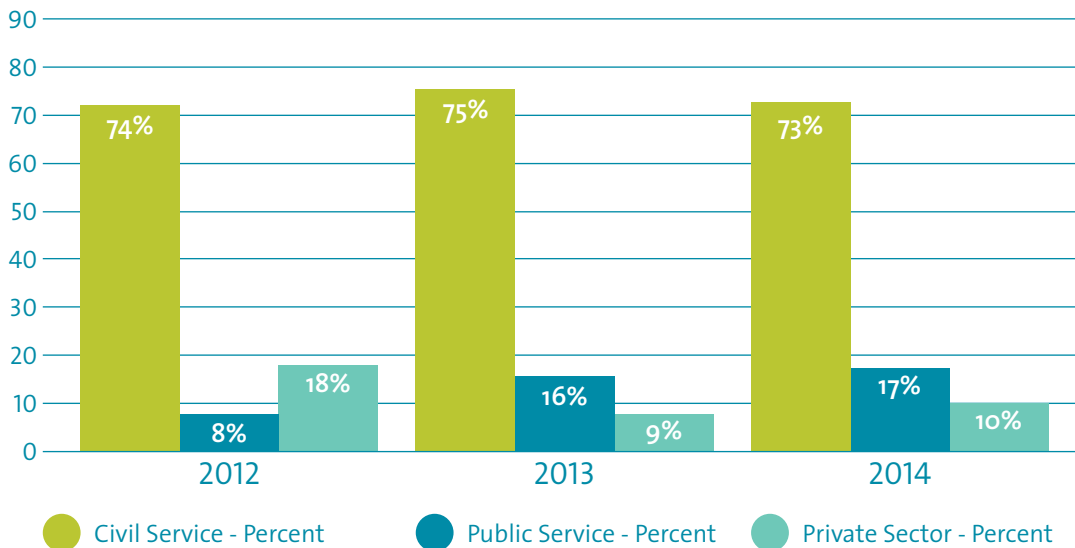
- 2014 - 26 Campaigns**
- 2013 - 22 Campaigns**
- 2012 - 20 Campaigns**

The diagram below shows the breakdown of Civil Servants, Public Servants and the Private Sector applicants coming through the Preliminary stages and whose names went forward to TLAC for final interview

TLAC % Applications Received - Area



Names to TLAC - % Area





PAS also runs the recruitment processes for specialist senior executive positions in the civil service and wider public service. These generally involve very extensive campaigns and a three stage assessment process (including shortlisting, preliminary and main interviews), to ensure that the campaign attracts the broadest possible applicant pool and that the successful candidate possesses all of the required skills and experience for the role at an appropriate level. Campaigns in 2014 included the CEO of the IDA, CEO of the Central Remedial Clinic, CEO of the National Roads Authority, and Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

In 2014 PAS carried out an extensive benchmarking exercise with a range of public and private sector organisations nationally and internationally. This exercise highlighted that significant use is made of in-depth executive assessment at the final stages of senior executive campaigns. On this basis, and in consultation with TLAC and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, PAS ran a pilot exercise in 2014 to establish whether this approach could add value for the campaigns. The outcome of the pilot was that the approach could add value for roles that had particular challenges associated with them.

The PAS aim to fill 95% of roles. Although this was achieved in 2014, particular difficulties have been noted in filling some particular types of specialist posts. In 2014, we managed the recruitment process for a number of specialist roles, primarily in HR, IT and Finance at a senior level in Government Departments and Offices and in the broader civil service. These roles specifically required candidates with significant strategic leadership and change management experience. Candidates sourced through Executive Search have been very interested in these roles, particularly given the opportunity to make a difference at a senior level in a large scale organisation, such as a Government Department. However, the challenge has been that the remuneration (salary and benefits) the candidates currently earn is way in excess of what is on offer in the civil service. Where pension may previously have been an incentive, this is no longer the case due to pension reform. The general perception of candidates has been that these are excellent opportunities for them, and prior to an approach they were not aware that Government Departments and Offices were recruiting from outside the public sector. As the economy improves, PAS are acutely aware that remuneration will become more of a problem as private sector organisations develop, attract and retain talent by making sure candidates with specialist skills are remunerated competitively.

## Graduate Recruitment

In early 2014 with indications of an improvement in, and some confidence returning to, the jobs and talent market, it was evident there was increasing competition for talent across a range of skill areas. It was clear that a comprehensive and defined strategy would be required in order for PAS to essentially re-enter, and be re-introduced to the graduate market.

PAS conducted a short but comprehensive review of the graduate recruitment market to inform the development of a graduate recruitment marketing strategy and a twelve month action plan for attracting and engaging top quality candidates for roles in the public sector. The aim was to position PAS and the public service as a leading employer of high quality graduates within third level institutions and other key graduate target audiences.

It was evident that, in order to attract these quality graduates to careers in the public service, PAS needed to initiate a number of priority projects related to different stages of the recruitment and employment life-cycle.

The first phase of this began with the launch of our new graduate-focused website [www.gradpublicjobs.ie](http://www.gradpublicjobs.ie) in September 2014. This was launched strategically to coincide with graduate recruitment activity from all of the main employers in the Irish marketplace, and also with the participation of PAS in the Grad

Ireland career event and other targeted graduate-focused events in early October. The main aim of this new website is to attract and engage top quality candidates and provide them with an easy access route to crucial information relating to the benefits and challenges of a public sector career. This website has also been a vital resource for PAS in reinvigorating the brand and repositioning the Public Appointments Service within the new graduate market.

