

Oireachtas Update



In the Dáil this week, the Houses of the Oireachtas Inquiries (Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013 will be discussed at second stage. Statements will also be made prior to the meetings of the European Council. EU leaders meet on May 22 to discuss issues including tax policy; the EU's efforts to promote growth, jobs and competitiveness; and the deepening of EMU. Amongst the bills being discussed in the Seanad this week is the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Bill 2012. Statements will also be made on the issue of diesel laundering. The Committee on Health and Children will meet on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of this week to discuss the Heads of Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill 2013.

News and public sector appointments

Secretary General of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform discusses the role of the private sector in Public Service Reform

"The private sector is playing, and will continue to play, an important role in this (reform) process"

Mr Robert Watt, Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, speaking at the Dublin Chamber of Commerce SMART Series conference last week, said that the public and private sectors are "working closely together to implement the Government's reform programme and we have developed a new partnership with the private sector". Expertise, he added, have been recruited from the private sector to key positions within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Department is also working with a range of partners on strategic aspects of the reform agenda, "not least public procurement, shared services and external service delivery".

"We have also drawn on the experience and knowledge in the private sector to strengthen our programme and project management capability. This assistance has been extended to key sectoral departments, to strengthen their ability to deliver change." As the reform programme evolves, he added, "There will be many more opportunities to work together."

Mr Watt also highlighted the importance for public sector workers in broadening their skills base and experience. By working in the private

sector for a time, public sector workers "have the potential to add real value and new perspectives to policy, operations and service delivery." This is the purpose of an Exchange Scheme, incorporating 12 month placements, with the private sector which has been initiated by his Department. The Civil Service Career Break Scheme also allows civil servants on career breaks to take up paid employment for a period of up to three years subject to the normal protections, including those related to conflict of interest and political involvement.

The Minister went on to discuss a number of further reforms within the public sector including the progression of Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects including work on the N11 / Newlands Cross project; public procurement; shared services; and ICT. Concluding his speech, Mr Watt stressed: "What I have set out this morning is the progress we are making in radically changing the Public Service. The private sector is playing, and will continue to play, an important role in this process."

Management of new public hospital groupings to comprise 6 new roles

Each grouping will also include a primary academic partner

The Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly TD last week announced a reorganisation of public hospitals into six hospital groups, namely: Dublin North East; Dublin Midlands; Dublin East; South/South West; West/North West; and Midwest.

Each group of hospitals will work together as single cohesive entities managed as one, to provide acute care for patients in their area, integrating with community and primary care.

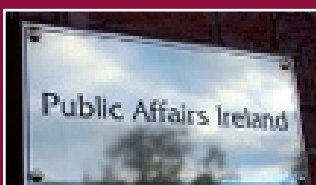
A policy framework will now be devised by the Department of Health and work on the roll-out of the groups will commence immediately. This will be overseen by a National Strategic Advisory Group and driven by the HSE. Group Chairpersons and CEOs will be appointed as soon as possible and preliminary governance arrangements will be put in place. Each hospital will be established on an administrative basis during an interim period and hospital groups will each establish an interim group board to which the management team will report. The Chair of the interim board will be appointed by the Minister. The Chair will then nominate the board membership for Ministerial

approval.

Each of the groups will be led by a group Chief Executive Officer who will be the accountable officer for the group. The requirement for individual hospital management teams will be determined by the size of the hospital and the range of services provided at each site. However, the management teams of hospital groups must comprise the following key posts: Group Chief Executive Officer; Chief Clinical Director; Chief Academic Officer; Chief Director of Nursing; Chief Finance Officer; and Chief Operations Officer.

The hospital groups, according to the Minister, "will secure the future of our smaller hospitals. When the new groups are established, services can be exchanged between sites. This will result in the maintenance of activity in smaller hospitals and will allow them to focus on the provision of care that is safe and appropriate".

Each grouping will also include a primary academic partner.



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Entrepreneur to chair new Government Entrepreneurship Forum

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD has announced the establishment of a small Entrepreneurship Advisory Forum to advise and support his Department and to influence policy in the area of entrepreneurship. The Forum will be chaired by entrepreneur and investor Sean O'Sullivan.

