

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT 2010-2014 (CROKE PARK AGREEMENT)
PART A - PROGRESS ON COURTS SERVICE ACTION PLAN
For submission by 3 May 2011

1. Better human resource management: Actions to include under this heading include reductions in numbers, redeployment, reconfiguration of service delivery, revisions in attendance arrangements, better attendance and absence management etc.

Terms of Agreement 2010-2014 (refer to all relevant paragraphs)	Target Date as per Current Action Plan	Action*	Comment**
P3 1.4, P4 1.9, P5 1.10/11, P27 4.4, P55 6.3.10	Jun-12	Replacement of the current single jurisdictional provincial Circuit and District Court with a unified multi - jurisdictional office in each county	Planning has now commenced at the three Phase 1 sites - Naas Ennis Monaghan - in advance of the proposed implementation date for that phase of 23 rd May 2011. Following a review of this phase it is planned to complete the rollout of the new structure in all locations by 2013.
P3 1.4, P5 1.10, P12.6	2011	Maximise the use of the Service Officer Pool	A number of meetings have been held with IMPACT and significant progress has been made. Discussions are taking place with the DJE in relation to the possible redeployment of service officers from the Justice Sector to allow a reduction in private security in Dublin
	Within period of agreement	General flexibility i.e. cross jurisdictional working - Reorganisation of service delivery	Implementation of the unified multi-jurisdictional office in each county is proceeding. A number of other proposals are being formulated.

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2. Better Business processes: Actions under this heading would include efficiency measures and improvements to the processes by which your Department/Body delivers its services to the public, including changes to the technology used, better data management, including around identity, and so on.

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P3 1.4, P5 1.10, P29 4.3	End 2011	Logging/Recording of Information using Digital Audio Recording technology- Criminal and Civil Courts	Agreement has been reached with the staff unions to replace loggers in the High Court Civil and Family Courts with a minimal noting of information by the registrar to allow the provision of a transcript. This commenced in late March and savings are now being realised.
P3 1.4, P5 1.10, P29 4.3	Within period of agreement	Optimisation of the use of Courtroom technology such as <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. videolink 2. video display 3. video conferencing 4. DAR 5. evidence presentation 6. evidence dissemination 7. the development and use of an electronic courtbook 	A Courtroom Technology Group is examining ways to increase the use of Courtroom Technology and realise the possible savings for the Courts Service, Gardai and Prison Service which would be generated by the giving of evidence by videolink. Staff have commenced operating DAR equipment in the High Court.
P3 1.4, P5 1.10,	Mid 2011	Development and introduction of Interim Case Management System for CCA, Central and Circuit Criminal Courts	This system is now implemented in the Criminal Courts of Justice. Discussions are ongoing in relation to further extension of the system to Circuit Court offices outside Dublin.

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P3 1.4, P.5 1.10	Within period of agreement	Reduction in external ICT Support	<p>The ICT Unit has reduced dependence on external service providers by carrying out a number of functions in - house which were traditionally outsourced. These relate in particular to the areas of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business process analysis • Re- design • Training • Project Management <p>Significant savings have been realised in this reporting period.</p>
P3 1.4	Ongoing process to be rolled out to full organisation by 2014	The application of Business Process Improvement across the organisation	<p>Training in the LEAN approach to Business Process improvement was given to a group of staff from various offices. A 4 person team has carried out a process mapping exercise in Cavan. These process maps have now being reviewed by staff and managers from a number of offices and a report containing recommendations for improvements will be considered by the Senior Management Team shortly. The implementation of agreed recommendation will follow.</p>
P3 1.4, P5 1.10, P12.6	End 2011	The operation of revised security arrangements in Dublin	<p>A Report from the Security Review Group was considered by the Courts Service Board on 6/12/2010. A number of actions are under way. Work on a procurement process for a new security contract has begun.</p>

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<p>P5 1.10/11, P29 4.13, P30 4.15, P55 6.3.10</p>	<p>Within period of agreement</p>	<p>Centralisation of Process which may include but is not limited to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Processing of Legal Aid Claims- 2. Probate Summary Judgements/Issue of Civil proceedings 3. Phone Calls to Court Offices 4. Summoning of Juries 5. Small Claims 6. Fines Notice and warrant issue 7. Sheriff's business 	<p>No report at this stage</p>
<p>P3 1.4, P4 1.9</p>	<p>2012</p>	<p>Electronic Transmission of Charge Sheets from An Garda Síochána to the Courts Service</p>	<p>Discussions have commenced and a business case for the ICT system is being developed in cooperation with An Garda Síochána. While significant savings would flow from the development of this initiative the project may be deferred or delayed due to funding restrictions.</p>
<p>P3 1.4, P4 1.9</p>	<p>End 2011</p>	<p>Printing of summonses by outsourced contractor</p>	<p>The Courts Service is exploring the use of the Revenue printing facility to print summonses. This should result in both financial and resource savings.</p>
<p>P3 1.4, P4 1.9</p>	<p>Within period of agreement</p>	<p>Extension of Video conferencing arrangements between Prison Service and Courts</p>	<p>Video conferencing installations in Letterkenny and Galway have been completed. These sites were prioritised at the request of the Prison Service. A small working group with representatives of both organisations has been established and is currently working on a set of procedures to cover bail and remand hearings. Live videolink between Cloverhill Court and prison is now in operation for District Court sittings and will be extended to the High Court Bail List shortly Any future installations will require the input of and approval of the Department of Finance</p>