The new website provides up-to-date information designed to inform and influence people to actively consider career options in the Irish public service (e.g. Civil Service, Local Authorities and other public service bodies). The fresh, colourful and clear layout of the new website reflects the commitment of PAS to engage meaningfully with the target audiences. The content and focus of the site reflects best practice in the market place and reflects what leading employers are doing in order to attract the best talent.

In September 2014, with a number of key graduate related campaigns in the immediate pipeline, PAS began the process of raising the visibility of the brand across all platforms and driving as much traffic as possible to the new website at [gradpublicjobs.ie](http://gradpublicjobs.ie). The strategy behind this included attendance at key careers fairs in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland to engage face-to-face with potential candidates; advertisements in papers and other publications nationwide; and interaction across the key social media platforms. It also included a number of features in the national press on new opportunities and the merits of considering the variety of career options in the public service.

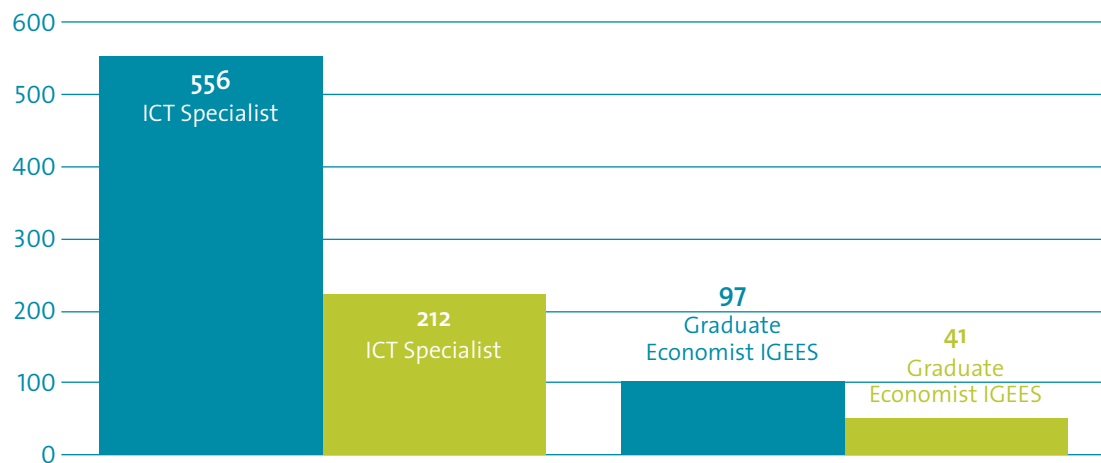
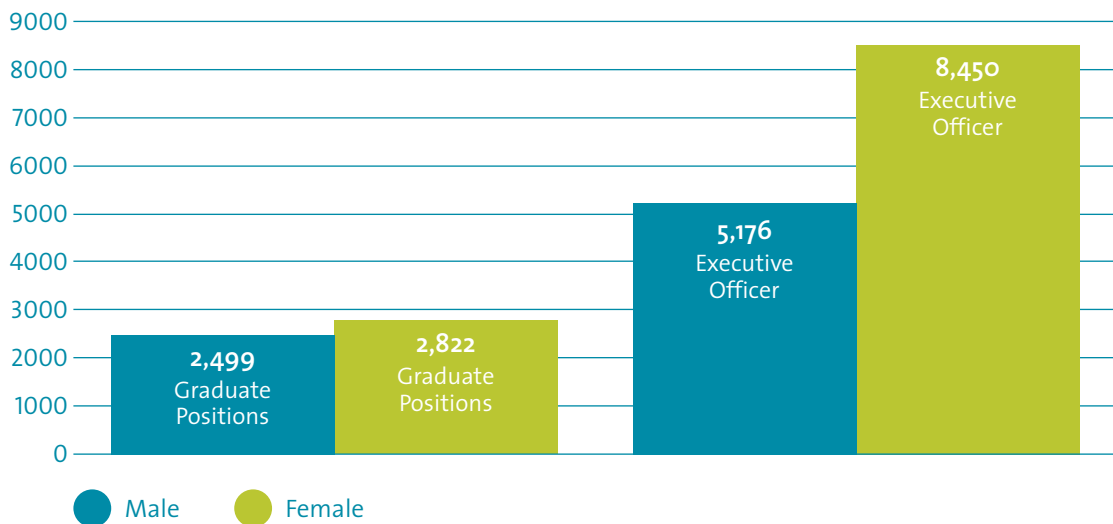
PAS fronted all of the graduate marketing activities with interviews, quotations from and images of recent entrants. Evoking the “Face of the Public Service” in this way, and highlighting the real-life experiences and words of public service employees, helped to personalise the marketing campaign, something that was further facilitated during the careers fairs when visitors met with recent entrants as peers and got the opportunity to discuss opportunities in the public service. Furthermore, within the client base of PAS, it helped to build significant engagement, understanding of, and support for graduate recruitment, and the rapid advancement of a more structured graduate development package.

## Impact of [Gradpublicjobs.ie](http://gradpublicjobs.ie)

Since the launch of [gradpublicjobs.ie](http://gradpublicjobs.ie) (in September 2014) the number of overall visits to the site (up to the end of 2014) was over 60,000, of which over 40,000 have been unique visitors.

The impact of this new site is apparent when it is observed that this high level graduate campaign for the public service received 5,321 applications, which is a 99% increase on the number of applications received in the previous year for the specialist graduate campaign (before the graduate website existed). The second graduate related campaign (at Executive Officer level, not exclusively for graduates but it does attract a significant number of graduates) also attracted a high volume of applications as can be seen below. There were a number of more specific and specialised graduate campaigns featured on the site in 2014, including Graduate Economists with IGEES (Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service). Campaigns such as these gave further opportunities for highly talented and qualified graduates to compete in targeted campaigns.