Minister Bruton and the Minister for Small Business John Perry TD have also launched a public consultation inviting interested parties to make submissions as part of an assessment of the current environment for entrepreneurial activity. The deadline for receipt of submissions from interested parties is close of business on Friday June 7 2013.

Minister Bruton said it is time to develop the next phase of the Government Action Plan for Jobs and "that is why I have asked Sean O'Sullivan to chair a forum to advise on new policies".

With regard to the public consultation, he said engagement with interested parties and stakeholders "will ensure that the issues we prioritise are the right ones, and we will publish our plan by the end of the year."

Minister for Small Business John Perry said, "We need to ensure that we foster the development of an entrepreneurial culture that supports entrepreneurs to identify new business opportunities, establish successful companies and generate employment. I strongly encourage interested stakeholders to participate in the consultation process."

Mr O'Sullivan said he expects "we will deliver some substantial recommendations out of this Forum and consultation process." Entrepreneurship, he added, "is about creating something from nothing, about growth and change and the kind of disruption that improves people's lives. It is effectively a kind of magic that impacts the entire economy. We need to look at what the Government can do to draw out this magic, to support it and develop it, and where necessary to simply stand aside and let people get on with it themselves."

New Head of School of Law at NUI Galway

Professor Donncha O'Connell is the newly-appointed Head of the School of Law at NUI Galway having recently been appointed to an Established Chair in Law.

Mr O'Connell is also a part-time Commissioner of the Law Reform Commission, the statutory body charged with advising the Government on law reform proposals, and a member of the Legal Aid Board. He was called to the Bar in 1990 and subsequently went to the University of Edinburgh, graduating with a Masters in Law in 1993. He was then appointed to a lectureship at the School of Law, NUI Galway and taught Constitutional Law, Labour Law and European Human Rights.

In 1999 he was appointed as the first full-time Director of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL). In 2002 Donncha resigned as Director of the ICCL and returned to the Law School at NUI Galway. In the same year he was appointed as the Irish member of the EU Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights established by the European Commission on foot of a recommendation by the European Parliament LIBE Committee.

In 2005 Donncha O'Connell was elected Dean of Law at NUI Galway and served a full term until 2008. During that time he worked through the Council of Deans to bring about the establishment of the new College of Business, Public Policy & Law, NUI Galway.

Managing Director of RTE Radio Clare Duignan to step down

It has been announced that the Managing Director of RTE Radio, Clare Duignan, is to step down at the end of June and Jim Jennings, Head of RTÉ Radio 1, will step into the role in an interim position. RTÉ Radio will hold a public competition for the post of Managing Director in the coming months. Clare Duignan moved to RTÉ Radio as MD four years ago. She oversaw the growth of RTÉ Radio 1 reach across the four years from 2008 to 2012, from 23 percent to 24 percent. RTÉ lyric fm reach remained stable at three

percent across the same period. RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta is implementing its new Three Year Strategy which marks the start of a number of exciting new initiatives at the station. While her time as managing director also coincided with one of the most turbulent periods for 2fm, recent share stability for the station, and the appointment of new station head, Mr Dan Healy, has signalled a new beginning for 2fm.

Ministers provide figures on numbers of women in public sector roles

The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD said that since the establishment of this Government, 16 members have been nominated to State boards, 25 percent of which were female.

When questioned on the number of women in principal and assistant principal officer positions within the civil service, the Minister stated that as per the end of April 2013, 34 percent of principal officers and 41 percent of assistant principal officers employed on a whole-time equivalent basis are women.

The Minister for Local Government, Phil Hogan TD also disclosed gender figures within local authorities. He confirmed that of the 33 City and County Managers in situ, four or 12 percent of them are women.

In March 2011, the Government in its 'Programme for Government' announced that it will take steps to ensure that all State boards have at least 40 percent of each gender. Minister Howlin stated that it is his attention in the limited number of appointments I have to make to increase the number of women appointees over the lifetime of the Government.

