



European
Commission

THE IMPROVEMENT OF EMPLOYER RELATIONS SERVICES INVOLVES BUILDING MORE EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS THROUGH NEW MANAGEMENT/ORGANISATION STRUCTURES AND STRENGTHENING THE CAPABILITIES AND SKILLS OF STAFF.

Improving employer relations services (the Employer Relations Strategy 2017-20)

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REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Improvement of employer relations services is important in the context of ensuring that, where possible, new job opportunities are filled by registered unemployed people. Emerging outcomes include helping to fill vacancies by delivering recruitment campaigns and pre-selection procedures for large employers, more employment opportunities for PES clients, and increased awareness of PES support and services.

Scope of measure
(a pilot project or a national reform)

National

Name of the PES

Intreo

When was the practice
implemented?

A centralised National Key Account Management team was established in Quarter 4 of 2015. This team was established in addition to Employer Relations representatives across divisional areas.

What was the driver
for introducing the practice?
Was it internal or external?

A key strategic context is the Irish Pathways to Work strategy 2016-20 produced by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). This aims to ensure that, where possible, new job opportunities are filled by registered unemployed people.

One of the strands in Pathways to Work is about employer relations development, and specifically fostering a more professional approach with the PES to engaging with employers, and undertaking PES staff training and development in order to improve the quality of the service offered to employers. In order to implement this work, an Employer Relations Strategy has been produced for 2017 to 2020.

Which organisation was involved
in its implementation?

The following team structure was established to support delivery of the Employer Relations Strategy:

- ▶ National Employer Relations Division – has responsibility for Employer Relations Policy; National Key Account Management Team; National Contact Centre; Jobs Ireland development team; Work Placement Support Programmes Unit (First Steps etc.)
- ▶ 11 Divisions throughout the country - each Division has Employer Relations Managers and, as appropriate, an assigned team to respond to and support the needs of employers in the Divisional area.
- ▶ Contracted Public Employment Services – these provide a service for long-term unemployed people and connect with employers to identify and put forward suitable candidates for job opportunities.

In addition:

- ▶ The PES work closely with skills and training bodies – to collaboratively develop and support training programmes to upskill clients for current and future industry skills needs.
- ▶ Industry/business representative bodies (national and divisional) – the PES participate and engage with representative bodies to create awareness of employer relations services.
- ▶ Regional Skills Fora – set up under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills, these fora address labour market relevance of further education and training provision, and identify the skills needs of employers. The PES participate in these groups across the country.

Which groups were targeted
by the practice?

The groups targeted by the practice include:

- ▶ All jobseekers
- ▶ Employers
- ▶ Representative groups

What were the practice's main objectives?

The Employer Relations Strategy's aim is to build effective relationships with employers with a view to increasing recruitment activity and, in particular, increasing employment placements for job centre clients. It sets out the following objectives:

- ▶ Develop and implement an integrated and consistent approach to engagement with employers to position the Irish PES as a partner of choice for recruitment and employment services.
- ▶ Increase awareness among employers of the portfolio of services and supports in order to maximise take up.
- ▶ Improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the services offered to employers.
- ▶ Develop the infrastructure (structures, people, processes and ICT) required to deliver the objectives.

What activities were carried out?

Developing and implementing appropriate management/organisation structures. An Employer Relations Division was created within the DEASP with a brief to build linkages with employers and promote the recruitment of unemployed jobseekers.

A centralised Key Account Managers (KAMs) team was established as a single contact point for large employers (250+ employees), which is specialised by occupational area. KAMs provide an intensive and tailored service, including assistance with advertising jobs, identifying suitable candidates from the database of candidates, pre-screening, scheduling interviews and providing interview facilities in collaboration with divisional teams. For large scale recruitment, KAMs may also facilitate a drive at regional or national level. Where there is a skills gap, KAMs may liaise with local education and training providers to help meet future skills needs.

Alongside KAMs, there are also 11 Employer Relations Managers in each of the 11 PES Divisional areas. Some of these are accompanied by a dedicated support team, but others draw on the support of general staff when needed. Divisional Managers undertake similar tasks to KAMs but at a localised level and for employers with under 250 employees.