The numbers of applicants for graduate campaigns advertised last year are set out in the charts below:



## Next Steps

PAS aims to establish [www.gradpublicjobs.ie](http://www.gradpublicjobs.ie) as the market leading resource for information and advice on opportunities for graduates in the public sector. PAS are now focused on integrating [gradpublicjobs.ie](http://gradpublicjobs.ie) into the fabric of graduate recruitment in Ireland. With a strong start, wide graduate audience, and a large number of quality applicants, PAS is aiming to ensure that the public sector is very much a frontrunner as third level students and graduates research their career opportunities in Ireland and in Europe. PAS will be regularly adding new content to [gradpublicjobs.ie](http://gradpublicjobs.ie) to advise and inform the users, followers, and candidates along with posting new positions and campaigns. With a continuous focus on proactive marketing of public service careers and a dynamic and ongoing social media presence PAS are confident that the impressive trends set in the first few months can be continued.

## Other High Volume Campaigns

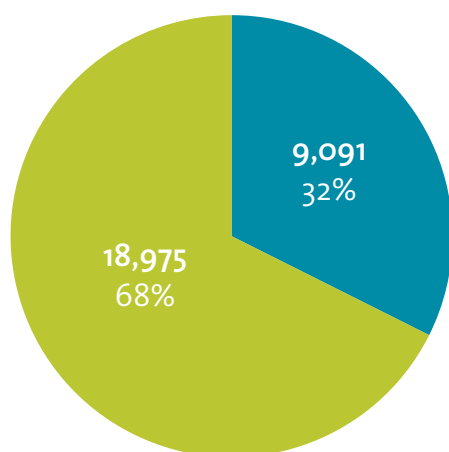
In 2014, for the first time since the moratorium on recruitment, PAS commenced an extensive programme of large volume recruitment campaigns. PAS conducted a range of selection tests and interviews for Garda Trainee and Clerical Officer, in addition to the annual Temporary Clerical Officer campaign.

Online testing for the Garda Trainee commenced in January, with 24,803 candidates invited to participate. Stage 2 online tests for the top 5,004 candidates were held in February, with Stage 3 (supervised tests) taking place in March and April for the top 600 candidates; successful candidates were then invited to interviews in May (with 370 attending). Round two supervised tests took place in August (431 candidates were invited to tests), with interviews in September and October (with 254 attending). Qualifications checks were conducted on all successful candidates before 295 names were forwarded to An Garda Síochána in 2014.

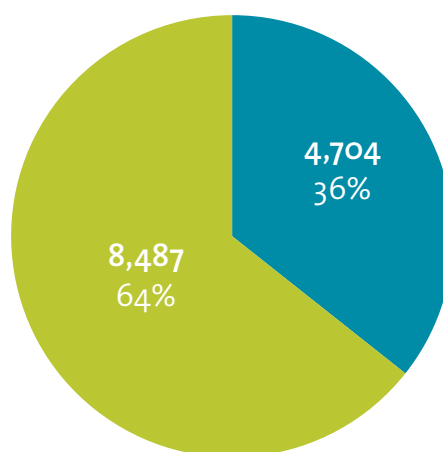
13,177 candidates applied for the Temporary Clerical Officer in 2014, with 8,908 completing the online questionnaire. Vacancies in a wide range of client organisations were filled from this panel, with 1,778 posts being filled in 2014.

A competition to fill permanent Clerical Officer vacancies was advertised in June, and 28,066 applications were received. Online testing took place in July, with testing for special needs candidates taking place in August. Supervised online tests took place in September for the top 935 candidates; the first 555 of those successful were called to interview in October. All permanent Clerical vacancies in the civil service are now being filled from this campaign, with 172 being filled in 2014.

Total Applications for Clerical Officer 2014



Total Applications for TCO 2014



● Male ● Female

## Shared Services Recruitment

A unit was set up in March 2014 to deal with the increasing demand for recruitment services from the new shared service organisations, and a high volume of campaigns were processed; as a result the recruitment needs of these organisations were met by PAS.

## Office of Government Procurement (OGP) Project

Approximately 970 applications were received for a variety of posts, with 133 recommendations made in 2014.

## Shared Services Project

On near completion of the OGP Project, the focus of the team shifted towards recruitment for a number of new Shared Services Offices on behalf of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. These offices comprised the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), the National Shared Services Office (NSSO), the Payroll Shared Services Centre (PSSC) and PeoplePoint.

