

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM AND NEW POLITICS

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Agenda

- Key Themes 2016
- Recurring Challenges
- The Context
- A wider role for public servants?
- Conclusions.

Themes for 2016

- Civil service staff engagement survey – a first.
- New performance management system – includes 360 degree feedback for senior managers (also a first) and a focus on promoting performance discussions.
- New disciplinary procedures with a strong focus on managing poor performance.
- Focus on Leadership Development across public sector.
- Town hall consultations.
- Action plans report good progress.

Engagement Survey - Good

Competence	80%
Well Being	75%
Engagement	70%
Social Support	70%
Coping with Change	69%

Engagement Survey – Not Good

Public Perception	33%
Involvement	36%
Pay	42%
Organisational Support	44%
Career Development and Mobility	44%

Worrying Responses

- 12% agree that poor performance is addressed effectively.
- 28% agree that job performance is measured to ensure all staff are achieving results.
- 30% agree that Department searches for new ways of looking at problems.
- 35% agree that senior managers have a clear vision for the future of the Department.
- 36% are confident in decisions made by senior management.
- 39% agree that Department is managed well.
- 42% agree that work utilises their full abilities

Recurring Challenges

- The push from DPER and the resistance of the “system”.
- People management not a strength.
- Evidence of untapped potential.
- Indications of low levels of innovation.
- Improvements needed in consultation and communication.
- Strong possibility that good ideas from staff are not heard.
- Evidence suggests that these are challenges for the public service as a whole.

The Context

- Rise in Populism – giving simple answers to complex problems.
- Levels of trust are low -
 - Edelman Trust Barometer 2016 shows an increase on 2015 but still low-
 - 32% trust Government
 - 39% trust the media
 - 43% trust business
 - 49% trust NGO's
- New Politics – is a recognition of low levels of trust in Government and contains proposals to improve it.
- “If we stick to “business as usual” the dangers we face include social exclusion, marginalisation, economic failure or even a breakdown in social cohesion” – The People’s Conversation.

New Politics

- A New Dáil: to expand the role and power of TDs so that they can truly hold the Government to account.
- Open Government: Trust in Government to be improved by opening it up to outside scrutiny and making party political funding more transparent.
- Empowering the Citizen: shift the balance of power between the State and the Citizen so that local communities and individuals have more power over their own lives.

Empowering the Citizen

Examples

- Constitutional Assembly.
- Citizens Assembly.
- Public Participation Networks in Local Government.
- Consultation on New Legislation.
- Open Government Partnership.

Is this enough?

Is there a greater role for the Public Service to play?

A Report from the People's Conversation

Common themes-

- A political system that is not detached from the concerns and expectations of citizens.
- Reform of government and administration to involve citizens in making decisions.
- An education system that helps people to be active citizens.
- A voice for citizens outside of elections.
- To bring back the word “citizen”.
- A model of citizenship that takes into account our role as global citizens and provides opportunities to influence decisions at international level.
- The opportunity for all to be active citizens regardless of their circumstances.

Key Proposals

- A permanent Citizens Assembly.
- A widespread use of Citizens Juries in line with international practise.
- Recognition of the potential of Public Participation Networks but point out that they do not deal with public services that are centralised.
- Move decision making closer to the citizen.
- More deliberation of policy issues outside the “normal” structures.
- A Minister for Community and Volunteering.
- Constitutional status for the office of the Ombudsman.

Citizen's Jury

A Citizens' Jury is composed of a group often of around 12-50 randomly selected citizens, representative of the demographics in the area, that come together to deliberate on an issue. The jury hears from expert witnesses that are knowledgeable on the topic and deliberate to provide a solution or recommendation to the public and official decision makers.

Case Study

Pilot Citizen's Jury, Galway County Council

- Set up in 2013
- Mandate –
To develop practical proposals for public sector reform for a two year period with reports every six months to Galway County Council.
- Advertised in media – 12 representative people chosen randomly.
- Jury had 20 meetings between July 2013 and July 2015

Case Study

Work focussed on answering two questions –

- How can Government organise itself better to serve us the citizens?
- How can citizens have a greater say in the design and delivery of public services?

Activities included-

- Public listening sessions.
- Meetings with public servants.
- Making practical proposals.

Case Study

Outcomes

- The Jury developed proposals on -
 - How public service agencies can better communicate with and serve citizens.
 - Data sharing and citizens rights.
 - Centralisation with accessibility.
 - Using the Ombudsman's guide to best practise for public servants.
- Proposals sent to Galway County Council, the Department of Social Protection, the Garda Síochána, the HSE and Údarás na Gaeltachta for consideration.

Case Study

What we learned-

- People want to be involved and want to make a difference.
- Skilled facilitation of meetings is essential.
- Experts can be invited to jury deliberations to inform discussions.
- Clarity of the outputs required is critical.
- Public sector organisations need to champion this approach themselves.
- People involved now understand the difficulties involved in public sector reform.
- How the deliberations of the jury will assist public policy making needs to be explained at the outset.

Conclusions

- New Politics provides an opportunity for the Public Service as a whole, including the Semi-State sector, to play a greater role in empowering citizens.
- The concept of countrywide Citizens' Juries to deliberate on key policy challenges like, for example – climate change, an aging population, countering the rise in populism, improving public services, improving health services – should be given serious consideration.
- Such initiatives could contribute to a more effective and innovative public service.

Thank you for your attention