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3. Delivering for the Citizen: Actions under this heading would include efficiency measures and improvements to the processes by which your Department/Body delivers its services to the public, including changes to the technology used, better data management, including around identity, and so on

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P3 1.4 P4 1.9	Within period of agreement	Rationalise the number of stand alone District Court Offices	In accordance with its Strategic Plan the Courts Service in 2011 will consider the future of a number of stand alone District Court Offices. Savings will be realised following the amalgamation of these offices with those in County Towns Decisions have been made to close two offices at this stage.
P3 1.4, P4 1.9, P5 1.10/11, P27 4.4, P55 6.3.10	Within period of agreement	The creation of a single multi-jurisdictional Civil Office in Dublin to include the licensing function	A proposal is being developed on this action and will be discussed with the staff side shortly.
P3 1.4, P4 1.9, P5 1.10/11 P27 4.4, P55 6.3.10	Within period of agreement	The creation of a single multi-jurisdictional Family Law office in Dublin	No report at this stage.
P5 1.10, P27 4.4, P55 6.3.10	Within period of agreement	Expand the adjudicative role of County Registrars by extending the areas in which County Registrars may exercise adjudicative functions and other functions	Discussions are continuing with the County Registrars. Draft Heads of Bill have been provided to the Department of Justice in respect of 8 of the

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			<p>recommendations in the Role of the County Registrar Report. It is expected that these proposals will be included in the Civil Law (Misc Provisions Bill). The advice of the AG has been sought in respect of a further 8 recommendations, and an initial response has been received from counsel by the Courts Service within the last week through the Department. Discussions are also underway in relation to a number of items including future support for County Registrars in a combined court office environment, and a draft Statement of Principles has been furnished to County Registrars for final consideration.</p>
P3 1.4	Within period of agreement	Rationalisation of Court Venues	<p>The programme to rationalise the number of court venues is continuing. There are currently 112 venues. 17 venues have closed during the reporting period. 1 more will close in early May. Further proposals will be considered by the Building Committee and Courts Service Board in 2011.</p> <p>Draft heads of Bill amending the Courts of Justice Act 1936 to facilitate this exercise have been submitted by the Courts Service to the Department and are under consideration by the Attorney General's Office. As an initial step, the Courts Service Board on the 11th April last made an order transferring Donegal County to the Western Circuit, with effect from the 1st January next year</p>

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P4 1.9			Separately, an exercise has been initiated to rationalise the sittings of the High Court on circuit and integrate them with High Court personal Injury sittings in regional venues. The recommendations would effect a reduction of 107 judge sitting days and would secure a reduction in the expenditure on sittings of the High Court on Circuit of approx. €42,779, while freeing up the sitting days saved for motions or trial work, or for writing of reserved judgments.
P3 1.4, P5 1.10, P29 4.3	Within period of agreement	The introduction of e-filing	No report at this stage
P5 1.10/11, P29 4.13, P30 4.15, P55 6.3.10	End 2011	Introduction of 1st Phase of CCMS- Judgements online	CCMS is being introduced on a modular basis. The first module is Judgments Online. A proof-of-concept has been developed to demonstrate how practitioners can initiate a liquidated debt case and pay the appropriate fee online. In mid 2011, subject to Department of Finance approval, there will be procurement for resources to develop the proof-of-concept into a fully working system. Amendments to legislation are required to implement this across all jurisdictions and initial enquiries have been made to the Dept of Justice in this regard.
P3 1.4, P5 1.10 P3 1.4	By 2012	Standardised Office Opening Hours	No report at this stage

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P5. 1,10.11 P29 4.13	Additional Item	Restructuring of Estate and Buildings Unit	The Courts Service has recently combined the Estates and Buildings Unit, the PPP Unit and the Dublin Buildings Unit. This restructuring has allowed the area to discharge its remit despite the loss of two Principal Officers and has increased flexibility and efficiency in the management of the Courts Service estate.
P3 1.4, P5 1.10/11, P29 4.13, P30 4.15, P55 6.3.10	Additional Item	Transfer of all Criminal Business transacted in Dublin to the Criminal Courts of Justice facility	The benefits of the transfer of business to the CCJ are now being realised. They include savings in the areas of jury minding, transport and management of prisoners, the cost of jurors meals and the reduction in leasing costs of vacated buildings.
P3.1.4	Additional item	Reduction in external support - Legal Services	The Directorate of Reform and Development are providing in-house advice and assistance on a number of legal matters thus reducing the spend on externally sourced legal services. Through a combination of introduction of the protocol on access to legal services managed by the Directorate and the assumption by that Directorate of the provision of informal in-house legal advice, where appropriate, expenditure on pure legal services (i.e. extracting compensation claims) was reduced from approx. €45,000 in 2008 to €15,000 in 2009, to €203,000 in 2010 (not accounting for approx. €40,000 invoiced late in 2010).
	Additional item	Revised arrangements for the provision of interpretation services	The revised scheduling of cases requiring the use of interpreters is delivering financial savings in a number of areas outside Dublin

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