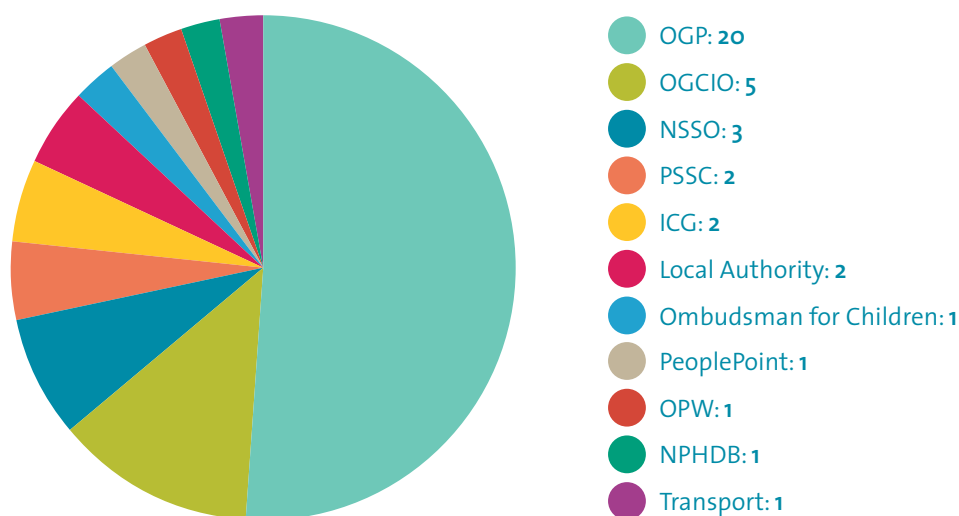
## Local Authorities

The last quarter of 2014 saw the launch of a national campaign for roles at Director of Service level. Previously, this had been done on a campaign by campaign basis. However, because of the moratorium, there has been a build up of vacancies and a new model, centralising Director of Service recruitment and having a national panel, was introduced for efficiency reasons. This new model will act as a pilot for other senior level campaigns for the local government sector. The campaign was widely advertised, attracting over 450 applications from a diverse range of backgrounds. Negotiations have also started on introducing psychometric testing for other senior local authority positions.

## Next Steps

The Shared Services Recruitment unit will now focus mainly on recruitment for the Local Government sector. 2015 will see national campaigns launched for senior grades including Senior Executive Officer, Planning grades, Engineering grades and Architects.

### Campaigns 2014: Total 39



## Professional and Technical Recruitment

The Professional and Technical Recruitment Unit advertised 69 campaigns during 2014. The Unit recruited for a diverse range of senior professional posts in the Civil Service, Local Authorities and wider public sector. The unit consolidated the use of preliminary interviews and a final interview for Principal Officer level posts, with the final stage also including a presentation by candidates, and recommended 118 candidates for appointment during 2014.

The unit also introduced personality assessment as part of the recruitment approach for particular roles.

## Hospital Consultant Recruitment

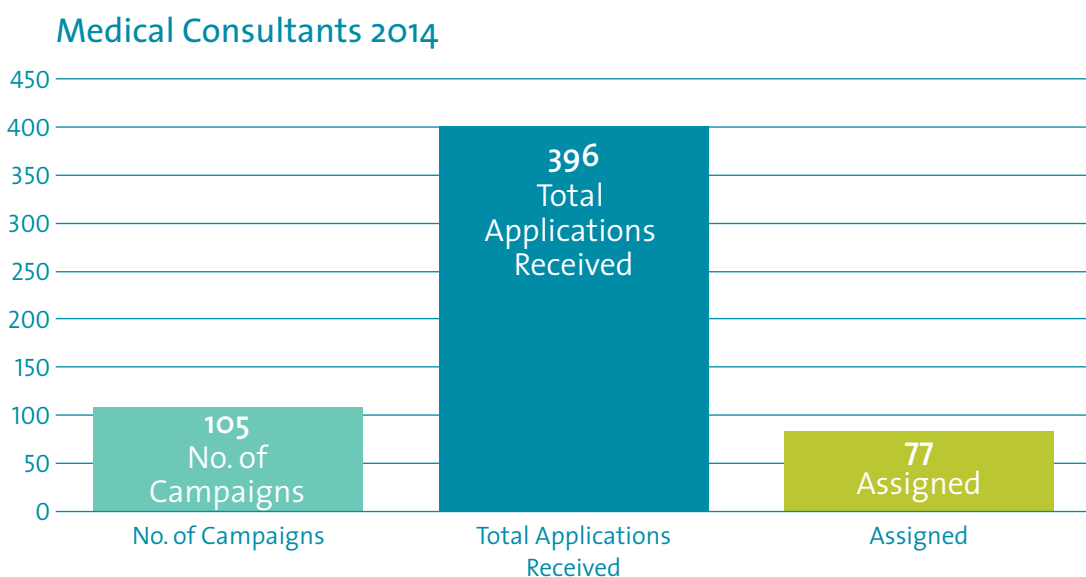
77 hospital consultants were recommended for appointment in 2014.

A review into how PAS recruits hospital consultants commenced in 2013 as part of a Lean Six Sigma project which identified a number of areas for improvement and ways of speeding up the process. It indicated two areas in particular which were causing problems and these were difficulties in putting selection boards in place and time taken to complete character and medical checks.

The revised pay scales for newly appointed consultants came into effect from 1st September 2014 and following this the Minister for Health announced plans to fill 200 or more posts.

All of these developments, and the creation of the seven Hospital Groups, have led to investment by all stakeholders in the process with the objective of delivering improved services to the citizen. Agreement has been reached with the HSE on the constitution and size of selection boards; this will bring more consistency and structure into how selection boards will be formed into the future, and it is hoped will ultimately lead to improvement in time taken to recruit a consultant. The increase in demand to fill posts and difficulties in recruitment to some specialties has resulted in an increased focus on sourcing potential applicants using in-house search, newspaper advertising and websites.

The figures for 2014 are set out below.



## Redeployment Activity in 2014

Government policy is to reorganise public service resources to focus on areas of greatest need. PAS manages this reorganisation process for the Civil Service and the Non Commercial State Agencies. This process is facilitated through collaboration with Departments/Offices and state agencies, and proactively making improvements related to policy, services and systems.

PAS continued to facilitate delivery of this process throughout 2014. In March, a briefing session was held for Redeployment Liaison Officers. This outlined changes as a result of the Public Service Management (Recruitment & Appointments) (Amendment Act) 2013, which allowed for transfers between sectors and for a subsequent Redesignation process. As a result of this meeting, a working group was set up with the aim of drafting and agreeing on a detailed list of the items of information that a receiving organisation needed in order to assist in the redesignation of individuals, particularly across sectors. This 'Redesignation Administrative Form' was included in a revised Redeployment Toolkit which the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform issued in November.

