



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Strengthening our Defence Forces – Phase One

A High Level Plan to implement the Report of the Public Service Pay Commission on recruitment and retention issues in the Permanent Defence Force

# Strengthening our Defence Forces – Phase One

## Overview of High Level Implementation Plan

### Background and Context

The Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) submitted its third Report to the Minister for Finance & Public Expenditure and Reform in May 2019. The Report addressed issues relating to the recruitment and retention of personnel in the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) on foot of a comprehensive evaluation of these issues by the PSPC.

The PSPC rightly identified that a career in the PDF is not comparable with that of any civilian occupation. It highlighted special disadvantages associated with military life such as unsocial hours of duty; prolonged periods of separation from family; exposure to danger; and restrictions associated with military discipline. The PSPC also found that most of those who join the PDF are motivated by a desire to serve their country, which they do with pride and dedication.

The PSPC identified significant retention issues across the services that make up the PDF. The PDF comprises highly trained, skilled and well-motivated individuals who inevitably will be sought after and attracted to civilian employment, especially in a buoyant labour market. However, the loss of key personnel places additional pressure on, and limits the capacity of, the PDF in undertaking the crucial role that it performs in service to the State.

The PSPC also identified difficulties with the current recruitment arrangements for enlisted personnel and made proposals directed at ameliorating those difficulties.

### High Level Implementation Plan

It is really important to Government that members of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) feel valued, respected and appreciated - not least due to the critical service that they provide to the State, their fellow citizens, and vulnerable people across the globe. The aim of this High Level Implementation Plan is to **fully** implement the Third Report of the Public Service Pay Commission and put the building blocks in place for further initiatives so that PDF members feel valued, respected and appreciated. It should be noted that no action contained in this Plan is intended to compromise the stability of the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA). The Plan will be implemented in two phases. This first phase focuses on implementing the third Report of the PSPC. The second phase will examine core pay in the PDF within the context of the PSSA and future public sector pay negotiations.

This Plan is arranged around three broad themes:

1. Valuing members of the Permanent Defence Force;
2. Retaining the best people in the Permanent Defence Force; and
3. Attracting the best people to the Permanent Defence Force.

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## Overview of High Level Implementation Plan (Contd)

The Plan extracts the recommendations (implicit and explicit) made in the third Report of the PSPC and translates them into discrete actions. It categorises the actions; proposes a timeframe for their commencement; and identifies the lead actor to implement the action. The Plan also identifies the outcomes expected to be achieved when the actions detailed under each theme are implemented in full.

The timeframe for commencement of actions in Phase One is split into four distinct timelines:

1. Immediate (i.e. action to commence and be completed within 1 month of approval of this Plan);
2. Short-term (i.e. action to commence (and in some cases be completed) within 3 months of approval of this Plan);
3. Medium-term (i.e. action to commence (and in some cases to completed within 3 – 6 months of approval of this Plan); and
4. Long-term (i.e. action to commence within 6 – 12 months of approval of this Plan).

Some actions are broken down and sequenced across a number of phases. In those cases, each sub-action is on the same line as its precursor. In this way, reading across the line gives the full extent of what is involved in the implementation of a specific action and gives clarity at what will happen at each phase of implementation.

### Programme Implementation & Oversight

Oversight is vital to building confidence and credibility in the Plan, and to reinforcing its overall viability. Under the direction of the Minister with responsibility for Defence, a Civil-Military Strategic HR Group will be established immediately; the Terms of Reference of which will include the implementation of this Plan. An external HR adviser will also be appointed to assist with the implementation of this Plan. The Civil-Military Strategic HR Group will agree, as a matter of priority, the time it is expected to take to complete each individual action and put in place appropriate programme management to ensure timely completion of actions. The Defence Forces and the Departments of Defence and Public Expenditure and Reform will assign Action Managers to be responsible for taking forward each action that has been assigned to them. The Defence Forces and the Departments of Defence and Public Expenditure and Reform will also designate an individual who will coordinate on all actions for which they have responsibility. The Minister with responsibility for Defence and the Minister for Finance & Public Expenditure and Reform will keep Cabinet Committee F updated on an ongoing basis on progress made in implementing the Plan. All updates on the implementation of the Plan will be channelled through the Cabinet Committee F Senior Officials' Group which is chaired by a senior official in the Department of the Taoiseach. As part of their role, the Chair of the Senior Officials' Group will liaise closely with the nominated coordinators in the Defence Forces and the Departments of Defence and Public Expenditure and Reform on the individual actions contained in the Plan, and monitor implementation timelines.

