

Department - Arms-Length Body Relationships

Friday, 27 April 2018 - 8.00am – 10.30am

Institute of Public Administration, 57-61 Lansdowne Road, Dublin D04 TC62
A light breakfast will be served at 8am and the proceedings will commence at 8.30am



Central Government departments cannot themselves deliver all public services. As such, they are significantly dependent upon arms-length bodies and agencies to deliver a range of functions and services on their behalf. These bodies take many guises, including state agencies, local authorities, higher education institutions and non-profit entities in receipt of public funding. Just as such bodies bring many benefits, including specialised focus, delivery and 'close to the ground' stakeholder engagement, they equally bring challenges in terms of ensuring strategic alignment, performance and compliance monitoring and democratic accountability. Governance Codes recognise these issues in providing for, *inter alia*, reporting and assurance arrangements. Coupled with these 'vertical' relationships, however, are 'horizontal' relationships and challenges in respect of ensuring bodies work well together towards the achievement of common goals. This Forum event will bring together three senior, expert speakers to discuss the approaches, issues and challenges in respect of relationships between Departments and arms-length bodies. The questions to be considered include:

- How do Departments organise themselves to effectively manage and monitor arms-length bodies?
- What are the key sources of direction and assurance for Departments?
- How do we ensure an appropriate balance between autonomy and accountability for arms-length bodies?
- What are the key levers for effective relationships – both 'horizontal' and 'vertical' relationships?
- What are the implications for 'conduit' bodies, which oversee arms-length bodies on behalf of Departments?
- What impact have Oversight Agreements and Performance Delivery Agreements had on Department-Agency relations?
- Are current accountability mechanisms sufficient in respect of performance and assurance?

Guest Speakers:



Dr. Fergal Lynch is Secretary General of the Department of Children & Youth Affairs, a position he has held since January 2015. Prior to this Fergal was Deputy Secretary General at the Department of Health. He has extensive experience in strategic planning, policy, evaluation of policy and service delivery and project management. The Department of Children & Youth Affairs has a number of bodies under its aegis, including Tusla and the Adoption Authority of Ireland and delivers some of its funding programmes through Pobal, including the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme.



Joan Martin is Chief Executive of Louth County Council, having been formally appointed to the position in September 2014. She previously had been Acting Chief Executive for a number of months and previously served in a wide range of areas in the Council, including in the areas of planning, environment and water services. Louth County Council delivers a broad range of services in the county, including in the areas of housing, roads, economic development, heritage, and sport and recreation. This requires it to engage extensively with a range of government departments and state bodies.



John Treacy is Chief Executive of Sport Ireland, a position he has held since May 2015. Sport Ireland is under the aegis of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and has a key role in planning, leading and co-ordinating the sustainable development of competitive and recreational sport in Ireland, including through the development of the National Sports Campus and in funding and overseeing the national governing bodies for sport. John was previously Chief Executive of its predecessor body, the Irish Sports Council, between 1999 and 2015. John is an Athletics Ireland 'Hall of Famer' having won a silver medal in the marathon at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles as well as two IAAF World Cross Country Titles in 1978 and 1979.

Time & Location

The briefing will take place on Friday, 27 April 2018 at the IPA, 57-61 Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin D04 TC62.

A light breakfast will be served from 8.00am. The presentations and open forum discussions will commence at 8.30am and conclude at 10.30am.

Cost and Bookings

Members of the Forum may nominate up to **two** participants to the briefing without charge. The cost for additional nominees is €100 per person. The cost for non-forum members is €175 per person. Bookings can be made by using the attached booking form or by contacting Rebecca Cooney at rcooney@ipa.ie or ph: 01-2403657.