### Activity in 2014



**426**  
Posts Circulated



**790**  
Expressions  
of Interest



**101**  
Designations  
Processed

## State Boards

For the last number of years, PAS provided an advertising service in relation to vacancies on the Boards of State agencies. This service was availed of by some Government Departments while other Departments advertised vacancies through their own websites. As part of this service, PAS also collated applications received through the publicjobs.ie website and forwarded these to the relevant Department for assessment.

On 30 September 2014, the Government decided that, in future, appointments to State Boards would be made through an open and transparent process and that PAS would play a central role in this process. Subsequent to the Government decision, new "Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards" were issued by the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform. Under these Guidelines, PAS is given a central responsibility for the effective operation of this new process.

As the Guidelines make clear, this role has been given to PAS because PAS has an established track record of effectiveness in the public appointments arena. PAS is seen as having expertise in assessment and is recognised for operating to high standards of independence and fairness across all of its recruitment activities.

Under the new Guidelines, PAS is responsible for developing and agreeing clear criteria for each vacant Board role with the relevant Department and the Chair of the Board of the particular State agency. Once agreed, these criteria are published on the State Boards website at [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie) for a three week period. All expressions of interest received are then collated and PAS oversees an impartial assessment process designed to ensure that all candidates are assessed against the published criteria. Following this assessment, a list of potentially-appointable candidates is then sent to the relevant Department.

PAS had a very limited window of only a few weeks within which to put in place this process in the period between the Government decision and the publishing of the new Guidelines. A new State Boards website was developed which allows expressions of interest to be advertised and for applications to be submitted online using the PAS platform. PAS also designed and published a self-assessment questionnaire for State Board roles which potential applicants can use to assess their own skills before applying. A small staff team was put in place to design and manage the operational processes and worked to establish good communication with the newly-appointed State Board Liaison Officers in each Government Department.

This initial programme of work will gather pace and broaden to include awareness-raising and promotion of the State Boards appointments process in 2015.

By the end of 2014, 33 vacant positions across nine State Boards were being processed by PAS. These included eight vacancies on both the Low Pay Commission and the Board of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland together with four vacancies on both the Board of Ervia and the Board of the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland. PAS was also working to fill vacancies on the Board of Leopardstown Park Hospital, as well as the position of Chair of the Board of St. James' Hospital.

## Customer Focus

PAS have a programme in place to evaluate the achievement of the Standards of Service Delivery (as set out in the Quality Customer Service Action Plan and Statement of Strategy). Reports on the achievement of these standards are evaluated by the Management Team on a regular basis, and by the Board of the Public Appointments Service each quarter.

PAS has set challenging quantitative standards for the delivery of the services to differing customer groups.

PAS conducts a number of annual customer surveys in order to ascertain whether the service standards set for these groups are being achieved and how these groups rate all of the services that are provided. These surveys include Client, Selection Board Member, Candidate and Staff Surveys. Reports on the outcome of the Customer Surveys are provided to the Board.

Client Service Level Agreements are in place for all major clients, and project plans are put in place for all other campaigns.



## Client Engagement

In our 2014 client survey, although the response rate was not very high, satisfaction levels with PAS were high, including:

- › 100% satisfaction with the quality of staff assigned by PAS
- › 100% satisfaction with our understanding of client recruitment needs
- › 100% satisfaction with the value added by PAS
- › 87.5% satisfaction with timescales for meeting client recruitment needs
- › 100% satisfaction with the quality of advice provided by staff
- › 87.5% satisfaction with the efficiency in dealing with queries.

A system has been set up to establish time to hire for all campaigns and progress in relation to achieving targets is monitored through our internal quality forum. On average it takes 12 weeks to fill a senior executive post, and 15 weeks to fill a professional and technical post.

The client management programme was reinforced, with a dedicated client manager (at a senior level) assigned to each client organisation. The majority of contact and requests for assistance with recruitment campaigns or queries came in through this channel in 2014.

The vast majority of clients continue to approach PAS for assistance with their recruitment needs and would like more involvement from PAS in areas outside of our traditional remit, should PAS resources allow. Decisions in relation to the provision of such assistance are made on a case by case basis depending on the workload in PAS at that particular time.

## Candidate Feedback

Our 2014 candidate survey had very high satisfaction levels overall. The results are set out below. The area of feedback quality will be prioritised for investigation in 2015.

### (Senior Management and Professional/Technical Campaigns - 432 responses)

Quality & Timeliness	Positive Response Rate	Negative Response Rate
Satisfaction with advance notice in relation to interview	88%	12%
Satisfaction with time taken to issue interview result	84%	16%
Satisfaction with language used in correspondence	87%	13%
Satisfaction with the quality of questioning at interview	78%	22%
Satisfaction with fairness of the interview	75%	25%
Satisfaction with the quality of feedback provided	47%	53%
Satisfaction with the timeliness of feedback	80%	20%
Dealings with Staff		
Satisfaction with level and quality of information provided by staff	85%	15%
Satisfaction with helpfulness of staff	90%	10%

## (Large Volume Campaigns - 1,401 responses)

Quality & Timeliness	Positive Response Rate	Negative Response Rate
Satisfaction with advance notice in relation to test(s)	90%	10%
Satisfaction with advance notice in relation to interview	87%	13%
Satisfaction with the relevance of test questions	71%	29%
Satisfaction with time taken to issue test result	84%	16%
Satisfaction with time taken to issue interview result	89%	11%
Satisfaction with language used in correspondence	95%	5%
Satisfaction with the quality of questioning at interview	89%	11%
Satisfaction with fairness of the interview	90%	10%
Satisfaction with quality of feedback	70%	30%
Satisfaction with the timeliness of feedback	85%	15%
Dealings with Staff		
Satisfaction with level and quality of information provided by staff	90%	10%
Satisfaction with helpfulness of staff	93%	7%

## Selection Board Member Feedback

The 2014 selection board member survey had very high satisfaction levels in each area. The results are set out below. All selection board members were asked for additional feedback on our services and for suggestions for improvements. A lot of very positive feedback was received, and all viable suggestions are being implemented in 2015 as part of the selection board member survey action plan.