Information Commissioner publishes Annual Report 2012

Commissioner expresses disappointment at decision to stop collating statistical FOI returns

The Information Commissioner Emily O'Reilly has published her Annual Report for 2012 which shows a 38 percent increase on 2011 in the number of FOI review applications received by the Office in 2012. The number of applications accepted has increased by more than 35 percent. The majority of applications accepted by the Office in 2012 concerned applicants seeking access to records.

statistical returns for 2012 for the majority of civil service bodies have not been forwarded to my office for publication". The Commissioner said she is disappointed that "alternative arrangements for the collation of statistics were not agreed in advance of the Department's decision." It is estimated that the number of bodies for whom no statistical information is available for publication is in excess of 110.

Key statistics

The Commissioner expressed disappointment at the decision of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to stop collating the statistical FOI returns due to an administratively unsustainable workload. Up until now, the Office published statistical returns which showed the extent to which members of the public, journalists, private organisations and others avail of the access rights under the FOI Act. Now however, the Commissioner is "unable to offer commentary on a significant number of public bodies, as

FOI Amendment Bill

The report also highlights the progress being made on the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Bill and the proposed automatic application of FOI legislation to all newly-formed public bodies. While it is "somewhat disappointing" that the Bill remains to be published, the Commission is "aware that the heels of legislative development can often turn slowly".

Dáil

Tuesday May 21	Wednesday May 22	Thursday May 23
<p>2pm Questions (Minister for Finance)</p> <p>3.15pm Leaders Questions</p> <p>3.36pm Questions (Taoiseach)</p> <p>4.36pm Order of Business</p> <p>5.06pm Pre European Council Statements, (to conclude within 65 minutes)</p> <p>Topical Issues</p> <p>Statements re Report on Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration (Resumed) (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)</p> <p>7.30pm Private Members Business</p>	<p>10.30am Leaders Questions</p> <p>10.51am Order of Business</p> <p>Motion re Report Stage of Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Bill 2013 (to conclude within 65 minutes) (Department of Justice and Equality)</p> <p>Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Bill 2013 Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Justice and Equality)</p> <p>Houses of the Oireachtas Inquiries (Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013 Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)</p> <p>1.30pm SOS</p> <p>2.30pm Questions (Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)</p> <p>3.45pm Topical Issues</p> <p>7.30pm Private Members Business</p>	<p>10.30am Leaders Questions</p> <p>10.51am Order of Business</p> <p>Non Use of Motor Vehicles Bill 2013 Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of the Environment Community and Local Government)</p> <p>Health Service Executive (Governance) Bill 2012 (Seanad) Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Health)</p> <p>Houses of the Oireachtas Inquiries (Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013 Second Stage (Resumed) (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)</p> <p>3.42pm Topical Issues</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4.30pm</p> <p>Questions (Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform)</p>

Seanad

Tuesday May 21	Wednesday May 22	Thursday May 23
<p>The Seanad Chamber is being used by the Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children which is holding on the General Scheme of the Protection of Life in Pregnancy Bill 2013</p>	<p>10.30am Order of Business</p> <p>12.30pm Statements on Commemorations [Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht] Spokesperson Senator Catherine Noone</p> <p>2pm Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Bill 2012 – Report Stage (Amendments from Dáil Éireann) [Minister of State for Primary Care] Spokesperson Senator Colm Burke</p> <p>3pm Animal Health and Welfare Bill 2012 – Report Stage (Amendments from Dáil Éireann) Spokesperson Senator Michael Comiskey</p> <p>5pm Private Members Business</p>	<p>10.30am Order of Business</p> <p>11.45am Statements on Diesel Laundering [Minister of State for Public Sector Reform] Spokesperson Senators: T. Sheahan & J. D'Arcy</p> <p>2pm Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Bill 2013 – Committee Stage- [Minister for Justice and Equality] Spokesperson Senator Paul Bradford</p>