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# Strengthening our Defence Forces – Phase One

## Valuing Members of the Permanent Defence Force

Actions to be taken immediately	Actions to be taken in the short-term	Actions to be taken in the medium-term	Actions to be taken in the long-term	Actors (lead in bold)	Expected Outcomes
<p>★ Increase Military Service Allowance</p> <p>★ Restore all allowances cut by 10% under the Haddington Road Agreement (HRA) to pre-HRA levels</p> <p>★ Restore weekend premium rates</p>		<p>Commence a review of pay structures in the PDF (as part of the more general exercise recommended by the PSC in its August 2018 Report)</p>	<p>Commence implementation of review findings</p>	<p><b>D/PER</b> / D/Defence HR</p> <p>D/PER</p> <p>D/PER</p> <p>D/PER</p>	<p> <b>More money in the pockets of PDF members</b></p>

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## Retaining the best people in the Permanent Defence Force

Actions to be taken immediately	Actions to be taken in the short-term	Actions to be taken in the medium-term	Actions to be taken in the long-term	Actors (lead in bold)	Expected Outcomes
 <b>Restore the Service Commitment Scheme for Flying Officers (Pilots)</b>				<b>D/PER</b> / D/Defence HR / Defence Forces Leadership	 <b>Flying Officers are more likely to want to stay in the PDF</b>
Establish a Civil and Military Group to evaluate the Review of technical pay arrangements (grade 2-6) and prioritise actions for implementation	Commence implementation of priority actions related to technical pay arrangements (grade 2-6)	Commence implementation of further actions related to technical pay arrangements (grade 2-6)		<b>D/Defence HR / Defence Forces Leadership</b> / D/PER	 <b>Enlisted Technical Personnel are more likely to want to stay in the PDF</b>
Consider, as a priority, incentivised long service arrangements for certain Officer and NCO ranks - in particular those with specialist skills undergoing a significant loss of experience	Identify options for implementation	Options considered in the context of future public sector pay negotiations		<b>D/Defence HR / D/PER</b> / Defence Forces Leadership	 <b>Members with specialist skills and Technical Officers are more likely to want to stay in the PDF</b>
	Consider options to tackle barriers to extended participation in the PDF (incl. the possibility of extending retirement ages for members of the PDF)	Commence implementation of review findings		<b>D/Defence HR / Defence Forces Leadership</b> / D/PER	 <b>More members will have the option to stay in the PDF for longer</b>

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# Strengthening our Defence Forces – Phase One

## Retaining the best people in the Permanent Defence Force (Contd)

Actions to be taken immediately	Actions to be taken in the short-term	Actions to be taken in the medium-term	Actions to be taken in the long-term	Actors (lead in bold)	Expected Outcomes
	<p>Examine bespoke management training for Leaders and Managers (incl. communications; engagement; managing performance and underperformance; encouraging autonomous decision-making; learning &amp; development and career development (for their teams))</p>			<p><b>Defence Forces Leadership / D/Defence HR</b></p>	<p> <b>Enhanced leadership throughout the PDF</b></p>
	<p>Review / audit existing learning and developmental measures in place in the PDF</p>	<p>Develop further the Professional Military Education (PME) Strategy for the PDF (in consultation with PDF members) encompassing continuing professional development and defined career pathways</p>	<p>Implement PME Strategy</p>	<p><b>Defence Forces Leadership / D/Defence HR</b></p>	<p> <b>Members are more likely to want to stay in the PDF</b></p>
	<p>Review / audit existing wellbeing measures in place in the PDF</p>	<p>Develop the PDF Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy (in consultation with PDF members) covering issues such as workplace stress; burnout; engagement; and embeddedness</p>	<p>Implement Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy</p>	<p><b>Defence Forces Leadership / D/Defence HR</b></p>	<p> <b>Happier, healthier and more engaged PDF members</b></p>

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# Strengthening our Defence Forces – Phase One

## Attracting the best people to the Permanent Defence Force

Actions to be taken immediately	Actions to be taken in the short-term	Actions to be taken in the medium-term	Actions to be taken in the long-term	Actors (lead in bold)	Expected Outcomes
	Engage external expertise to review recruitment methods for the PDF. Review should encompass, inter alia, entry age criteria; contract terms for future enlisted members; and options to broaden use of external recruitment.	Implement changes to recruitment processes for the PDF		<b>D/Defence HR / Defence Forces Leadership</b>	 <b>Best practice recruitment processes in place in the PDF</b>
	Fully integrate the Workforce Planning process for the PDF with job design and training and development planning. The Workforce Plan for the PDF should encompass, inter alia, a forecast of resource requirements; a gap analysis; an analysis of specific capability needs; proposed changes to recruitment policies; an evaluation of selection criteria; an analysis of supply of and demand for candidates with the required skill sets; and an induction plan for new entrants.	Institute a process of continually examining external and internal recruitment factors, methodologies and policies as part of a process of Workforce Planning	Fully embed new approach to Workforce Planning in the PDF	<b>Defence Forces Leadership / D/Defence HR</b>	 <b>PDF recruitment processes are reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis</b>
		 <b>Interim Workforce Plan for the PDF prepared</b>	 <b>New approach to Workforce Planning fully embedded in the PDF</b>		

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