Quality and Timeliness of Process and Documentation	Positive Response Rate	Negative Response Rate
Receipt of board documentation in time to prepare	92%	8%
Satisfaction with quality of supporting documentation	96%	4%
Satisfaction with training/briefing received	87%	13%
Candidates given sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their suitability	96%	4%
Satisfaction with measures to ensure confidentiality of the process	100%	0%
Dealings with Staff		
Satisfaction with service provided by staff	98%	2%

## Feedback included:



*“I’m impressed with the professionalism of the process and with the objectivity and fairness of the assessment of candidates. PAS should be congratulated on putting in place a transparent and equitable system that ensures a level playing field for all candidates”*

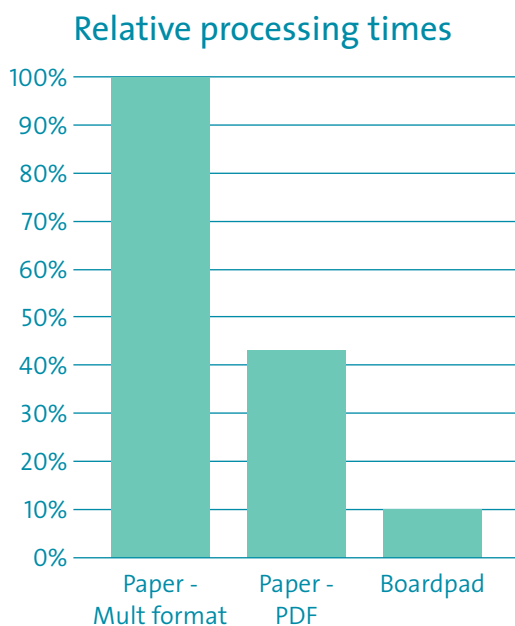
*“I’ve been involved in five selection processes since late 2013. I would regard them all as fair, challenging to candidates, always focused on selecting the right people”.*

## E-enabled Options

The focus of 2014 was removing paper from the processes and delivering more services electronically.

### Digital Interview Material

Tablet PCs were introduced with an App for Board Members to use for shortlisting and/or interviewing candidates. The following indicate some of the potential savings from moving towards electronic interview materials. Taking an average across eight campaigns the input required of IT staff amounted to approximately 40 minutes to set up meeting, convert documents, upload documents and prepare the tablets. If the paper process takes up to seven hours to prepare all documents (when multi format), or three hours when based on a single PDF document, then there is a potential saving of just over 90% or 78% respectively in time taken to process documents. The graph below shows the relative processing times.



Targets are currently being set for use of this technology going forward with an aim of 100% use on interview boards by mid 2015.

### STAR Enhancements

The STAR system is the main enabler of the recruitment process in the organisation. A number of significant enhancements were made to STAR in 2014. Enhancements were made to support the move from paper based exams to online assessments. STAR can now support very complex large volume, multiple stage campaigns with multiple sub-campaigns. STAR also facilitates more flexibility in the submission of application forms, CVs, etc. for campaigns. STAR has also been adapted to gather equal opportunity data at a campaign level.

PAS also developed a mobile friendly version of the Publicjobs.ie website. This allows candidates access to the site on tablets and Smart phones.

In the candidate survey, conducted in 2014, there was a very high level of satisfaction with publicjobs.ie.

## (Senior Management and Professional/Technical Campaigns)

Website	Positive Response Rate	Negative Response Rate
Ease of use	89%	11%
Quality of information	92%	8%

## (Large Volume Campaigns)

Website	Positive Response Rate	Negative Response Rate
Ease of use	94%	6%
Quality of information	95%	5%

## Online Assessment

There have been significant developments in assessment processes in order to manage the large volumes of applicants applying for campaigns in as efficient a way as possible. In 2014, PAS tested over 50,000 people using on-line tests and have learned about what works most effectively in the context of on-line tests. That learning and experience has enabled PAS to provide good quality advice to candidates to ensure the on-line experience is as positive as possible. While there was initial resistance to the concept, feedback from candidates indicates that, in general, they prefer doing their tests on-line at their own convenience. There has been ongoing monitoring of performance in on-line testing to ensure that the assessments are performing as they should and those going forward to subsequent stages, (typically an assessment centre), sit supervised tests to ensure that the assessment system is robust.

PAS has put a procurement framework in place to ensure that a panel of on-line test providers is in place, and a number of the on-line test providers have made changes to their systems to support this approach (e.g. to support the testing of candidates with special needs).

A case study below, comparing the last graduate campaign before the moratorium with the first graduate campaign since the easing of the moratorium, illustrates the efficiency gains from moving to on-line tests.

Campaign	Number Applied	Number Tested On-line	Number Sitting Supervised Tests	% Completing Tests	% Sitting Supervised Tests
AO/Third Sec 2008	5709		3041	53%	53%
AO 2014	5315	4422	103	83%	2%

Work on upgrading the internal testing facility (the SMART Centre) has been completed. The new infrastructure can be managed and updated centrally and support a wider range of online assessments.