KAMs and Divisional Managers work closely together in order to provide a consistent and cohesive service to employers.

KAMs and Divisional Managers have delivered recruitment campaigns for large employers, such as for a large retailer setting up retail outlets across Ireland. The support team comprised of Retail KAMs (campaign co-ordinator) and Divisional Support teams in the roll out areas. Campaigns involved promotion on www.jobsireland.ie, on social media, text messaging, direct engagement with job seeking clients and through the network of PES offices and contracted public employment service providers.

Developing and strengthening the capabilities and skills of staff assigned to employer services roles. The Staff Development Unit (SDU) in the DEASP provide training for personnel. The SDU Unit, in collaboration with the National College of Ireland has developed a Certificate in Professional Practice in Employability Services (Level 8 Special Purpose Award). This programme includes a four day module on 'Engaging with and Supporting Enterprises'. The development of further training is a key focus for 2018 to enhance the skillset of employer relations personnel.

Supporting traineeships in collaboration with industry, skills and training bodies. This has included a 26-week National Construction Traineeship that prepares trainees for work in the construction industry and a 12-week National Career Traineeship in Hospitality. The traineeships are designed to meet skills gaps in the industry and offer qualifications to jobseekers. The DEASP is represented on a Traineeship Steering Group chaired by the Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS).

Developing internal capacity and business technologies to improve job matching. The JobsIreland website has been upgraded. This free web service uses competencies and skillsets as well as the traditional job type classifications to match opportunities with registered jobseekers on the Jobs Ireland portal.

A shared portal is being established to capture the work of the employer relations teams, which will reflect existing activity reporting at divisional level.

Promoting Intreo services to employers. The Employer Relations Division delivers employer briefings, engages directly with employers, disseminates articles to employer bodies, runs an annual jobs week where employers are engaged, and profiles services within broader government-run networks (e.g. National CSR Stakeholder Group).

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| <p>What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organisational and strategic reorganisation ▶ Diverting personnel towards Employer Relations services ▶ Training KAMs and Divisional Employer Relations Managers ▶ Establishing new business technologies |
| <p>What were the source(s) of funding?</p> | <p>National PES budget.</p> |
| <p>What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?</p> | <p>DEASP are in the process of developing monitoring and performance indicators related to employer engagement, and this may include employers engaged with KAMs and Divisional Managers, registration of vacancies, and filling of vacancies. It is therefore too early to provide any output data. Examples of some initial output data approaches are given below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 12 trainee participants on Chef Start training. ▶ 23 trainee participants on National Career Traineeship in Hospitality. ▶ Recruitment Campaign delivered for new nationwide employer: 1 007 people called for interview over four campaigns; 230 people hired over four campaigns. ▶ Recruitment Campaign for Security Company: 200 people called for interview; 50+ people hired over four campaigns. ▶ Annual Jobs Week, December 2016: 100 events were held and 400 employers participated, along with 15 000 jobseekers. |
| <p>What outcomes have been identified?</p> | <p>It is still early for identification of outcomes, but the following are intended and emerging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Helping to fill vacancies by delivering recruitment campaigns and pre-selection procedures for large employers. ▶ More employment opportunities for PES clients. ▶ Increased awareness of DEASP/PES support and services. ▶ Improved user experience for jobseekers and employers. ▶ Increased utilisation of services and supports. ▶ Higher employer satisfaction levels. ▶ A more consistent service for employers. ▶ Stronger relationships and networks with employers to better understand their needs and expectations. |
| <p>What are the lessons learnt and success factors?</p> | <p>The key lessons learnt and success factors include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Getting to know industries and occupational areas, specifically their skills and recruitment needs. ▶ Being responsive, adaptable and proactive when working with employers, and ensuring that employers see the value of working with PES. ▶ Segmentation of KAMs staff working with employers into occupational groupings to enable staff specialisation but all employers receive the same PES service. ▶ Divisional Managers and the centralised KAMs working together in an open and collaborative manner. ▶ Participating in networks of employers is an effective way of engaging employers. |



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