



Office of the Ombudsman
Oifig an Ombudsman



Office of the Information Commissioner
Oifig an Choimisinéara Faisnéise



Oifig an Choimisinéara um Fhaisnéis Comhshaoil
Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information



Oifig an Choimisiúin um Cheapacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí
Office of the Commission for Public Service Appointments



Coimisiún um Chaighdeáin in Oifigí Poiblí
Standards in Public Office Commission

CORPORATE REPORT 2016

This document covers the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) (incorporating the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information (OCEI)), the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPOC) and the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA). The four offices each carry out separate and distinct statutory functions and produce individual statutory and annual reports on their operations. For accounting and financial reporting purposes they are amalgamated under one Vote, Vote 19.

The offices are managed by an Accounting Officer and a Management Team, who direct overall operations, while simultaneously protecting and preserving the statutory independence and functions of each of the constituent parts. Each office has its own staff complement but the finance, human resources, legal, communications and information technology functions are shared.

The 2016 financial allocation under Vote 19 was €10.1m of which €7.4m was allocated for pay-related expenditure and €2.7m was allocated to non-pay expenditure. The Appropriation Account for Vote 19 is available on the Comptroller and Auditor General's [website](#).

Governance

In April 2016 the Office published its first [Corporate Governance Framework](#) in line with the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service. The Framework demonstrates the Office's commitment to best practice structures, processes and systems that support the successful operation of duties in an ethical, accountable, transparent and effective manner. In documenting governance arrangements our stakeholders can be assured that good governance policies and practices are embedded in the culture of the Office. We believe that good corporate governance is essential in order to support the delivery of the Office's strategic priorities. This document, which is published on each of our websites, gives details about how we operate.

Risk Management

The Office completed a full review of its approach to Risk Management, reviewing all processes in 2016, which was facilitated by an external audit company. Our Risk Register rating system was enhanced further and this is supported by a revised Risk Management Policy.

The Risk Register is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Director General and the Management Team, who consider how best to mitigate against any current or potential risks or alternatively optimise any opportunities. This enables the Office (and all statutory functions) to respond effectively to changes in our business and external environment.

Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

The Risk Management framework and Governance function is supported by our [Audit and Risk Committee \(ARC Charter\)](#). The Accounting Officer appoints the membership of the Committee, which comprises of an Independent Chair, one Office official (member of the Management Team) and two external representatives.

The members are set out below along with the total fees paid to them for their attendance at meetings during 2016. The payments are in line with those sanctioned by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Ms Martina Moloney (Chair)	€1609.56 (full year)
Ms Melanie Pine	€1131.16 (full year)
Dr Thomas Frawley	€565.58 (appointed on 19 September 2016)
Ms Orla Twomey	€282.79 (resigned on 27 June 2016 due to other commitments)
Mr David Nutley (Office official)	N/A

During 2016, the Audit Committee held four meetings, which were attended as follows:

- 2 March - Martina Moloney, David Nutley, Melanie Pine
- 27 June - Martina Moloney, Melanie Pine, Orla Twomey, David Nutley
- 26 September - Martina Moloney, Melanie Pine, Tom Frawley, David Nutley
- 7 December - Martina Moloney, Melanie Pine, Tom Frawley, David Nutley

Internal Audit

The role of the Internal Audit Unit is to provide assurance to the Director General (Accounting Officer) as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Office's systems of internal controls, risk management and governance arrangements. The Internal Audit function uses a risk based approach to plan audits, reporting findings to the Director General and the Audit and Risk Committee.

It conducts its work in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (IIA Standards), guidelines from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service (December 2015). In 2016, audits were carried out in respect of the Office Credit Card, Data Protection, the Human Resources Shared Service Centre migration and Office Procedures.

Risk Incidents / Fraud / Whistleblowing / Data Protection Reports / Protected Disclosures

No reports or disclosures were received during the course of 2016.

FOI Publication Scheme

The FOI Publication Scheme came into operation in 2016. Its purpose is to facilitate the provision of information to the greatest extent possible, except for information that is deemed exempt under the Freedom of Information Act. The Scheme provides details on the role of the respective office, the types or records held, key corporate documents, information regarding the staffing complement and remuneration scales of the office's management grades. Each of the four offices have prepared a publication scheme and the document is available in the 'About Us' section of the respective websites.

Strategic Statement 2016 – 2018

The Offices of the Ombudsman and Information Commissioner published a revised Strategic Statement in 2016, in which three high level objectives were identified as primary enablers in the achievement of their vision, as follows

- We will drive improvements in the wider public service
- We will deliver a customer focused service that reflects our core values
- We will develop and enhance our management and administrative frameworks to enable and underpin our objectives of improving the wider public service and delivering an excellent customer focused service

A separate strategic plan exists for the [CPSA](#). While the plan is concerned only with the Offices of the [Ombudsman](#) and [Information Commissioner](#) (incorporating the OCEI), given the sharing of staff across all four Offices, in accordance with the needs and priorities of each Office, many aspects of this plan are clearly relevant to all staff. The document also identified organisational values, which set out the qualities that staff are should reflect when carrying out their duties, namely, Fairness, Independence, Innovation, Customer Focus and Empathy. The Office's Organisational Values were promoted throughout the organisation by a dedicated committee represented by staff at all grades.

Human Resources

As at 31 December 2016 the Office had a total of 112.6 staff as follows:

- | | |
|--|------|
| • Ombudsman / Information Commissioner | 1 |
| • Director General | 1 |
| • Ombudsman | 44 |
| • OIC / OCEI | 26.6 |
| • Shared Services function | 22.3 |
| • Standards in Public Office Commission | 13.4 |
| • Commission for Public Service Appointments | 4.3 |

Disability Act 2005

Access Officer

In accordance with section 26(2) of the Disability Act 2005, the Office of the Ombudsman has appointed an "access officer". The access officer is responsible for arranging for and co-ordinating assistance and guidance to persons with disabilities accessing our services. In 2016 the access officer received three requests. Two of which were for assistance with communicating with the Office and one regarding searching on our website.

Employees

Under Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005, public sector bodies are required to report on the level of employees with disabilities. In 2016 we conducted a self-reporting staff census, which indicated that we exceed the minimum of 3% for employment of people with disabilities.

Overview of Energy Usage in 2016

The energy consumption in our office buildings is for heating, air conditioning, hot water, lighting and office equipment. It is measured by the Office of Public Works. In 2016 the combined Offices consumed 893,815 kWh of energy, consisting of:

- 688,210 kWh of electricity
- 205,605 kWh of fossil fuels

The Office actively encourages staff to save energy through simple and therefore efficient measures such as taking the stairs instead of using lifts and ensuring PCs and lights are turned off when not in use. Central recycling bins were also introduced in 2016, which allow waste to be segregated, thereby supporting the environmental objectives of the Office.

Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

The Office dealt with 24 PQs on a variety of topics in 2016.

Freedom of Information Act 2014

The Office continues to meet its obligations in relation to responding to Freedom of Information requests. In 2016 the Offices received 45 requests under the FOI Act broken down as follows:

SIPOC	16
Ombudsman	15
CPSA	11
OIC / OCEI	3

Data Protection Acts

In 2016 the Office of the Ombudsman received six Data Protection access requests and the Standards in Public Office Commission received one, which was subsequently withdrawn. No requests were received by the other offices.

Access to Environmental Information Regulations (AIE)

In 2016 the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information received three AIE requests. No requests were received by the other offices.

Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations

The Standards in Public Office Commission received one request under the Regulations. No requests were received by the other offices.