## Sharing Knowledge and Expertise

PAS is part of the following key networks/groups:

- › Civil Service Renewal Process
- › Civil Service Personnel Officers Network
- › Assistant Secretary Network
- › Association of Chief Executives of State Agencies
- › SPS Coaching Working Group
- › Head of ICT Network
- › Quality Customer Service Network
- › Graduate Development Programme

## Assessment Development

PAS has delivered on a programme of development of new selection tools in 2014. PAS is a leader in the development of on-line assessment questionnaires and they have proved to be a very efficient and effective sifting tool alongside on-line tests. In 2014, PAS rolled out new on-line screening questionnaires for the Garda Trainee, Executive Officer and Administrative Officer campaigns. PAS has also developed bespoke assessment exercises for Statistician, Trainee Auditor and Graduate Economist in IGEEs.

A longitudinal study into the use of personality questionnaires for Garda recruitment is currently underway. Eighty of the recently selected trainees took part in the study which involved the completion of two personality questionnaires. The results will be analysed and compared to their performance in the selection process to evaluate whether personality questionnaires will be included in future Garda Trainee campaigns.

PAS has continued benchmarking of on-going practice in the area of assessment, and as well as attending conferences in the area, one of our psychologists delivered a paper at the British Psychological Society Division of Occupational Psychology in the UK which was very well received.

In 2014, PAS seconded a psychologist for three months to the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) as part of the EU NEPT (National Experts in Professional Training) programme. EPSO is the selection body for the majority of positions in the EU Institutions. The psychologist was assigned to the strategic directorate which sets out the strategy and carries out research into key areas of organisational importance in the area of selection. The assessment processes used in Ireland are highly regarded and PAS are a key benchmark organisation for approaches to assessment for EPSO and across the European Union. The secondment was very useful to build important relationships for Ireland with EPSO, particularly given a current emphasis on ensuring Irish candidates are well represented in the EU Institutions. This staff member continues to work in this area with the Department of an Taoiseach and other EU jobs stakeholders.

## Our People

PAS revised the staffing structure in 2014 to make best use of the resources and to ensure that the recruitment teams were both flexible and highly skilled. PAS availed of temporary resources from client organisations who were trained by PAS, allowing PAS to provide an excellent recruitment service to those clients and to meet unforeseen demands for the services.

## Training and Development

Two training sessions were held in 2014 for external PAS Representatives and a workshop was held with Selection Board Chairpersons.

PAS aims to have a professional recruitment standard in place for all staff; 27 staff have been trained to date in Lean/Six Sigma and 18 staff have been trained in level A & B Psychometric Testing. A number of the lean projects have been implemented by staff who have already completed the training. These projects have led to improvements in the areas of senior executive recruitment; decision-making in relation to requests for campaigns; increased support to clients once a request has been received; and standardisation of processes across a number of areas and systems. A Business Improvement Team have been given responsibility for putting in place the supporting structures and measures that will underpin this lean approach.

## Human Resource Management Benchmarking

PAS was successful in the annual NSAI assessment for Excellence Through People accreditation. The Assessor was on site for one day in August and reviewed written evidence of compliance with the new standard, and also interviewed a selection of staff in the office. The Assessor examined three of the six areas and followed up on recommendations made in the overall assessment in September 2013. No recommendations for improvements were made in 2014.

## Equality and Diversity

Equality and Diversity are central to the culture of the organisation. PAS ensures this through:

- › equality proofing all of the new assessment and selection techniques;
- › conducting equality monitoring on all large volume tests;
- › the Equality and Diversity Policy; its implementation is monitored by the Equality Monitoring Group (who also monitor adherence to the requirements of the Disability Act);
- › including Equality and Diversity issues as part of the Corporate Orientation Programme for all new staff; and providing Disability Awareness and Diversity Awareness training for staff;
- › implementing the Accessibility Action Plan;
- › the booklet entitled 'Features and services of the Public Appointments Service for customers with special needs'. This information booklet highlights the various aspects of the accessible recruitment service provided and the physical accessibility of the Office in general. It is aimed at, and focused on, reassuring customers with special needs that we have the facilities and services necessary to allow them to take part in the recruitment process of their choice in a fair and impartial manner. This booklet is available on the website.

## Staff Engagement

PAS is able to deliver on a very large workload because of the flexibility and commitment demonstrated by staff. PAS ensures that staff are engaged through ongoing leadership, staff development and communication.

PAS conducted a staff survey in 2014, and the satisfaction levels were very high. A summary of this survey is set out below. An Action Plan has been put in place to address any issues identified and to implement suggestions received from staff as part of this process, including suggestions which relate to improved services to external customers. This action plan will be implemented through the Partnership Committee.

	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Disagree Strongly
My manager allows me to take responsibility for my work	54	41	5	
My manager shows his/her appreciation when I work hard/put in extra effort	33	58	9	
I received the training and development required to carry out my job	28	57	11	4
I think this is a healthy and safe place to work	37	54	7	2
People in the office are willing to cooperate with each other	33	59	8	
I feel that people treat each other with respect	28	68	4	
I feel I can use my initiative to make suggestions for improvements in the work I do	28	61	9	2
I think the office provides good facilities for staff with disabilities	35	65		
I would speak highly to people externally about PAS as an employer	33	61	4	2
I would speak highly to people externally about the work we do	44	52	2	2
I believe that I provide a quality customer service to all external customers	50	48		2
I keep the candidate experience at the front of my mind	28	68	4	
I go the "extra mile" to deliver for our customers	37	61	2	

## The Facilities

PAS made facilities available to other public service organisations, providing 280 rooms to external clients in 2014.

