

Department-Agency Relations - Autonomy & Accountability

Thursday, 21 February 2019, 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

State Agencies are established to carry out specific and specialist tasks, distinct from a parent Department, but broadly supporting the delivery of the Department's and Government's priorities. They are typically provided for under an Act of the Oireachtas, which, *inter alia*, will provide for autonomy and reporting requirements, and a Board. However, in the vast majority of instances, the Accounting Officer for the public money allocated to the state agency is the Secretary General of the parent Department, who naturally will want assurance from the state agency that money is being spent appropriately and that controls are in place. This can lead to an inherent (and sometimes overt) tension in respect of autonomy vs accountability, with autonomy (from a state agency perspective) felt to be hindered by the requirement to seek sanction (e.g. for posts) and 'over-reporting'. Departments, on the other hand, can be concerned regarding the visibility and credibility of assurance information. Recent initiatives in the shape of Oversight Agreements, Performance Delivery Agreements and Circular 13/2014 have arguably served to not only provide for greater consistency of approaches between Departments and Agencies, but have possibly also allowed for greater clarity of roles and expectations between the parties.

This Forum session will explore this important area, with a particular focus on some of the key issues such as:

- What impact have Oversight Agreements and Performance Delivery Agreements had on Department-Agency relations?
- What are the key sources of assurance from a Departmental perspective?
- What makes for a 'good' relationship between Agency and Department and vice-versa?
- Can state agency autonomy be increased without reducing accountability?

The session will be supported by the results of theme-specific research carried out by the Governance Team and presented by Ariane Alex.



Dr Graham Love is a Partner in the Consulting Services practice in Mazars with a focus on the delivery of consulting services to the higher education and health sectors and on leading development of those sectors at firm level. Graham previously served as Chief Executive of the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the Health Research Board (HRB) and Molecular Medicine Ireland. Graham has also held senior roles in Science Foundation Ireland and Accenture where he worked in the communications and high technology division. He was appointed by the Ministers for Health and Education to key national committees, including the National Skills Council, the National Cancer Strategy Steering Group and the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee.



Ginny Hanrahan is Chief Executive Officer of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU), Ireland's multi-profession health and social care regulator. Ginny qualified as an Occupational Therapist in 1983, and has worked in the health services for 35 years, in Ireland, Australia and the UK. Prior to her appointment at CORU in 2008, Ginny had been Head of Clinical Services at Beaumont Hospital, Dublin representing health and social care professionals on the Senior Executive, with responsibility for 400 staff, 27 departments and 20 different professionals.



Ariane Alex is a Governance Specialist at the IPA, involved in delivering a range of services to clients in the public and non-profit sectors, including Board Effectiveness Reviews, Gap Analysis exercises and Governance Framework Reviews. Ariane has a particular expertise in research methods, which underpin review work, including quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis, and reporting.

Time & Location

The briefing will take place on Thursday, 21 February 2019 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 €250 per person but subject to availability. Bookings can be made using the attached booking form or by contacting Jane Greer (jgreer@ipa.ie)