Committee Meetings

Monday May 20	Tuesday May 21	Wednesday May 22	Thursday May 23
<p>9.30 am Health and Children Seanad Chamber AGENDA: Public Hearings on the Heads of Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill 2013:</p> <p>Session A: 9.30 am – 12 noon Psychiatry and Perinatal Psychiatrists [Dr Anne Jeffers, Consultant Psychiatrist, College of Psychiatrists of Ireland; Dr Maeve Doyle, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, College of Psychiatrists of Ireland; Dr Joanne Fenton, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist; Dr Anthony McCarthy, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist; and Dr John Sheehan, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist]</p> <p>Session B: 12.15 – 2.45 pm Psychiatry [Dr Yolande Ferguson, Consultant Psychiatrist, Tallaght Hospital; Dr Peadar O'Grady, Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist; Prof Veronica O'Keane, Consultant Psychiatrist, Tallaght Hospital & TCD; and Dr Eamonn Moloney, Consultant Psychiatrist, Cork University Hospital]</p> <p>Session C: 3.30 – 6 pm Psychiatry [Prof Kevin Malone, Consultant Psychiatrist, St Vincent's University Hospital & UCD; Dr Bernie McCabe, Consultant Psychiatrist, Navan Hospital; Dr Jacqueline Montwill, Consultant Psychiatrist, Mayo Mental Health Service; and Dr Sean O'Domhnaill, Consultant Psychiatrist]</p> <p>Session D: 6.15 – 8.45 pm Other Medical Specialities [Ms Claire Mahon, President, Irish Nurses & Midwives Organisation; Mr John Saunders, Chair, Mental Health Commission; Dr Kevin Walsh, Consultant Cardiologist, Crumlin & Mater Misericordiae Hospital; and Dr Janice Walshe, Consultant Medical Oncologist, St. Vincent's University Hospital]</p>	<p>9.30 am Health and Children Seanad Chamber AGENDA: Public Hearings on the Heads of Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill 2013: Legal Hearings</p> <p>Session A: 9.30 am – 12 noon Medical Law</p> <p>Session B: 12.15 – 2.45 pm Constitutional Law</p> <p>Session C: 3.30 – 6 pm Medical Ethics</p> <p>Session D: 6.15 – 8.45 pm</p> <p>Members' Time / Closing Statements</p> <p>1.30 pm Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals (ii) Session A: 1.30 p.m. The effects of the black economy on the Construction Industry and Session B: 2.30 p.m. Proposed solutions to protect small businesses and the jobs they provide</p> <p>2 pm Agriculture, Food and the Marine Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) The proposed Code of Conduct for the grocery goods sector; (ii) Pricing and impact on primary and secondary suppliers; (iii) Support for local produce; and (iv) Labelling (resumed)</p> <p>2 pm European Union Affairs Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: Accountability Report 2012 [European Movement Ireland]</p> <p>2.15 pm Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: Climate Change [Officials of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government; National Economic and Social Council; and Environmental Protection Agency]</p>	<p>9.30 am Transport and Communications Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) The current budgetary position and planned cuts to contracted and staff broadcasters' remuneration; and (ii) Update on programme making editorial policies.</p> <p>10 am 1. Justice, Defence and Equality Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals: (ii) Engagement with nominees for Members Designate of the Irish Human Rights Equality Commission.</p> <p>12.30 pm Environment, Community and Local Government (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: Housing (Amendment) Bill 2013</p> <p>1 pm Education and Social Protection Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals: (ii) Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare - Report on Child and Family Income Support) [End Child Poverty Coalition; National Women's Council of Ireland]</p> <p>2 pm 2. Justice, Defence and Equality Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill 2013 [Minister for Justice and Equality]</p> <p>2 pm Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Department of the Taoiseach Strategy Statement 2011-2014; and (ii) IFSC Clearing House Group [Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach]</p> <p>4 pm Members' Interests of Seanad Éireann Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Private Meeting</p> <p>4.30 pm Finance (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: 2013 Revised Estimates for Public Services - Finance Group of Votes:</p>	<p>9.30 am Health and Children Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Update on Health Issues [Minister for Health; Minister of State at the Department of Health with responsibility for Primary Care; Minister of State at the Departments of Health and of Justice, Equality and Defence with responsibility for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People and Mr Tony O'Brien, Director General Designate, Health Service Executive]</p> <p>10 am Public Accounts Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee; and (ii) 2011 Annual Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General and Appropriation Accounts: a. Vote 10: Office of Public Works; and b. Chapter 14: Measuring Procurement Performance [Ms Clare McGrath, Chairman, Office of Public Works]</p> <p>10 am Transport and Communications Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals</p> <p>2 pm European Union Affairs Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Recent developments in the EU [European Committee of the Bavarian Parliament]</p>