# Appendices



## APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2014			
	Total number of Applications Received	Number Interviewed at Prelims & Main	Number Assigned / Recommended
<b>Civil Service</b>			
Clerical including Temporary Recruitment	41,257	4,687	2,357
Administrative	7,078	597	269
Senior Management & Professional/ Technical/Specialist posts	4,612	841	124
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,947</b>	<b>6,125</b>	<b>2,750</b>
<b>Local Authorities</b>			
Local Authorities	1,019	275	39
- Health Sector	488	61	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Garda</b>			
Garda	24,803	624	295
<b>Processes conducted for public bodies outside of the remit of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004</b>			
The Adoption Authority of Ireland	39	14	1
Grangegorman Development Agency	63	20	1
SEAI	147	31	1
IHRC	72	36	3
NORA	104	22	2
- State Boards	959		
- Other Public Service Bodies	1,532	382	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Top Level Appointments Committee</b>	<b>Total Number of Applications Received</b>	<b>Number Interviewed</b>	<b>Number of campaigns completed</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>26</b>

SELECTION/TESTING SERVICES PROVIDED			
	Total Number of Applications Received	Number Tested	
- Mature Code Nursing	1,648	1,325	
- Total	1,648	1,325	
Overall Totals	Number of Applications	Number Interviewed	Number Assigned/ Recommended
	84,734	7,878	3,304
	Total Number of Campaigns Advertised 2014	Total Number of Applications Received	
	342	84,734	

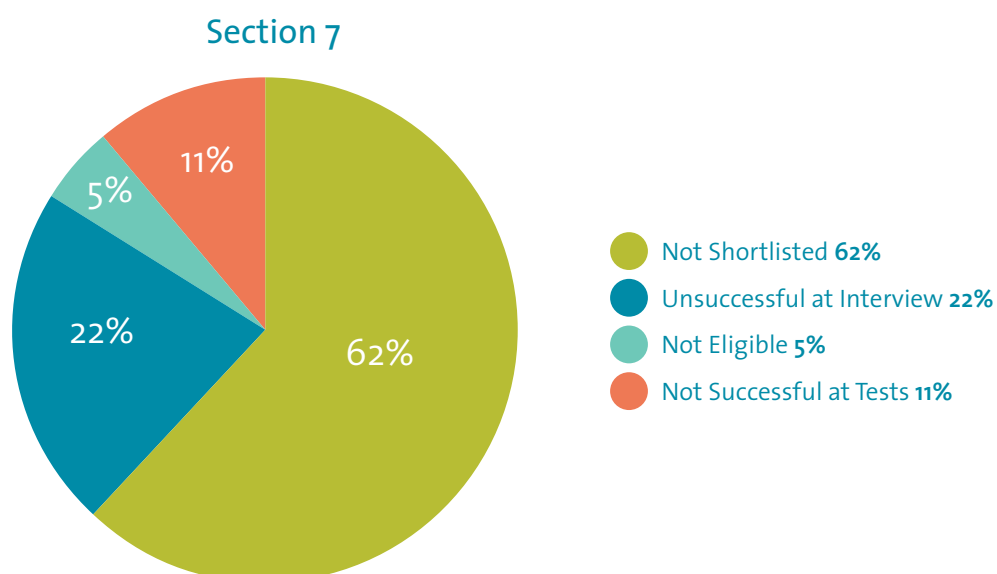
## APPENDIX II

### Requests for Review Appeals

The Commission for Public Service Appointments has published procedures to be followed when dealing with candidates' requests for review and candidates' complaints in relation to appointments processes. Requests for reviews and complaints received generally fall under Sections 7 and 8 of the Code of Practice for Appointments to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service. Section 7 deals with requests for review of a decision taken in relation to an application and Section 8 deals with allegations of a breach of the code of practice. The statistics for 2014 in relation to both Section 7 and Section 8 are as follows:

Section 7	Section 8
73	11

The chart below shows the breakdown of the selection stages involved in the requests for Section 7 reviews.



## APPENDIX III

### Overview of Energy Usage in 2014

The main energy usage relates to heating/lighting and providing water in the office in Chapter House. In 2014, 1,220.99 MWh of energy was consumed, consisting of:

- 896.87 MWh of electricity;
- 260.39 MWh of fossil fuels;
- 0 of renewable fuels.

### Actions Undertaken in 2014

In 2014, PAS undertook a range of initiatives to improve the energy performance, including:

- Raising staff awareness of energy savings through promotional material and reminders in relation to energy usage
- Close monitoring and control of energy usage including manual interventions with the heating system controls
- A reduction of 23.52 MWh of electricity was achieved on 2013 usage
- A reduction of 40.21 MWh of fossil fuels was achieved on 2013 usage

### Actions planned for 2015

In 2015, PAS intends to further improve the energy performance by undertaking the following initiatives:

- Continue to raise staff awareness in relation to energy savings
- Continue to manually intervene in heating system controls until building management system has been put in place
- Put an Energy Savings Team in place representing staff throughout the organisation.

## APPENDIX IV

### Expenditure

		2014
		Outturn
		€000
i	Salaries, wages and allowances	4,437
ii	Travel and subsistence	55
iii	Training and development and incidental expenses	174
iv	Postal and telecommunications services	117
v	Office equipment and external IT services	847
vi	Office premises expenses	215
vii	Recruitment costs- research and corporate governance	13
viii	Recruitment costs - advertising and testing	761
ix	Recruitment Costs - interview boards	550
		<b>7,169</b>







